



**OC STEM**  
INITIATIVE



# **New California Standards**

**COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT  
ON COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS  
For Parents & Students**

## VISION

- All students possess the requisite STEM skills to be competitive for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs in Orange County
- All educators and teachers are provided the tools and support to ensure their students are STEM competent and STEM literate
- Orange County is a leader in STEM workforce competitiveness in California and the United States

## STRATEGY AREAS

1. Organizational Structure
2. Communication Strategy
3. STEM Learning
4. Professional Development
5. Workforce Development
6. Research and Evaluation

## MEMBERS

The Allergan Foundation  
The Boeing Company  
Broadcom Foundation  
Children and Families Commission of Orange County  
Cotsen Foundation  
Edwards Lifesciences  
JP Morgan Chase Bank  
Kaiser Permanente  
Kay Family Foundation  
OCTANe  
Orange County Department of Education  
Orange County United Way  
Samueli Foundation  
Tiger Woods Learning Foundation/Center  
Time Warner Cable  
The Henry Samueli School of Engineering  
University of California, Irvine



# OC STEM INITIATIVE

Dear Friends:

We want to thank you for your interest in helping communicate the benefits of the more rigorous standards being implemented in our Orange County schools.

Your support and involvement are critically important to the future of our children, community and workforce. The word “change” often brings concern and even fear to many people. Even when the change is beneficial, like the California Standards, people still find it easier to keep doing things the old way.

If you and other parents understand the benefits that the California Standards, also known as the Common Core Learning Standards, bring to children, there is less chance for misinformation and confusion. That’s why your efforts to communicate the reality of Common Core are so important. With your help, families will better understand this important change and what it means to their children – today and in the future.

The Common Core standards simply make sense. Schools have been listening to college administrators and business leaders, who have been saying that we need students and employees to be better problem solvers, communicate more effectively and work in teams. Those are really the attributes of Common Core. When students focus on the skills needed to solve complex problems, they will be better prepared for college, as well as for today’s jobs and the jobs of tomorrow.

Contrary to what you may have heard, teachers will have more control of their classrooms, not less. Common Core gives teachers the flexibility to do what they do best – be creative in choosing the teaching methods and selecting the curriculum that best fit their students’ needs.

Schools and businesses are recognizing they must be aligned to better serve our children. Many Orange County employers, both large and small, are enthusiastic supporters of Common Core.

The bottom line is that Common Core is a way for students to acquire the life skills they need. Common Core will help them stand on their own two feet to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead.

We hope you find this Toolkit useful. Please download it, and find ways to use it to communicate the benefits of Common Core. Your involvement is invaluable. Thank you!

Sincerely,

*Gerald Solomon*

Gerald Solomon  
Executive Director, Samueli Foundation  
Chair, OC STEM

*Linda Christopher*

Linda Christopher  
Executive Director  
OC STEM

# WELCOME

This Toolkit has been customized to help Orange County parents and students easily and effectively communicate the benefits of the new California Standards, also referred to as the Common Core Standards.

