

## The Common Core

### Roseville Joint Union High School District

#### Why is this important?

The U.S. competes in a world economy and our students are competing for jobs with students from around the world. **The U.S. needs a well trained workforce 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.** Studies indicate that in 2025, 41% of jobs in California will require a college degree. Almost a million jobs will go unfilled by California residents unless we begin preparing more students at that level. In addition, many other jobs require extensive training beyond a high school diploma. **The common core standards will help produce a well trained workforce that can compete for those jobs.**

#### What does this mean for the Roseville Joint Union High School District?

**This is the direction our district was headed before the common core!** Our mission is to prepare every student with college/career ready skills so they can compete and thrive economically when they are done with their schooling. Our high schools are revamping curriculum to match the new standards. It is like remodeling an older home. A homeowner does not tear the house down and start from scratch. You replace appliances with more effective, efficient ones. You replace windows and doors to improve energy efficiency. You make structural changes that open up rooms or create needed storage. But, the core of the structure remains intact. **We are remodeling the teaching in our high schools.** Teachers are being trained to expand their instructional strategies to require students to apply knowledge and engage in higher order thinking skills. As an example, instead of just memorizing the formula to determine the area of a right triangle, students are asked to figure out how much decking material must be ordered and how to account for the slope of the lot in order to complete a backyard construction project. **Obviously, basic core curriculum content is still relevant and will not change significantly.** Students will still need to know how to determine the circumference of a circle and how to write a coherent essay. We are not abandoning the basic tenets of a good education that have been around for decades. **Students will just be applying that knowledge in more rigorous, challenging, and engaging ways.**

#### Where did the common core originate?

**The Common Core is a grass roots effort that was initiated by concerns from the business and university communities about 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 which currently outperform the United States on academic

tests and that would better prepare our kids to compete in a global economy. **The new standards are endorsed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce** and a number of other business organizations. The State of California is leading a consortium that includes 23 other states (Smarter Balanced) that are working together to develop new assessments to match the standards. Another Consortium (PARCC) includes most of the remaining States of the union. **All of our work on the common core is governed by the State of California and the Roseville Joint Union High School District, not the federal government.**

### **How are the common core standards different?**

**The new standards require students to apply knowledge.** 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 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.** So far, new assessments have been developed in English and in math. New science and social science standards are in the works.

**The Roseville Joint Union High School District has been working for decades to prepare students to compete in college and the workplace.** In the past eight years, we have doubled the number of students who are college ready when they graduate and we have seen huge surges in the numbers of students taking college placement exams and Advanced Placement (college level) courses. The new common core standards that have been adopted in California are much more in alignment with those efforts than any previous initiatives we have seen from the State. **The new standards are designed to raise the bar so all students leave high school with college/career ready skills.** Rather than testing the ability to memorize facts and formulas, the new assessments will measure a student's ability to apply knowledge, to read and understand complex materials, and to communicate clearly in writing. From what we have seen so far, the new standards will enhance our ability to prepare our students for success in both college and at work.