

ENGLISH LEARNER SUCCESS IN THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS)

Your Voice, Your Advocacy: A guide for parents on how your support and the CCSS can help your children succeed in school



CaliforniansTogether

Championing the Success of English Learners

- in collaboration with -



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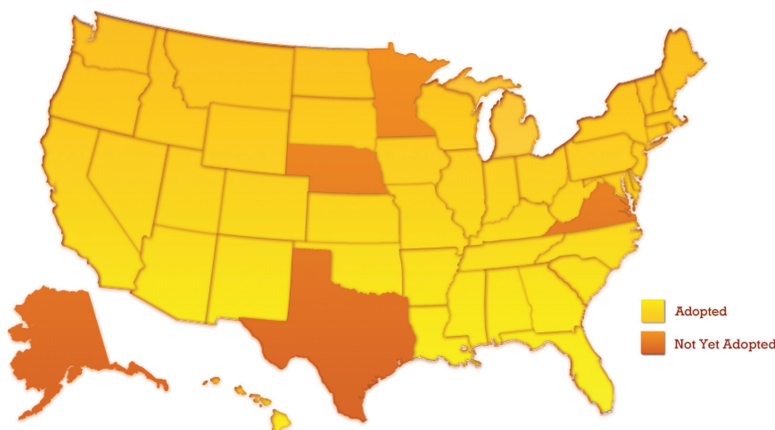
This guide has been developed to help you, as a parent of an English Learner, understand what the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are and how these standards will impact the academic success of your child once they are implemented in the classroom. This guide will provide you with information you can use to speak with your child's teachers, principals, and other school staff to make sure he or she receives the learning supports to succeed academically.



WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS?

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are new standards that describe what your child and all students across the country are expected to learn and be able to do by the end of each school year. The new standards are for English reading, writing, speaking and math. The CCSS expect more from all students so they will be ready for college and the jobs of the future.

Until now, each state developed its own academic standards. This made it difficult for parents to know how well their children are achieving compared to other children across the United States. In the map below you see that California and 46 states across the United State are preparing to teach these new standards. All schools and districts should be teaching these new standards by the 2014-15 school year.



A map of the US highlighting the states that have adopted the standards.

DEFINITIONS

CCSS: The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are improved academic standards in English reading, writing, speaking and math that list what students should learn and be able to do in each grade. These standards will also be taught during history, social studies, arts, and science classes, to better prepare all students to graduate high school ready for college and work.

English Learner: A student whose home language is other than English and needs support in learning to read, write, and speak and listen proficiently in English and their home language, when possible.

HOW WILL THE CCSS SUPPORT THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF YOUR CHILD?

The CCSS raise the expectations for what your child must learn by the end of each school year. When these new standards are implemented in districts with the right learning supports in the classroom, the education of your child and the millions of English Learners in California and nationwide will improve.

Schools must be ready to provide extra help to English learners who have to learn English and the new standards. If schools and districts are not ready, your child may have trouble succeeding in school. Over the years many schools and districts have not been prepared to provide the extra help to English learners. As a result, English learners often score lower than most students on state tests, drop out of high school, and do not meet the requirements needed to attend college.

You play an important role in making sure that your child is successful. You can make sure that your child's school provides the necessary extra help inside and outside of the classroom. With this support, your child has the best chance to succeed in learning the CCSS.

In the following sections, this guide outlines important issues, information you should know, and questions you can ask teachers, principals, and school staff to speak out for your child's success.



YOUR VOICE, YOUR ADVOCACY

Take action: Speak with your child's teachers to learn more and discuss the type of extra help your child will receive in the classroom. For examples, look at the chart "Extra Help for English Learners" on the next page.

Questions to ask teachers: "When will the school explain to parents how English learners will be supported to learn the new Common Core Standards?" and "What additional instruction is being offered to my child to help him/her learn English?"

EXTRA HELP FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

Your child will need extra help to learn English and the new standards. Your child's teachers will also need extra help to understand how best to teach these new standards and help your child learn English. Below are examples of support for your child, his/her teacher, and for you.

For students



- **Homework and class assignments:** Your child's homework and class assignments should be provided in your home language, if needed.
- **Educational materials:** These materials can be videos, internet reading resources, magazines, books, and computer programs. When possible, books, computers and other materials should be available in English and the home language.
- **After school programs:** After school programs add to the help your child receives in the classroom. After school programs allow more time to read, write, speak and listen. They help your child learn more about all school subjects including math, history, social studies, arts, and science.