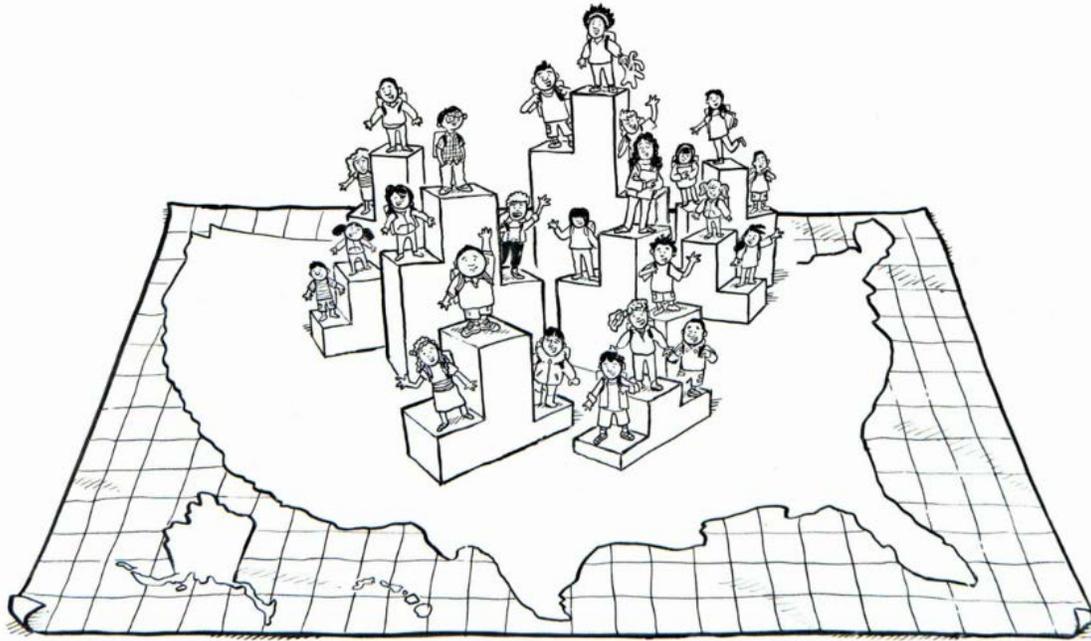
*Look for videos, key messages, talking points, handouts, newsletter items and social media messages, along with other tools, to help you spread the word about the advantages of higher standards for our children, their futures and our communities.*

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# WHAT IS COMMON CORE?

The new California Standards, also known as Common Core represents higher standards that help students become critical thinkers ready for college and career, putting them on a path to prosperity in Orange County's bright economic future.



## VIDEO

Please take a look at this 3-minute overview from the Council of the Great City Schools explaining the Common Core State Standards. Please share this link with your friends.

<http://vimeo.com/51933492>

## WEBSITE

For more detail on the Common Core State Standards, go to the California Department of Education website:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/>

# FACT SHEET

## WHAT IS COMMON CORE?



Common Core provides clear standards for grade levels and across schools. Parents can be confident they understand what their children need to know for each grade level. Students continue to learn factual information, but will also receive

a deeper education that will focus on critical thinking and analysis. Students will benefit by being better prepared to succeed in college and careers as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century evolves.

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP



Homework will be tougher, as students work to meet new, higher standards. Families are uniquely positioned to help children build a bridge between their schoolwork and the world. Including children in developing the family budget or mapping out a road trip can bring classroom concepts into real life. Parents can also model skills

like persistence, teamwork and patience. Students are more likely to succeed and have a positive attitude when family members encourage them to be persistent. Talk with your children's teachers for tips on how to help your child succeed.

## HOW COMMON CORE BENEFITS STUDENTS

In addition to learning factual information, students will be developing the ability to solve problems as they arise. That's what we all need to do in real life and what businesses are looking for in the people they hire.

In a world where we don't know what the jobs of tomorrow will look like, being able to analyze the situation and solve problems will be key for a student's future success.

## WHAT COMMON CORE MEANS TO TEACHERS

Common Core learning standards give far more flexibility to teachers and districts than they have had before. These standards set out what each student is expected to know by the end of the school year. However, the standards do not tell the teacher how to teach. The curriculum, specific books, lesson plans and classroom exercises are left up to each district to decide on its own. By doing this, the Common Core learning standards allow individual communities to tailor learning exercises and lessons to their own students and histories.



## WHAT BUSINESS LEADERS SAY



Business leaders are looking for critical thinkers and problem solvers. These skills, which are at the center of Common Core, are currently needed in the workforce. As jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century continue to change, business leaders need people who can analyze the changes and

determine how the business can evolve to meet them. Business leaders are looking to high schools, community colleges and universities to help their students develop these vital capabilities. Capable employees are not only critical to the health of their individual businesses, but to Orange County's economy as a whole.

