



What are educational standards?

Educational standards define expectations about what students should know and what skills students should be able to demonstrate at any given point in their education. Standards are developed by subject area (or content), such as mathematics. For example, a teacher will know exactly what standards a fourth grade student should master after a unit on fractions.

Standards are the foundation for a curriculum. A curriculum defines the courses, content, and sequence that should be taught for a student to achieve mastery of the standards.

What are the Maryland College and Career Ready (MCCRS) Standards?

Schools across Maryland have implemented Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards, which incorporate the Common Core State Standards. Maryland was one of the first states to adopt the Pre-K – 12 standards in Reading/English language arts and mathematics. The Maryland State Board of Education adopted the standards by unanimous vote in June 2010.

These rigorous education standards establish a set of shared goals and expectations for what students should understand and be able to do in grades Pre-K – 12 to be prepared for success in college and the workplace.

Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) form the foundation for Maryland's State curriculum framework. Hundreds of classroom educators, instructional leaders, administrators, and higher education representatives continue to assist State officials in developing the new Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards Framework to support the implementation of these standards

Who led the development of the Common Core State Standards upon which the MCCRS are based?

The Common Core State Standards were developed by a multi-state initiative coordinated by the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). In addition, teachers, parents, school administrators, and education experts from across the country, together with state leaders, provided input into the development of the standards.

Are the Common Core Standards the Curriculum for the State and St. Mary's County Public Schools?

No. The standards are guideposts to which Maryland has chosen to align its instructional outcomes. The actual implementation of the MCCRS, including how the standards are taught, is determined entirely by St. Mary's County Public Schools.

Were teachers involved in the creation of the standards?

Yes. Teachers have been a critical voice in the development of the standards. The Common Core State Standards drafting process relied on teachers and standards experts from across the country. The National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), among other organizations, were instrumental in bringing together teachers to provide specific, constructive feedback on the standards.

States across the country collaborated with teachers, researchers, and leading experts to design and develop the Common Core State Standards. Maryland independently made the decision to adopt the Common Core.

Do the Maryland College and Career–Ready Standards tell teachers how to teach their curricula?

The standards establish benchmarks of what students should know and be able to do. However, the standards do not dictate how teachers teach their students. Teachers know best about what works in the classroom. The Maryland State Department of Education has developed curriculum standards for local school systems to use in the development of the local curriculum. Teachers use the St. Mary's County Public Schools curriculum maps to make instructional decisions for their classrooms and decide how best to help students reach the standards.

Do the Maryland College and Career–Ready Standards dictate instructional materials that must be used in St. Mary's County Public Schools?

No. The standards do not mandate the use of any particular instructional resources. St. Mary's County Public Schools chooses the books and materials it uses in its classrooms without interference from any agency located outside of St. Mary's County.

Do the Maryland College and Career–Ready Standards dictate a required reading list for English language arts?

No. The CCSS includes sample texts that demonstrate the level of text complexity required of the standards. However, only SMCPS, with input from its stakeholders, determines which texts are used in its classrooms.

Why is the sequence of key math topics in the math standards important?

The mathematical progressions, or sequencing of topics, presented in the MCCRS are coherent and based on evidence. Part of the problem with having many different sets of state standards was that different states covered different topics at different grade levels. Coming to a consensus on the standards guarantees that, from the viewpoint of any given state, topics will move up or down in a consistent grade level sequence. What is important to keep in mind is that the progression is mathematically coherent and leads to college and career readiness at an internationally competitive level.

How will the MCCRS benefit our students in English/language arts and mathematics, as well as in other content areas?

The MCCRS require collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving and are designed to support a student's ability to apply more demanding concepts to real-world situations that simulate the type of work they may do in the future. Students will cover fewer topics in a grade level, however, they will be exposed to content in much greater depth. The standards also call for the following shifts in learning and instruction in English/language arts, mathematics, and other content areas:

English/language arts (as well as other content areas)

- Build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts in addition to literature
- Reading and writing grounded in evidence from the text
- Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary

Mathematics (as well as other content areas)

- Focus intensely on two or three topics in each grade
- Concepts logically connected from one grade to the next and linked to other major topics within the grade
- Fluency with arithmetic, application of knowledge to real world situations, and deep understanding of mathematical concepts

Are teachers prepared to teach to these standards?

Yes, SMCPs teachers are prepared. Teacher and principal teams from every school have participated in ongoing professional development, including academies in each of the previous three summers, with follow-up sessions provided during the school year. Further, throughout the school year, teachers engage in ongoing professional development through professional learning communities, workshops, and other in-service professional development.

How will the MCCRS be assessed?

The Maryland Department of Education (MSDE) has developed assessments that aim to measure the proficiency of Maryland's students related to skills necessary to succeed in college, career, and life. Maryland students will be assessed through the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP).

Are St. Mary's County Public Schools teachers required to post student grades or personal data in the classroom?

No. Student grades are shared confidentially with families through the Home Access Center (HAC) and Schoology.