For teachers



- **Training:** All teachers need special training to be able to help their students learn the new CCSS and English language skills in the new English Language Development Standards.

For parents



- **Home to School Connection:** Letters and conversations with school staff should be communicated in a language that you understand and speak. Speaking with your child in your home language will help you know how well your child is progressing in school and how you can help him/her learn the new standards.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR CHILD'S ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN THE CCSS

What are language and literacy skills?

Reading



Writing



Speaking



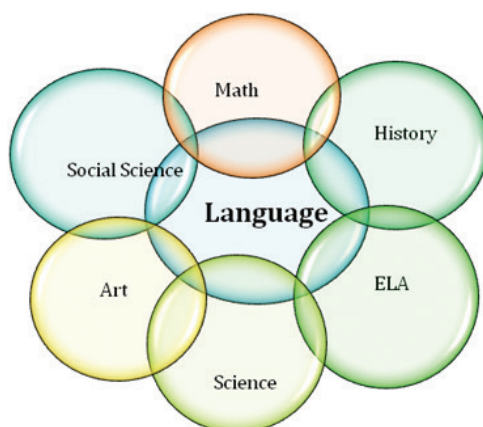
Listening



Your child will need strong literacy and language skills to successfully learn the CCSS. Strong reading and writing skills will help your child learn all subjects including English language arts, math, history, social studies, arts, and sciences. Teachers must provide students with many opportunities to read, write, speak and listen in the classroom. Below are two opportunities you can expect the CCSS will provide your child and all English Learners. Opportunities include working in small groups or pairs on projects or assignments to make sure your child develops the literacy and language skills needed.

The Improved CCSS

Language is central to all subject areas



OPPORTUNITY FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

Language and literacy instruction in all subject areas

English Learners will spend more time reading, writing and speaking in all of their classes to develop and improve their language and literacy skills.

Collaborative learning

The CCSS supports collaboration and teamwork among students and teachers to develop language and literacy. Through collaboration English Learners will have extra time to practice and improve their speaking and listening skills.

YOUR VOICE, YOUR ADVOCACY

Take action: Learn and discuss with your child's teachers how they teach language and literacy development for English Learners in all school subjects in their classrooms.

Questions to ask teachers: "How are language and literacy skills developed through classroom activities and assignments to help my child learn English and the standards?" and "What extra help does the school offer to keep my child's progress at grade level?"

ENGLISH LEARNERS WILL LEARN MORE THROUGH THE CCSS

The CCSS Presents a Change in the Way Teachers Teach

The new standards require teachers to design their language and literacy lessons differently. The examples below presents three ways you may expect your child's teacher to design language and literacy assignments and activities. The way the assignments are designed supports CCSS learning and improving their English skills.

NEW TEACHING PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Collaborative learning

Teachers will organize students to work together to present their ideas orally, provide help to their classmates, and participate in one-on-one, small and large group discussions. Students will have more time in class to speak, to improve their English and present their ideas.



READING

Informational books and materials

Teachers will require students to read more about the world we live in. Examples of informational materials may include science and history textbooks, videos, magazines such as Scholastic News, newspapers such as La Opinión, maps, graphs, and websites such as the National Geographic for Kids.



WRITING

Essays, math word problems and science lab reports

Teachers will require students to write what they learn from assigned reading and their background knowledge and experiences to prove their ideas in writing, such as essays, math word problems, and science lab reports.



What this means for your child:

Your child has more opportunities to develop and improve his or her vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing, speaking and listening in all of his or her classes. These opportunities improve language and literacy skills.

SKILLS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS: COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION, CRITICAL THINKING, CREATIVITY

As students graduate from high school and continue onto college and their careers, they will be required to use technology, work in teams, and present information to others. In addition to the CCSS language and literacy skills, students will be required to improve their communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, together known as the “4Cs.” These skills will also contribute to their success in college and their careers.

You can expect to see some of the examples described below in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms that are teaching the skills of the “4Cs.” Be sure to visit your child’s classroom to learn how teachers are including these practices in lessons for all students, and especially for English Learners.

The 4C's	Classroom Examples
Communication: Students will develop speaking and listening skills required to share their thoughts, questions, ideas and solutions with classmates, friends, family and other adults in English and their home language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students develop and deliver presentations based on classroom assignments and activities.• Students are able to persuade others to change a school rule through their writing.• In small groups, students discuss their projects and assignments.
Collaboration: Students will develop teamwork skills to work together with other students and teachers to reach a goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers assign students to group projects to explore problems and identify solutions.• Students participate in pairs, work in small and large groups.• Teachers and students have one-on-one conversations about classroom assignments and activities .



