

Montana Common Core Standards

District Leader and Principal Fact Sheet

WHAT ARE THE MONTANA COMMON CORE STANDARDS?

The Common Core State Standards are a set of high-quality academic expectations in English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics that define both the knowledge and skills all students should master by the end of each grade level in order to be on track for success in college and career. They were created through a state-led initiative and have been adopted by more than 40 states, including Montana. The Common Core State Standards will replace our current state standards in English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects, and mathematics.

- The standards establish **consistent** learning goals for all students – regardless of where they live – so that children will stay on track in school when moving from one state to another.
- With a **clear roadmap** of academic expectations, students, parents and teachers can work together toward shared goals.
- The standards are **relevant to the real world**, focusing on the knowledge and skills students will need to succeed in life after high school, in both post-secondary education and a globally competitive workforce.
- A diverse team of teachers, parents, administrators, researchers and content experts developed the Common Core to be **academically rigorous, attainable** for students, and **practical** for teachers and districts.

MONTANA COMMON CORE SHIFTS

ELA/Literacy

1. **Building knowledge** through **content-rich nonfiction**.
2. Reading, writing and speaking grounded in **evidence from text**, both literary and informational text.
3. Regular practice with **complex text** and its **academic language**.

Mathematics

1. **Focus** strongly where the Standards focus.
2. **Coherence: Think** across grades, and **link** to major topics within grades.
3. **Rigor:** In major topics pursue **conceptual understanding**, procedural skill and **fluency**, and **application** with equal intensity.

IMPLEMENTING THE STANDARDS IN MONTANA

Several efforts are underway in Montana to bring the Common Core into our classrooms.

- Montana has joined the [SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium](#) as a Governing State.
- The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is developing a continuum for the [Stages of Implementation](#) to the [Montana Common Core Standards](#).
- Montana has created a series of webinars that focus on the overview and key content areas within English Language Arts and Literacy as well as Mathematical Practices and Progressions.
- [MCCS Overview](#)
- [ELA – Text Complexity](#)
- [ELA- Writing Highlights](#)
- [Mathematics- Highlights Practices](#)
- [Mathematics Focus and Coherence: Critical Areas and Progression Highlights](#)



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Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

opi.mt.gov

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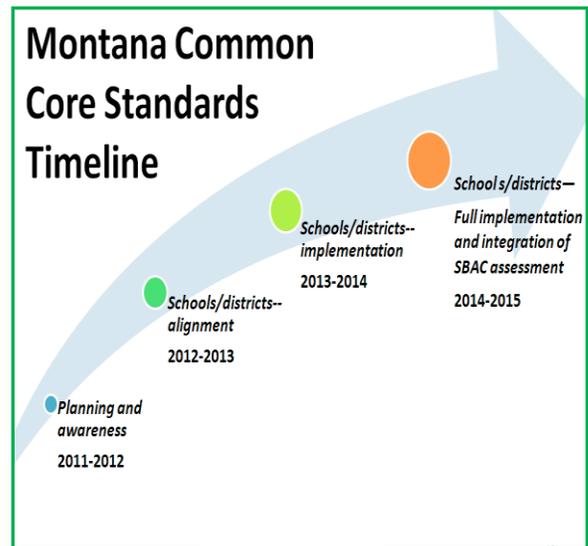
WHAT DO THE STANDARDS MEAN FOR ME?

- Transitioning from existing state standards to the Common Core will impact curriculum and instruction in schools.
 - The Common Core represents a real shift in instructional intent from high school completion to college- and career-readiness for every student.
 - The Common Core will require students to demonstrate mastery of content which cannot be acquired solely through lecture. Therefore, classroom instruction must focus less on teacher talk and more on actively engaging students.
 - The Common Core will emphasize application and higher-order thinking skills.
 - When the standards are fully implemented, educators will see that each grade covers fewer topics, but teaches content in much greater depth.
 - The coherent progression of the Common Core will demand increased vertical articulation K-12.
- With the standards in place, teachers and districts can now share best practices more efficiently across states.

WHAT CAN PRINCIPALS AND DISTRICT LEADERS DO NOW?

The standards will be fully implemented in Montana by 2015. In the meantime, we can make changes to instruction that will prepare students for the Common Core while helping them succeed on current state assessments. In order to lay the groundwork for a smooth transition to the new standards, principals and district leaders can ...

- **Inform teachers, school board members and parents** of the new standards in ELA and math
- Begin to **review instructional materials and curriculum** for alignment to the Common Core
- Assess **professional development needs** and begin to provide opportunities for teachers
- In English language arts,
 - Help teachers incorporate into instruction more **text-dependent questions** that require students to read a text closely to determine what it says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it
 - Start to integrate more **nonfiction** and **complex texts** into classroom instruction
 - Focus writing instruction substantially on **writing to inform and structure an argument**, not only writing stories
 - Develop a **school wide literacy initiative** based on the assessed needs of students. The literacy plan should include an emphasis on close reading, increased text complexity through the grades, informational text, argumentative writing, academic vocabulary, the use of high-order questioning, as well as listening and speaking skills.
- In mathematics,
 - Focus instruction more on the **few key topics** emphasized in each grade in the standards
 - Emphasize **problem-solving** and **real-world application**
- Connect with faculty at the local community colleges or universities regarding the expectations for entry-level college courses to see if your school's expectations align with what students need after graduation



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THE ROAD AHEAD ...

- As a fully state-led effort, implementation of the standards is completely in the hands of states and districts. However, many states are taking advantage of the opportunity to work together, particularly by participating in at least one of two coalitions – the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) – to develop assessments that will include summative tests in addition to formative assessments. Montana is a member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. New assessments will be in place in 2014-2015 and will replace existing summative assessments in ELA and math.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR DISTRICT LEADERS AND PRINCIPALS

- [Official Common Core State Standards Website](#)
- [Montana Common Core Standards](#)- The Office of Public Instruction

- Videos on the Common Core Standards
 - [Common Core State Standards for ELA and Literacy](#) (14 minutes)
 - [Common Core State Standards for Mathematics](#) (14 minutes)
 - [Elementary K-5](#) (14 minutes)
 - [Middle School 6-8](#) (14 minutes)
 - [High School 9-12](#) (14 minutes)

- [CCSSO's Common Core Resources](#)
- [AFT Position on Common Core State Standards](#)
- [NEA Position on Common Core State Standards](#)
- [ASCD Common Core Resources](#)
- [National Council on Teachers of English \(NCTE\) Common Core Resources](#)
- [National Council on Teachers of Mathematics \(NCTM\) Common Core Resources](#)
- [www.AchieveTheCore.org](#) (Student Achievement Partners' Instructional Tools and Resources)
- [SMARTER Balanced Assessment \(SBAC\) Consortium](#)



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