# KEY MESSAGES

These Key Messages are designed to clearly and consistently explain the benefits of the new California Standards, also known as Common Core to other parents and community members.

## LIFE SKILLS



Common Core is a way for students to acquire the life skills they need, such as the ability to think critically, communicate and collaborate. Common Core will help them stand on their own two feet to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead.

## TIME IS NOW



Businesses need skilled workers – now. By ramping up Common Core, students have a much better chance of acquiring the skills necessary to succeed in today's economy and emerging opportunities as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace evolves.

## CHANGE IS GOOD

It's true, Common Core represents a change. Because of its focus on solving complex problems students will learn the skills they need for today's jobs and the jobs of tomorrow.

## WORKPLACE SKILLS

Some of the most important attributes of Common Core, such as the ability to solve problems creatively, communicate effectively and work in teams, are needed every day by Orange County companies and entrepreneurs.

## GETTING THERE



Common Core's assessments, like the dashboard in a car, will help parents, students and teachers navigate the learning process. Everyone can see if students are getting to their destinations, or if course corrections are needed.

## SUPPORTED BY JOB CREATORS

Employers\* across the region are enthusiastic supporters of Common Core. Tomorrow's employees need to be creative and innovative critical thinkers.

### *\*Companies supporting Common*

*Core include: Aetna, AT&T, Bayer, Boeing, Broadcom, Chevron, Dell, Dow Chemical, DuPont, Exxon Mobil, Ford, GE, Harley Davidson, Hitachi, IBM, Intel, Lockheed Martin, Microsoft, Motorola, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, Rockwell, State Farm, Symantec, Taco Bell, Texas Instruments, Time Warner Cable, Verizon, Walmart, Xerox*



## WHAT TEACHERS DO BEST

Common Core gives teachers the flexibility to do what they do best – be creative in choosing the teaching methods and selecting the curriculum that best fits their students' needs.

# TAKING ACTION: FACE-TO-FACE

Clarify the new California Standards benefits. Make clear, powerful points.

## 6 TIPS TO START THE CONVERSATION

Whether you like to talk, write or go digital, use these steps that will help you communicate the benefits of Common Core standards.



### #1: Speak Up.

Ask to present a Common Core minute at the start of parent and community meetings.

### #2: Write About It.

Dedicate a recurring column in a parent newsletter to explain and illustrate what the Common Core learning standards really look like. *Bonus Tip:*

*Link to a video from this Toolkit to bring in voices from across the community.*

**#3: Make it Real.** Distribute the 1-page Fact Sheet in this Toolkit to parents and community members. *Bonus Tip: Build on the Fact Sheet in this Toolkit to show more details of what Common Core looks like in a classroom.*

**#4: Get Social.** Use the Facebook Postings and Tweet Sheet in this Toolkit to start your social media presence. *Bonus Tip: Link from postings and tweets to videos in the Toolkit.*

**#5: Go Digital.** Create a "Common Core" or "21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning" section on a parent website. If you don't have the resources to maintain a new page, link to a trusted source from the front page of your site. *Bonus Tip: Refer to the Resources section on the last page of this Toolkit.*

**#6: Engage.** Set up a Common Core-centered meeting with your school's PTA or Parent Committee. *Bonus Tip: Prepare for the meeting by reviewing the Key Messages, Common Core Minute and PowerPoint Presentation in this Toolkit. Designate one or two spokespersons (i.e. Experts/Champions).*



### PowerPoint Presentation

*Click [here](#) to download a brief PowerPoint presentation. Refer to the Notes pages for help in delivering a presentation to other parents and community members on the benefits of the Common Core standards.*

## COMMON CORE MINUTE #1

With one of these brief statements, you can quickly tell parents, students, school board members and community groups why Common Core matters.

