Parents

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY
A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

INFO TIPS

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY STANDARDS Q&A

DoDEA's College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) for Literacy and Mathematics are based on the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and Literacy, which have been adopted by the majority of states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and DoDEA. These standards outline what students should know and be able to do in reading and mathematics from kindergarten through 12th grade. The standards align with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully enter college or the workforce, are benchmarked to the standards of the world's top-performing countries, and share with a majority of U.S. public schools a common set of expectations for the nation's students.

These standards are in different stages of implementation across the country. These information tips will hopefully provide some background on college and career ready standards and the Common Core State Standards as well as clarify what the standards are and are not while addressing some of the myths and tackle them head-on.

Q: Do the college and career ready and Common Core Standards include all core academic subjects?

A: DoDEA CCRS will eventually incorporate all core academic subjects. Currently, the Common Core Standards are for mathematics and literacy.
The Common Core includes mathematics and literacy. The standards do, however, connect student learning in other subjects by emphasizing English language arts, academic vocabulary, problem solving, and mathematical reasoning across the curriculum, including in history and science. Separate efforts to create model standards for science, social studies, and the arts are under way, but these efforts are not part of the CCSS.

Q: Will college and career ready standards fully prepare students for college and their careers?

A: Reading and mathematics proficiency are foundational for student success. To be sure, the CCRS are an important first step in delineating the reading and mathematics knowledge and skills that students will need to succeed after high school graduation. But to attain postsecondary success, students must have access to a comprehensive education that also includes instruction in the arts, civics and government, economics, foreign languages, geography, health education, history, physical education, and science. All of these subjects should include opportunities for technology integration as well as creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking with content, peers and research.

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A whole-child approach to education is essential to realizing the promise of the standards. Only when students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged will they be able to meet our highest expectations and realize their fullest potential. Similarly, effective professional development that helps educators integrate the standards into the classroom and translate the standards into instructional strategies that meet their students' unique needs is crucial to the new standards' success.

Q: Are the standards a national curriculum that dictates what and how every educator must teach?

A: The standards are not a curriculum. Standards are targets for what students should know and be able to do. Curricula are the instructional plans and strategies that educators use to help their students reach those expectations. The new standards are a set of shared goals for the knowledge and skills students should possess in literacy and mathematics to be proficient in those subjects. School systems use the standards as a basis for developing curricula by designing scope and sequence of content, choosing appropriate instructional strategies, developing learning activities, continuously gauging student understanding, and adjusting instruction accordingly.

Q: How is preschool addressed in the college and career ready standards?

A: DoDEA has adopted *Teaching Strategies GOLD®* Objectives for Development and & Learning for our preschool programs. The Objectives for Development and Learning are predictive of children's school success and align to the CCSS for Mathematics and Literacy. The research behind each objective offers concrete evidence that each objective contributes to children's learning and development. This provides a solid foundation of College and Career Readiness for DoDEA's youngest learners.

Q: Will the CCR Standards complicate the classroom environment and cause chaos?

A: The CCR Standards are intended and written so that there will be fewer standards overall, giving teachers and students more time to explore the most important ones in greater depth. Students will develop a deeper understanding of key concepts, and be able to apply their knowledge to real-world situations. With less standards for each instructional year, teachers will have the time to explore the standards with students through rich learning experiences.

Q: Will students learn concepts in English Language Arts and Literacy differently?

A: Students will read more complex texts, both nonfiction and fiction. They will learn to create written arguments using evidence from multiple texts. They will learn to gather evidence to defend their opinions. The higher standards expect students to master grammar and increasingly complex vocabulary each instructional year. In middle school and high school, students will learn to apply their literacy skills to math, science, social studies, technical subjects, Career Technical Education and the arts. They will learn to read and write well across all subjects in preparation for college and careers, with a specific focus on completing written research projects each year.

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Although there is an extensive list of recommended texts, the only reading explicitly required is the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, a Shakespearean play and one play by an American dramatist.

Q: Will students learn "fuzzy math?"

A: Students will acquire the habit of mathematical thinking – a way of problem solving across all math courses. The foundation, which will begin in Pre-K and continue through 12th grade, will give students the building blocks to understand why and how math works in real-world situations. These building blocks are known as the Standards for Mathematical Practice. There are 8 in total and they are applied every year in Pre-K through grade 12 with increasing complexity as the student advances.

While memorization of mathematics facts is still important, more emphasis will be placed on true comprehension. To demonstrate their depth of understanding, students will be required to explain in writing how they solved a math problem. Precision remains an important part of the new CCR standards. Students are still required to solve mathematical problems for the correct answer and to know why it is the correct answer. Conversely, as important, students will learn to recognize incorrect answers and know why a solution is inaccurate.

Q: Will teachers be teaching more to the test? Will instructional creativity and student achievement suffer with the implementation of the CCRS?

A: It's actually the opposite – because critical thinking is a core component of student learning, teaching to a test is harder for educators and not productive for students. CCRS offer teachers the opportunity to teach deeper rather than wider, and allows them more time to help students master critical skills. For example: in a familiar math question, a student is provided the finish times for a race. In the previous standards, a student would rank the finish times fastest to slowest. This is data analysis. In the new CCRS, a student is likely to be asked to round the finish times and then explain how the results for the race change based on approximated adjustments. In the new response to the question a student must be able to a) round numbers (procedural); b) rank the finishes based on the time c) re-rank the finishes based on the new rounded times (fluency) and c) explain why the results changed (conceptual). This is an example of critical thinking in a rich task that requires a student to conduct data analysis, use mathematics concepts and skills, and draw conclusions.