



What are the Common Core State Standards?

- Common Core Standards are a higher, clearer and deeper set of learning standards. Developing the new standards has been a state-led initiative, with states voluntarily choosing to raise the bar for students. These standards teach students “how” to think and retain information through connections. These connections are made throughout the lesson utilizing several different teaching strategies and techniques.
- These standards establish clear and consistent goals for learning that will prepare our children for college and the workforce. These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate from high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The Standards are (1) research and evidence based, (2) aligned with college and work expectations, (3) rigorous, and (4) internationally benchmarked.
- Learning standards have not been updated in Illinois since 1997 and the world has changed a lot since then. These new standards will ensure that our students are better prepared for college and the workforce by emphasizing more complex content and the development of real-world skills like problem solving, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity.

How are Illinois students doing now?

- Currently, only one in four of Illinois students graduates ready for college or career. Only 38 percent of Illinois students ever earn a 2- or 4- year college degree in an economy in which most employers are requiring them. Additionally, only 19% of students who enroll in a 2-year institution and 62% of students who enroll in a 4-year institution end up graduating. We can do better!

What will the transition to the new standards mean for students?

- In the short term, students’ grades and test scores may drop during the ramp-up period to the higher standards, so it’s crucial for parents and teachers to work together to help students during the transition. **Remember, this doesn’t mean students know less, it means our expectations for what they must learn have been raised.**

What is PAARC?

- The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a consortium of 19 states plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. These new K-12 assessments will build a pathway to college and career readiness by the end of high school, mark students’ progress toward this goal from 3rd grade up, and provide teachers with timely information to inform instruction and provide student support. The PARCC assessments will be ready for states to administer during the 2014-15 school year.
- PARCC received an \$186 million grant through the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top assessment competition to support the development and design of the next-generation assessment system.