- My name is XXXXX. I am the parent of children who attend XXXXX.
- I feel very fortunate that my children will benefit from Common Core. That's because I believe Common Core will help our children develop important life skills, such as critical thinking. Going forward, our kids can use these skills to make informed choices, get a job and stand on their own two feet.
- The marketplace is changing so fast. For example, the cell phone in my pocket looks very different from the one I had when *[insert name of child]* was born. And the job skills *[insert name of child]* will need are changing so fast, it's hard to keep up.
- Because of Common Core's focus on critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication, I believe that *[insert name of child]* and *[his/her]* classmates will stand a better chance of mastering the skills they need to be successful and have a good life.

## COMMON CORE MINUTE #2

- I talk with a lot of parents, and one thing is universal. We are all interested in the same thing – the best education possible for our children.
- That's why I'm glad to see the higher standards and clear benchmarks we have with Common Core.
- Common Core is raising the educational standards for our students here in Orange County.
- Here's what I mean. Schools still teach the facts – but are now going beyond them to challenge students to really think things through.
- Students are learning critical thinking skills that will help them in college, on the job and in their lives.
- They are learning to analyze information and to better communicate with others – not just go along with the loudest voice.
- This approach will help our children to be better prepared for college and careers in today's world.

# TAKING ACTION: REACHING OUT

Emphasize the benefits of the California Standards. Connect with your community.

## NEWSLETTER / WEBSITE ITEMS

### VALUE

These mini-articles are designed to help you drop information about the Common Core learning standards into a communication.



### METHOD

Timing is key. It is most effective to publish these snippets at regular intervals throughout the year. Publishing them all at once will overwhelm parents. Include a link to one of the videos in this Toolkit.

## #1 Goals of the New California Standards

Teachers in our schools have been working hard to help students reach the new, more rigorous academic standards called Common Core. These new Common Core learning standards tell us what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade level, and leave it up to our teachers to decide how to get each student there.

The goal of Common Core standards is to ensure that our graduates are ready for college and jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Common Core emphasizes real-world skills like working with a group, applying concepts to new situations and analyzing the quality of information being used in our work.

Common Core learning standards are giving rise to a new way of teaching and learning in the classroom. Teachers are focusing on conceptual understanding, digging deeper on subject matter areas and



building on what kids already know to help them discover the next level. Students will work to understand each other's thought process while they focus on the right answer.

Our students will not only be learning information and the answers to specific questions, they'll be developing the ability to solve problems as they arise. That's what we all need to do in real life and what businesses are looking for in the people they hire. And in a world where we don't know what the jobs of tomorrow will be, being able to analyze the situation and solve problems will be key for success.

**Parent Tip:** Encourage your child to keep a journal. Whether it's full of drawings, collages or words, the journal will teach students how to write and tell stories that go beyond just recounting the events.



## #2 Teachers Implement California Standards

Under Common Core learning standards, individual teachers will decide how to teach in their classrooms. Instead of delivering scripted lesson plans and worksheets, teachers are expected to engage their students in discussion and learn how a student is thinking about the problems that are being presented. This means teachers and students spend a lot of time listening, quoting what they've heard back to each other and asking, "Why?"

Because of the shift in teaching style, teachers have been hard at work trading ideas on new lessons and techniques. Teachers are also working together on lesson plans that can be used across departments and classes.

The key to our students' success under California's new learning standards lies in their implementation. Teachers will control the curriculum and constantly identify what works and should be kept, and which teaching techniques need to be added to build a stronger, more valuable education for our students in the long run.

**Parent Tip:** *Cook with your child. Measuring ingredients and learning to improvise in putting together a recipe will both help students understand math concepts and encourage innovative thinking.*



## #3 Parents' Role

Common Core learning standards aim to prepare students for life outside of the classroom. When you walk into work each morning, nobody warns you, "Today will be a multiplying fractions day." Instead, today's employees are expected to handle real-life situations and solve problems as they come up. There are no notes to consult as we analyze the situation and make decisions. To prepare our students for this reality, teachers are focusing more than ever on real-world skills.

