

## **PA Core Standards Parent Fact Sheet**

### **WHAT ARE THE PENNSYLVANIA CORE STANDARDS?**

The State Board adopted Common Core Standards in July 2010. Since that time, the decision was made to craft a set of Pennsylvania (PA) Core Standards tailored to meet our state specific needs in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as for Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science/Technical Subjects. A group of Pennsylvania educators crafted the PA Core Standards, which mirror the academic rigor of the Common Core State Standards, are attainable for students, practicable for teachers and districts, and reflect the organization and design of the PA Academic Standards.

In compliance with Chapter 4 (§4.11), Pennsylvania's Core Standards are a set of rigorous, high-quality academic expectations in English Language arts (ELA) and mathematics that all students should master by the end of each grade level. The PA Core Standards are robust and relevant to the real world and reflect the knowledge and skills our young people need to succeed in life after high school, in both post-secondary education and a globally competitive workforce.

### **WHAT DO THE PA CORE STANDARDS MEAN FOR PARENTS?**

- The PA Core Standards, describe exactly what your child(ren) should learn by the end of each grade level.
- PA Core Standards establish clear expectations for students, which better enables parents, teachers and children to work together toward shared goals.
- The PA Core Standards shifts instructional intent from high school completion to college and career readiness therefore, your child(ren) will be prepared for opportunities beyond high school.
- PA Core Standards requires content to be taught at a much greater depth.
- Over the next several years, curriculum and assessments will evolve to align with the Pennsylvania Core Standards.
- With the Pennsylvania Core standards, you can be assured that students in your school are learning to the rigorous, high quality standards as other students in Pennsylvania.

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### PA CORE SHIFTS

ELA/LITERACY	MATHEMATICS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Building knowledge</b> through <b>content-rich nonfiction</b>.</li><li>2. Reading, writing and speaking grounded in <b>evidence from text</b>, both literary and informational text.</li><li>3. Regular practice with <b>complex text</b> and its <b>academic language</b>.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Focus</b> strongly where the Standards focus.</li><li>2. <b>Coherence: Think</b> across grades, and <b>link</b> to major topics within grades.</li><li>3. <b>Rigor</b>: In major topics pursue <b>conceptual understanding</b>, procedural skill and <b>fluency</b>, and <b>application</b> with equal intensity.</li></ol>

### IMPLEMENTING THE PA CORE STANDARDS:

The PA Department of Education worked with state teachers and curriculum experts to develop a **model curriculum** that schools may **voluntarily** use if they wish. The PA Department of Education continues to provide educational resources through the Standards Aligned System ([www.pde.sas.org](http://www.pde.sas.org)). Information and resources related to PA Core Standards are located in the Standards, Assessment, Curriculum Framework, Instruction, and Materials & Resources section of the website. Currently, state assessments are being developed that align to the PA Core Standards. Because these standards are more rigorous than the previous state standards, Pennsylvania has the following implementation schedule for the PA Core Standards aligned assessments:

- Students in grades 3 – 8 will continue to be assessed using the current PSSA, which will include PA Core standard related questions **ONLY** if the PA Academic Standard and PA Core Standard are similar. In 2015, students in these grades will be assessed on the PA Core Standards.
- PA has replaced the 11<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA with end of course exams in Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology. These exams are called Keystone Exams. They have been aligned to the PA Core Standards.
- Although Keystone Exams were given during the 2012-13 school year, it is not until the 2016-17 school year that students must score at least “proficient” on these exams in order to graduate. Pennsylvania has developed an alternative means for some students to demonstrate proficiency on the PA Core Standards, if needed.

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- Pennsylvania has developed an online testing option that is available to schools for both the PSSA and Keystone Exams; however, completing the test online is not a requirement.

### WHY HAVE PENNSYLVANIA CORE STANDARDS?

- Life requires more than one skill at a time. A quick trip to the grocery store requires planning, reading, math facts, estimation, communication, and critical thinking to make the right purchases. The PA Core Standards requires one to integrate his/her learning just as one does when grocery shopping and filling one's grocery cart.
- English class is not the only place you need to read and write. The PA Core Standards include standards for reading and writing in Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects designed to help students apply and develop reading and writing skills in all classes.
- Basic math is not enough. The PA Core Standards for math emphasize conceptual understanding, not just computation, to make sure students are learning and absorbing the critical information to succeed as through school and beyond.
- Students need to be ready for what comes next. Students will have many choices after high school—work, college, career training, apprenticeship, and military service. The goal of PA Core Standards is to prepare students for “choice”.
- Learning is a lifelong skill. It is very likely that graduates will change careers more than once after high school. The PA Core Standards will provide the knowledge and skills necessary to take advantage of a wide range of career opportunities in the rapidly changing, 21st century workplace.

### WHAT CAN PARENTS DO NOW?

- Learn about the PA Core Standards and the transition plan to PA Core Standards in your school.
- Meet with your child's teacher to discuss what your child will be learning over the course of the year and how classroom instruction will shift to align to the PA Core Standards.

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- Play an active role in your child's education. If you notice your child is struggling in a certain area, consult with his or her teacher to identify strategies and resources that might be helpful.
- Educate other parents about the transition to PA Core Standards.
- Explore opportunities to become actively involved in the PA Core transition through your state and local Parent Teacher Association (PTA), PTO, or other parent group. PTA's throughout the country are helping parents better understand the standards, and equip them with advocacy skills to support the standards' implementation.

### **PARENT RESOURCES:**

PA Standards Aligned System

PA Core Standards

Parent's Guide to Success-National PTA