



Ambuehl Elementary School
Back to School Night Parent Information Flyer
Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Fact Sheet



October 3, 2013

Dear Ambuehl Parents and Guardians,

This handout will give you an overview of the CCSS, which replaces the California State Standards under the No Child Left Behind Act. Forty-five states, including California, have adopted the CCSS. Language arts and math CCSS were introduced in CUSD schools during the 2012-13 school year and the CCSS will be fully implemented during the 2014-15 school year. CUSD teachers and administrators have been attending various educational workshops on the CCSS during the past few years and will continue with their training on CUSD student furlough days on October 4, January 6, and April 21.

*Sincerely,
Curt Visca
Principal*

What is the CCSS Initiative? The CCSS Initiative is a state-led effort that established a single set of clear educational standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts and mathematics that states voluntarily adopt. The standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter credit bearing entry courses in two or four year college programs or enter the workforce. The standards are clear and concise to ensure that parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of the expectations in reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics in school.

How do the CCSS compare to previous state standards? The CCSS were written by building on the best and highest state standards in existence in the U.S., examining the expectations of other high performing countries around the world, and careful study of the research and literature available on what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in college and careers. No state in the country was asked to lower their expectations for their students in adopting the Common Core. The standards are evidence-based, aligned with college and work expectations, include rigorous content and skills, and are informed by other top performing countries. They were developed in consultation with teachers and parents from across the country so they are also realistic and practical for the classroom.

Why is the CCSS Initiative important? High standards that are consistent across states provide teachers, parents, and students with a set of clear expectations that are aligned to the expectations in college and careers. The standards promote equity by ensuring all students, no matter where they live, are well prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to collaborate and compete with their peers in the United States and abroad. Unlike previous state standards, which were unique to every state in the country, the CCSS enable collaboration between states on a range of tools and policies, including: the development of textbooks, digital media, and other teaching materials aligned to the standards; and the development and implementation of common comprehensive assessment systems to measure student performance annually that will replace existing state testing systems; and changes needed to help support educators and schools in teaching to the new standards.

Will there be tests based on the CCSS? Yes. States that adopted the CCSS are currently collaborating to develop common assessments that will be aligned to the standards and replace existing end of year state assessments (STAR/CST). These assessments will be available during the 2014-15 school year.

By what criteria were the standards developed? The Standards made careful use of a large and growing body of evidence, including: Scholarly research; Surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs; Assessment data identifying college- and career-ready performance; Comparisons to standards from

high-performing states and nations; National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) frameworks in reading and writing for English language arts; and Findings from Trends in International Mathematics and Science (TIMSS) and other studies concluding that the traditional US mathematics curriculum must become substantially more coherent and focused in order to improve student achievement.

CCSS Mission Statement: The CCSS provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects CCSS: The CCSS for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (“the Standards”) are the culmination of an extended, broad-based effort to fulfill the charge issued by the states to create the next generation of K–12 standards in order to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school.

Key Features of the English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects CCSS:

- **Reading:** Text complexity and the growth of comprehension - The Reading standards place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read.
- **Writing:** Text types, responding to reading, and research - The Standards acknowledge the fact that whereas some writing skills, such as the ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish, are applicable to many types of writing, other skills are more properly defined in terms of specific writing types: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. Standard 9 stresses the importance of the writing-reading connection by requiring students to draw upon and write about evidence from literary and informational texts.
- **Speaking and Listening:** Flexible communication and collaboration - Including but not limited to skills necessary for formal presentations, the Speaking and Listening standards require students to develop a range of broadly useful oral communication and interpersonal skills.
- **Language:** Conventions, effective use, and vocabulary - The Language standards include the essential “rules” of standard written and spoken English, but they also approach language as a matter of craft and informed choice among alternatives.

Mathematics CCSS: The Standards for Mathematical Practice describe varieties of expertise that mathematics educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students. These practices rest on important “processes and proficiencies” with longstanding importance in mathematics education. The first of these are the NCTM process standards of problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, representation, and connections. The second are the strands of mathematical proficiency specified in the National Research Council’s report *Adding It Up*: adaptive reasoning, strategic competence, conceptual understanding (comprehension of mathematical concepts, operations and relations), procedural fluency (skill in carrying out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently and appropriately), and productive disposition (habitual inclination to see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile, coupled with a belief in diligence and one’s own efficacy).

Mathematics CCSS (Standards, Clusters, and Domains): Standards define what students should understand and be able to do. Clusters summarize groups of related standards. Note that standards from different clusters may sometimes be closely related, because mathematics is a connected subject. Domains are larger groups of related standards. Standards from different domains may sometimes be closely related.