

Common Core Fact Sheet

Where did the common core come from?

Because of mounting concerns from universities and the business community regarding the preparation of U.S. students for college and the workforce, The **Council of Chief State School Officers** and the **National Governors Association** coordinated the development of common academic standards. Joining with researchers across the educational community, **the goal was to develop more rigorous standards** that would better match the expectations and learning standards that exist in nations who currently outperform the United States on academic tests and that **would better prepare our kids to compete in a global economy.**

How are the common core standards different?

The new standards **raise the bar.** Rather than just memorizing important math facts or recognizing structures of grammar, students are expected to apply knowledge in real world contexts. The emphasis is on using knowledge to solve complex multi-step real world problems, to evaluate and compare information for validity and purpose, and to be able to communicate thorough understanding of key learning. The new standards help students to access the knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with the concept. **The old tests required kids to memorize information. The new ones ask them to do something with that knowledge.**

Why is this important?

The U.S. competes in a world economy and **our students are competing for jobs with students from across the world.** The U.S. needs a well trained work force equipped with the critical thinking skills to thrive in a world where access to information is easy, but where solving problems, adapting strategies, and the ability to read and communicate complex information have become essential.

How are schools going to change?

Schools are revamping curriculum to match the new standards. **Teachers are being trained to expand their instructional strategies to require students to engage in higher order thinking skills.** New assessments are being developed. However, basic curriculum content is still relevant and will not change significantly. Students will still need to know how to find the area of a right triangle and how to write a coherent essay. They will just be employing that knowledge in more rigorous, challenging, engaging ways.

What does this mean for RJUHSD?

We welcome the common core. **The mission of our district has always been to prepare students to compete in college and the workplace.** We have dramatically expanded our offerings in Advanced Placement classes and International Baccalaureate over the past 8 years. The purpose for developing our own common assessments was to raise rigor and ensure every student has access to a core curriculum that prepares them for college. Since making the completion of A-G requirements a district goal 7 years ago, we have almost doubled the percentage of students graduating from our schools who are college ready. Our Career Technical Education programs have been restructured around programs of study which mirror industry expectations. **The new common core standards are much more in alignment with those efforts and should help us to continue to increase the numbers of students who are college/career ready.**