Because of that focus, parents are a key part of a student's learning process. Our families are uniquely positioned to help children build a bridge between the outside world and the content they learn inside the classroom. For example, cooking with children can reinforce concepts of measurement or fractions that they may have come across in class. Mapping out a road trip or participating in the family's monthly budget can also help students understand how classroom skills translate to real life.

Parents can model skills like persistence, teamwork and patience through their own behavior. Though homework can sometimes be frustrating, students are more likely to succeed and have a positive



attitude about it if family members are encouraging them to persist. Parents can assist with research ideas, show an interest in what their children are reading and encourage kids to keep an open mind about how they learn. The key is for parents and teachers to form a strong partnership in supporting each student.

If you have any questions about how to support your child's learning this year, or about what he or she should be achieving in class, ask your child's teacher.

**Parent Tip:** *Ask your child to help you plan and budget for an event. Whether it's a lemonade stand or a birthday party, the activity will make connections between real-life and classroom concepts.*

## #4 How Group Learning Spurs Personalized Learning

Common Core learning standards are designed to ensure that each student is able to gain a set of skills before moving on to the next one. The only way our teachers can do this is by understanding each student's comprehension level, and focusing on how they learn. That's



why the standards place such high priority on understanding a learner's thought process—whether for a math problem or a classic novel.

This focus on individual student skills is why you might notice your child working on more group projects. Teachers are trying

to understand what students are saying and how they explain their reasoning to their peers. This, in turn, helps the teacher teach each student at his or her own level.

### FOR EXAMPLE:

1. The student explores a problem and comes to conclusions on their own.
2. The teacher leads a discussion about the conclusions students make. Students are encouraged to share their ideas and the teacher guides them toward the concept being taught.
3. The teacher then steps in and teaches the mathematical concept and provides exercises for students to practice.

That means that instead of a sheet of multiplication tables, teachers are helping students understand why multiplication works the way it does. Once the student has learned that, he or she will be able to apply the concepts of multiples in any situation, not just on a test.

**Parent Tip:** Help your student plan a sightseeing trip or research your family's history. The act of doing this will reinforce critical thinking and research skills, while encouraging them to pursue an interest.

## #5 Local Control of the Classroom

Common Core learning standards give far more flexibility to teachers and districts than in the past.

These standards set out what each student is expected to know by the end of the school year. However, the standards do not tell the teacher how to teach. The curriculum, specific books, lesson plans and classroom exercises are left up to each district to decide on its own. By doing this, California's Common Core learning standards are allowing individual communities to tailor learning exercises and lessons to their own students and histories.

Previous standards had sometimes provided teachers with standard scripts to read and encouraged them to stick to the textbooks. The new standards allow those decisions to be made at the district level, much closer to the frontlines of teaching.

District officials and teachers are working in professional learning teams across the region to compare notes and ideas and to learn from one another.



If you have questions about your child's homework or about a particular book or assignment, ask the teacher about why the district chose this particular work and the intended learning. Because these decisions are made locally, the teacher will likely be able to tell you exactly how it relates to both the standards and to your child.

**Parent Tip:** Ask your child to help you comparison shop. You can compare the prices of phone plans, groceries or sports tickets. Doing this will reinforce concepts of measurement, budgeting and evidence-based thinking for your child.

## #6 Literature in California's Common Core Learning Standards

The idea behind Common Core learning standards is that our children are ready for careers and life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Common Core sets students up to truly understand what they read, so they enter college and the workforce with strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills. That's why the standards emphasize depth over breadth in reading.

At a practical level, that means students in English classes will still be reading literary classics and engaging with them more deeply, taking the time to do more than just follow the storyline. The questions will be around why things happened, not just what happened. They're going to be asked to show they have really thought through what it means. And more often, they will also read paired nonfiction books that help them to understand a novel's historical setting. If we can teach our students to do that with one book, they will have a skill they can apply to any text.

