

COMMON CORE STANDARDS TALKING POINTS COMMUNITY/BUSINESS GROUPS

1. Why do we need common standards?

Today we live in a world without borders. To maintain America's competitive edge, we need all of our students to be well prepared and ready to compete with not only their American peers, but with students from around the world.

Developing a common core of standards that are internationally benchmarked, aligned with work and post-secondary education expectations, and inclusive of the higher order skills they need is critical to this process.

2. What are the common core standards?

These standards define the knowledge and skills in Mathematics and in English Language Arts that students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The standards are:

- Aligned with college and work expectations;**
- Clear, understandable and consistent;**
- Include rigorous content *and* application of knowledge through high-order skills;**
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;**
- Informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and**
- Evidence- and research-based.**

3. What is the link between the math standards and STEM education?

The college- and career-readiness standards document sets an ambitious goal for all students that will prepare them for success in entry-level, credit-bearing academic courses in college and in workforce training programs. At the same time, as a nation we want to ensure that an ever greater number of students graduate from high school ready to pursue STEM in college and careers. To meet this challenge, and to reflect the strong input on this subject received from states, the K-12 standards will indicate what students interested in pursuing a STEM career must study while in high school, while acknowledging that not all students need this material for college readiness.

4. Has career readiness been a major part of the standards work so far? Has the career and technical education (CTE) community been involved?

Research and evidence on what is needed for success in careers has been a part of the standards development work. For this initiative, careers are defined as those in the top two tiers of career classifications identified by the Department of

Labor. These careers provide sufficient wages and the opportunity for growth. The CTE community has provided feedback on the standards, and CTE organizations are supportive of the initiative, including the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), which is an endorsing partner of the initiative.

5. Do the standards dictate certain approaches and curricula?

No. The standards define what to teach not how or with what materials. The common core standards will not favor or prescribe any particular approach or course that students must take. The standards will articulate skills students must have to succeed in college and workforce training programs. The standards are designed to be cross-curricular and allow for courses that appeal to different students' needs and interests while helping them gain the requisite ELA and mathematics skills.

6. How is the higher education community engaged in the initiative?

The Department of Higher Education Executive Officers have been engaged in the initiative through their role on PARCC's advisory group. Many individuals representing higher education participated in the standards development.