Critical Thinking: Students will learn to analyze thoughts and ideas to reach a goal by reading and using the information from many books, films, magazines, newspapers and their own background knowledge and experiences.



- Students use what they learned from reading to support their ideas in writing.
- Students participate in classroom debates to understand different opinions on themes and issues covered in the class.
- Students investigate a problem in their community and interview experts, community and family members to gather information on the problem and how it affects their community and possible solutions.

Creativity: Students will develop new and innovative approaches to solve problems.



- Teachers ask questions that require students to question and evaluate their own thoughts and ideas.
- Classroom assignments are completed and presented by students using computers and videos.
- Students explore issues such as pollution in their community and create a video showing possible solutions.

YOUR VOICE, YOUR ADVOCACY

Take action: Visit your child's classroom to learn how teachers are preparing your child to develop the skills needed to be ready for college and his or her career.

Question to ask your teacher: "How are communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity being included in classroom activities and assignments?"

WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE SUPPORT NEEDED FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND ALL ELs

Without including extra learning support in the classroom, your child may face new problems in succeeding in the CCSS. As school districts fully implement the CCSS, the following are critical needs of English Learners that you as a parent can make sure your child receives in all subject areas. The section labeled, Your Voice, Your Advocacy, provides you with key questions you can ask your child's teachers, principal and other school site and district staff.

Critical to the Success of English Learners

English Learners must be taught all subjects and courses: EL students must receive high quality instruction in all subject areas, including: English Language Arts, math, history, social studies, arts, and sciences to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to be prepared to succeed in school and graduate from high school.



Teachers must receive training to support English Learners: Teachers must receive specialized support and training to be able to teach language and literacy development, as well as the "4Cs," for English Learners.



Your Voice, Your Advocacy

- "How much instruction is my child receiving in all the school subjects?" (School counselor or teacher)
 - "Does the school have a plan for providing support, services and resources to help my child succeed in all subjects both inside and outside of the classroom?" (School principal)
 - "Will my child's classes prepare him/her to graduate from high school? (counselor or teacher)
 - How is my child's home language being used to help my child understand her/his lessons and instruction?" (School counselor or teacher)
 - "What are the A-G and Advancement Placements courses that you offer students to be prepared for college and their careers? Is my child enrolled in these courses?" (High school counselor)
-
- "Will my child's teachers receive specialized training to ensure my child and all ELs meet the demands called for in the CCSS?" (School principal)
 - "What training will the teachers receive to help students learn English using the English Language Development Standards along with the Common Core Standards?" (School principal)
 - Do you feel you have had enough training to implement the Common Core standards that will specifically support my child and other English Learners to learn the Common Core Standards? What other support do you need? (Classroom teacher)

Critical to the Success of English Learners

New tests must assess English Learner's progress:

New state assessments are being developed to test how students are progressing in the CCSS. These tests will assess if English Learners are successful in learning the new standards, including language, literacy and other courses. The CCSS will require students to use computers to take the new state assessments. English learners will need to have access to this technology to know how to use computers during testing.

English Learners must have access to technology:

To be college and career ready, English learners should be comfortable using technology and their language skills to communicate and collaborate with experts beyond the classroom, to create projects that matter to the students and their community, to research information and promote understanding about diverse cultures, and to present their new understandings to their class.



Your Voice, Your Advocacy

- “When will my child take these new assessments and when will the test results become available?” (Classroom teacher)
- “What process will you put in place to share and help me understand how my child is progressing in school?” (School principal)
- “What supports will be available to help my child understand the language of the tests?” (School principal)
- “How will my child’s test results inform his/her class choices and the supports he/she receives in and outside of the classroom?” (School counselor)
- “How will you use technology in the classroom to improve student learning?” (Classroom teacher)
- “What types and how often will my child use technology in the classroom?” (Classroom teacher)
- “What will be done if my student’s classroom does not have the needed technology to improve student learning or take the new assessments?” (School principal)
- How will technology be used to support the 4 C’s? (Classroom teacher)

The questions provided here and throughout the toolkit are samples of what you can ask your child’s teachers, school principal, and other school staff to make sure the needs of your child are met in the implementation of the CCSS. As a parent, you are able to join parent groups on your school campus or district, such as the School Site Council or the District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC), to talk to other parents, teachers, and school leadership about the education and program for your child and other students.

