

Dear Parents,

Pennsylvania Schools are embarking on a period of transition from the PA Academic Standards to the PA Core State Standards. The goal is to provide a clear, consistent “core” of standards so all children have access to an excellent education. Keystone exams at the secondary school level are aligned to the PA Core State Standards. PSSA will be aligned to the PA Core State Standards in the 2014-2015 school year.

Parkland School District has a steadfast commitment to improving the education of all students to prepare them for college and career readiness. This parent letter was developed to assist parents with understanding the new Common Core curriculum movement and the need to work together to ensure our students success as they move towards their college and/or career goals.

The PA Core State Standards:

- Prepare students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and work
- Provide educators, parents and students with clear focused standards
- Set consistent expectations
- Include both knowledge and application of subject area
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards
- Are based on real-world application
- Are evidence and research-based

Key English Language Arts shifts include:

- Read as much non-fiction as fiction
- Learn about the world by reading
- Read more challenging material closely
- Discuss reading using evidence
- Write non-fiction using evidence
- Increase academic vocabulary

Key math shifts include:

- FOCUS: Learn more about fewer, key topics
- COHERENCE: Build skills within and across grades
- RIGOR: Develop a deep, authentic command of mathematical concepts through
 - Conceptual understanding – deep understanding of content
 - Procedural skill and fluency – the standards require speed and accuracy in calculation
 - Application – we learn math so we can use it in situations that require mathematical knowledge

How can parents help prepare their child for learning?

- Read a combination of fiction and non-fiction aloud or with your child. Select more difficult passages over time.
- Read more informational texts including newspapers, magazines, technical manuals, science and social studies articles and books.
- Talk with your child and have him or her explain things.
- Encourage writing at home.
- Help your child know basic math facts.
- Discuss and “do” real life math with your children.
- Look for problems based in real life.
- Encourage a good work ethic.
- Discuss with your children their performance in school and what they are learning.
- Talk with your children about the importance of graduating from high school ready for college and career success.