

Ohio's New K–12 Education Standards – What Parents and Guardians Should Know

WHAT ARE EDUCATION STANDARDS?

Education standards, also called “academic content standards,” are guidelines that describe what children are to learn in each subject and grade. They tell us what each child should know and be able to do by the end of a school year.

Ohio's standards for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies are becoming more rigorous. The English language arts and math standards, called Common Core standards, were created through a partnership of educators around the country, and they have been voluntarily adopted by the state boards of education of Ohio and 45 other states. Ohio has developed its own more rigorous science and social studies standards. The goal of all these guidelines is to ensure that all students have greater opportunities and access to the careers of their choice through a K-12 education system that provides the **knowledge and skills most valued by employers and higher education**.

Schools will begin using the new standards by the 2014-2015 school year, but they have been encouraged to start using them earlier. Here are some other things to know:

1. The standards include **the same learning goals for all students**, so children who move to new schools will stay on track.
2. The standards provide a **simple roadmap** to where our children are going. This means students, parents or guardians, and teachers can work together toward the same goals.
3. The standards are **related to the real world**. They focus on the knowledge and skills students will need to succeed in life, not just the classroom.
4. Teachers, parents or guardians, and researchers helped develop the standards. They are designed to be **challenging, but possible** for students to achieve and **practical** for teachers to use.

WHY DO WE NEED NEW STANDARDS?

To compete in a knowledge-based global economy, Ohio must improve the educational results of all students. Consider:

- About 40 percent of Ohio high school graduates who go a public college in Ohio need to take remedial coursework in English language arts or mathematics upon entry.
- 62 percent of new jobs available in 2018 will require some college or other postsecondary education.
- A 2009 international test found that 15-year-old students from more than 20 countries were outperforming U.S. students in math.

HOW ARE THE NEW STANDARDS DIFFERENT FROM THE OLD?

In English language arts

1. Students spend **more time reading to find facts and information in texts**. Examples of these texts are famous speeches or articles about world events. Students also will continue to read fiction, or literature, but the emphasis will shift to informational text.

2. Students **read to find evidence** that supports an argument or conclusion then write about their findings.
3. Students learn to read and write about **text that becomes more challenging over time**.

In mathematics, science and social studies

1. Classrooms focus on two or three topics within each subject in each grade, **digging deeper** into each than they have in the past.
2. Ideas or **concepts from each subject are connected from one grade to the next**. These **concepts also link to other major subjects** within the same grade. For example, 5th-grade students may solve a challenging mathematics problem then write in English class about how they used the newly learned math concept to do a class science project.
3. The standards prepare students to easily use the skills they've learned and to **apply them to real-world situations**.

WHAT ABOUT TESTS?

Ohio is working with a group called the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers – or PARCC – to develop English language arts and mathematics tests that will show teachers what their students know and are able to do under the new standards. Ohio also is developing science tests to match its new standards. These “assessments” will be conducted online so educators will get information and be able to adjust teaching strategies quickly. Assessments for social studies will be developed later.

HOW WILL THE STANDARDS HELP PARENTS OR GUARDIANS?

1. **You will be aware of exactly what your child should know and be able to do** by the end of each grade.
2. Because the standards make expectations very clear, you, your child and your child's teacher will be able **to work toward a single goal**.
3. You will see that your child is learning about fewer topics in each grade, but he or she is learning much more about each topic.
4. You can be assured that your child is learning under the same high standards as other students around the nation and world.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO NOW?

1. Learn about the new standards and how your school plans to transition to the higher expectations.
2. Meet with teachers to find out what your child will be learning and how teaching will change.
3. Play an active role in your child's education at home. If you notice your child is struggling in a certain area, talk with the teacher to find strategies that will help.
4. Tell other parents or guardians about the switch to the new standards and assessments.
5. Through your state and local PTA, get involved. PTAs in select cities are holding sessions to help parents and guardians understand the standards and encourage their schools to use them.

LEARN MORE FROM THESE WEBSITES

[Official Common Core State Standards Website](#)

[PTA's Parents Guide to Student Success](#) (includes parent guides to the Common Core standards)

[Ohio's New Learning Standards](#)