This toolkit provides you with key information and next steps to participate in school and classroom level discussions on how the CCSS will assist English Learners to succeed academically. However, district and state policies and instructional practices also affect the quality of education English Learners receive in the classroom. Join others in and outside of your community to partner with other parents, organizations, churches, and agencies to request and support a quality education for your child and California’s English Learners.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

The following links provide you with extra resources to learn about the Common Core State Standards and what other supports are being provided to parents.

Background

Common Core State Standards Initiative (<http://www.corestandards.org/>)

This website explains the Math and English Language Arts (ELA) standards for each grade and the history and background on how the standards were developed.

CDE CCSS and Parents and Guardians (<http://inet2.cde.ca.gov/cmd/documentdetail.aspx?doc=7943>)

A two-page English or Spanish document is available from the California Department of Education which discusses how parents can help their children, teachers and schools successfully implement the Common Core standards.

Guide to the CCSS

Parent Roadmaps to the Common Core Standards (<http://www.cgcs.org/Domain/36>)

Parents can go to this website to download a “parent roadmap” for every grade level. Each roadmap explains the standards for that particular grade and ways that parents can support their children at home with the new instruction.

Common Core State Standards Initiative-ELA (<http://www.corestandards.org/resources/key-points-in-english-language-arts>)

Provides the goals for students in the English Language Arts (ELA) components of reading, writing, speaking and listening, language, and media and technology.

Common Core State Standards Initiative-Math (<http://www.corestandards.org/Math>)

Explains briefly the differences between Math instruction in America and other countries. This webpage provides background on the need for Math standards to be more focused and clear so that students succeed.

National PTA Parents’ Guide to Student Success (<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2910#esp>)

Features 2-page Spanish or English guides for parents with children in each grade level. Every guide provides an overview of what children will learn by the end of the school year.

Engage NY (<http://www.engageny.org/parent-guides-to-the-common-core-standards>)

This webpage is dedicated to providing more resources to parents on the Common Core standards; some of the documents are available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, and Haitian Creole.

Santa Ana Unified School District-Parent Resources (<http://www.sausd.us/Page/21287>)

This website includes Spanish and English Common Core pamphlets, bookmarks, guides, and Santa Ana Unified School District workshops for parents.

California County Superintendents Parent Handbook (http://www.sjusd.org/pdf/districtinformation/CCSParentHandbook_020411.pdf)

The handbook, available in English, provides parents specific details on what students will need to know by the end of the school year. It is broken down into subjects and grade levels and even includes samples of classroom activity problems.

Guide to the CCSS - continued

California County Superintendents Parent Handbook-Spanish
(<http://ccsesa.org/index/documents/parentdocspanol.pdf>)

The handbook, available in Spanish, provides parents specific details on what students will need to know by the end of the school year. It is broken down into subjects and grade levels and even includes samples of classroom activity problems.

California Association for Bilingual Education (<http://www.bilingualeducation.org/programs/2INSPIRE.php>)

The CABE website provides information to parents so that they can increase their knowledge about schooling and high quality educational options for their children. CABE also provides school-based Family-School-Community engagement programs; interested parents and schools can call CABE for more information.

Videos

Common Core Works video (<http://vimeo.com/51947947>)

A three-minute video in English and Spanish explaining how the Common Core Standards help students achieve at high levels and help them learn what they need to know to get to graduation and beyond.

Univision Videos: The Common Core topics covered on the videos from Univision include: the definition of standards, the changes made in the new standards, English learners, and the role of parents.

- Video 1 (<http://vidayfamilia.univision.com/es-el-momento/video/2012-06-23/estandares-educativos-parte-1-que>)
- Video 2 (<http://vidayfamilia.univision.com/es-el-momento/video/2012-06-23/estandares-educativos-parte-2-por>)
- Video 3 (<http://vidayfamilia.univision.com/es-el-momento/video/2012-06-23/estandares-educativos-parte-3-que>)
- Video 4 (<http://vidayfamilia.univision.com/es-el-momento/video/2012-06-23/estandares-educativos-parte-4-los>)
- Video 5 (<http://vidayfamilia.univision.com/es-el-momento/video/2012-06-23/estandares-educativos-parte-5-el>)





Championing the Success of English Learners

Californians Together is a statewide coalition of 24 parent, professional and civil rights organizations that mobilize communities to protect and promote the rights of close to 1.4 million English Learners, 25% of Californian's students. Californians Together serves as a statewide voice on behalf of language minority students in California public schools. The coalition is committed to securing equal access to quality education for all children.

This report and updates on Californians Together's work to create the policies and practices for accelerating the language and academic needs of Long Term English Learners will be posted on the organization's website.

www.californianstogether.org

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