



Understanding the Common Core Standards:

What are the Common Core Standards and why is Arizona participating?

The Common Core Standards is an initiative of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association to develop “national standards” in mathematics and English language arts that focus on the student knowledge and skills that high school graduates need to master to succeed in college and careers. The Standards were developed and reviewed by representatives from participating states (including Arizona) and educators, researchers, parents and business leaders.

The State Board of Education voted to adopt the Common Core Standards in mathematics and English language arts for Arizona on June 28, 2010. The Board and the Arizona Department of Education believe the Standards will provide many benefits for Arizona students including consistency among standards and assessments for students across the country, international benchmarking of standards and a renewed focus on college and career readiness.

When will schools and students see the Common Core Standards?

The Common Core Standards are currently on ADE’s website at www.ade.az.gov. The public (including board members, parents and teachers) may submit comments regarding potential Arizona additions to the Standards until July 25, 2010. In October of 2010, the final Arizona Mathematics and English Language Arts Standards will be released. The date of implementation (when students will be taught and assessed on the new Standards) has not been finalized.

What does this mean for student assessments, including AIMS?

In addition to joining the Common Core Standards consortium, Arizona is also participating in a common assessment consortia (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) which will develop assessments for the participating states based on the Common Core Standards. At this point, the assessment consortium has not yet finalized when the tests will be developed and in place for Arizona students. The tests developed through the consortium will likely replace AIMS; however the new assessments may still be referred to as AIMS exams as they will serve the same purposes under federal and state law.

What assistance will the Department of Education provide to districts and teachers?

ADE will provide professional development and technical assistance to Arizona school districts. Professional development will include instructional crosswalks showing alignment from the old standards to the Common Core Standards, curriculum alignment and development and leadership development for sequencing instructional change. ADE will provide instructional materials to support the Standards through IDEAL (Arizona’s E-Learning Platform) and conduct regional meetings to discuss implementation of the new Standards.

What do the Common Core Mathematics Standards look like? Are they similar to our current state standards?

The Common Core Math Standards are heavily-focused on problem solving and quantitative reasoning. Similar to current performance objectives, students in grades K-5 focus on number and operations; grades K-7 progress towards Algebra through fractions and proportional reasoning; high school utilizes rigorous algebra, geometry, statistics and probability. The crosswalks between the current standards and the Common Core standards illustrate the degree of alignment. For example, in third grade, there are currently 47 performance objectives. Under the Common Core Standards, 21 of the current objectives are removed or moved to other grade levels and the remaining objectives are matched or partially matched to the Common Core.

What do the Common Core English Language Arts Standards look like? Are they similar to our current state standards?

The Common Core English Standards are separated by grade level for grades K-8 and “grade bands” for grades 9-10 and 11-12. The Standards utilize an integrated model of literacy and incorporate research and media skills throughout. The grade level standards for K-5 focus on reading, writing, speaking, listening and language whereas the 6-12 standards are divided into English Language Arts and Social Studies, Science and Technical subjects. Similar to the Math Standards, crosswalks indicate alignment between current and Common Core Standards. The English Language Arts Common Core Standards add new performance objectives in several grades (3 in Kindergarten, 11 in grade band 9-10 and 13 in grade band 11-12).

Where do I go for more information?

Arizona Department of Education: www.ade.az.gov/standards/CommonCoreStandards

Common Core Standards Initiative: www.corestandards.org