

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: HOW DOES COMMON CORE AFFECT MAIN STREET?

### WHY ARE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

New Mexico and 45 other states have adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for public schools, establishing state-of-the-art guidelines for teacher and student competency. Common Core is a radically different approach to learning, teaching and testing that engenders a deeper understanding of critical concepts and the practical application of that knowledge. Developed over many years and benchmarked internationally, these proven methods prepare students to be ready for college and competitive in the job market.

### WHAT ARE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS?

Standards that help teachers ensure students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning.

### WHAT ARE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS)?

The Common Core State Standards are part of a state-led movement to assure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Common standards mean that students consistently receive a high quality education, from school-to-school and state-to-state. New Mexico, along with 45 other states, has adopted these standards. The federal government was not involved in their development.

### HOW ARE CCSS DIFFERENT FROM OUR OLD SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION?

The Common Core is a radically different approach to teaching, learning and testing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that focuses on giving students deep understanding of the most important concepts in the subjects they are studying so that they can *apply* those knowledge and skills to other subjects and in the real world.

### WHAT IS THE TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS?

By 2015, all students will be taking new forms of tests that require them to show that they have the ability to read, write, speak, solve problems, and use technology. These tests will examine many kinds of student work, not just multiple-choice answers. Students in New Mexico already are transitioning to the new standards, as teachers receive targeted professional development from the state and from their districts about how to improve their classroom practices.

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**HOW DOES COMMON CORE AFFECT MAIN STREET? CONT.**

**DO COMMON STANDARDS LEAD TO DUMBING DOWN EXPECTATIONS ACROSS THE BOARD?**

The Common Core State Standards have been built from the best and highest state standards in the country and benchmarked to international standards. They were developed by experts, with input from educators and parents, so that they would be evidence-based, aligned with college and work expectations, include rigorous content and skills, and be realistic and practical for the classroom.

**WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS OF THE STANDARDS ON INSTRUCTION?**

The Common Core is a new approach to teaching, learning and testing for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that focuses on giving students deep understanding of the most important concepts in the subjects they are studying so that they can apply those knowledge and skills to other subjects and in the real world. *All* teachers will require substantial professional development as they transition to a system that emphasizes deeper content knowledge, practical application of mathematical and literacy skills, analysis and problem solving, and integration within and across subjects at every grade level. Teachers will have the opportunity to study these new standards and collaborate with their peers in the development of new curriculum materials and teaching practices that meet these needs.

**HOW DOES THE COMMON CORE SYSTEM AFFECT TESTING?**

By 2015, the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (SBA) delivered in grades 3-11 will be developed and administered by PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers.) PARCC is a consortium of 24 states working together to develop an assessment system aligned to CCSS—in other words, New Mexico students will be taking the same proficiency and accountability exams as students in 23 other states. These tests will be delivered and taken on-line.

**WILL THE GRADE 11 PARCC ASSESSMENT SERVE AS THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION TEST?**

Yes, the state's graduation assessment requirements will apply to the PARCC test.

**HOW DOES THE STANDARDS MOVEMENT HELP BUSINESS IN NEW MEXICO?**

Too many New Mexico students are underprepared for life after graduation and for the demands of the modern workplace. Common Core raises our national competitiveness by evening the playing field across the state for what students must know and be able to do to achieve a high school diploma and by preparing teachers for the material that they must teach to all students.