Students will be asked to read more in most classes, including interesting and challenging informational articles that have rich vocabulary and can deepen students' content knowledge. In the end, these skills will better equip our children to take on the challenges of tomorrow's workforce.

**Parent Tip:** Explore slogans you see on television or in stores with your child. Looking more deeply into marketing that they encounter every day can encourage them to focus on the implications of language, why certain messages resonate (and with whom), and refine their critical thinking skills.



## #7 "Take a Quick Look"

When you write a report or email, have you ever asked your spouse or colleague to, "Take a quick look," at it? When you do, you're asking for a "formative assessment."

Formative assessment is the ongoing process of collecting data on what people know or don't know, and changing track accordingly. At school, the idea is that with a clear vision of the progress each student is making, teachers can adjust their lesson plans and provide necessary interventions to improve individual achievement.

Common Core learning standards urge teachers to engage in formative assessment instead of waiting until the end-of-semester final to gauge a student's progress. The standards are aimed at "building children's capacity to think, analyze, communicate and reason." To test that, teachers need to find out where the students are when grappling with complex ideas. Is the idea beginning to consolidate? What does the teacher need to do to go deeper and really help them get it?

To get a full picture of student understanding, teachers ask open-ended questions and push students to explore ideas aloud. They listen in when kids are working together. They even encourage students to assess each other and themselves.

Checking in with children to figure out whether they've understood a concept or lesson is more important than ever.

**Parent Tip:** Be your child's book club. Ask your child what he or she is reading and why certain characters are behaving the way they are. Help them understand the historical or real-world context behind the story and where it fits.

## #8 Smarter Balanced Assessments

People across the country have asked about whether the new learning standards set out by the Common Core framework will be effective. The only way to answer that question is to measure students' progress under the new teaching methods. That's why, at the end of the year, all 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 11<sup>th</sup> graders will be tested under the new Smarter Balanced assessments. The old STAR system has been retired in California. The new system is called the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP).

The new tests will indicate the level of preparation for careers or college courses. Students will see fewer multiple-choice questions and will need to provide more short answers and extended responses that focus on their thought process. Like the Common Core learning standards, the tests are designed to push students' critical-thinking and real-world problem solving skills.



The tests are designed to provide flexibility for individual student needs. They're conducted on computers, which give students access to things like scratch pads and calculators. By putting the assessments online, we will get results back

quickly and schools can use them to plan for teacher professional development and to improve the curriculum and instruction.

A child's score on new tests will NOT determine whether he/she goes on to the next grade. However, the results will be compared over time to measure progress.

This year's test results may initially be lower than STAR results in previous years. This doesn't mean that students have learned less or fallen behind. Instead, it reflects the higher expectations under the Common Core learning standards. The assessments are new, as are the lesson plans. It will take a bit of time to put the whole process in place.

We are confident that, over time, the new teaching and testing

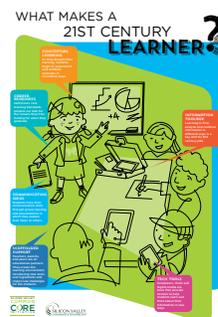


methods will help us learn a lot more about how our children learn and how schools can better prepare students to be more successful in higher education and on the job.

**Parent Tip:** Have your child plan a summer road trip or determine what it costs the family to travel to work, school and shopping each week. Researching destinations and calculating distances and costs will get them excited and show them how to use classroom skills in real life.



## POSTER



[Click here](#) to download a Common Core poster. Post as "refrigerator art" or use as a handout at parent meetings. You can also have a professional printer enlarge it for posting at a meeting.

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Engage in the debate. Be a California Standards champion.

## SUBMITTING LETTERS

*(These sample letters will get you started. Either fill in the blanks and email it to your local newspaper or create your own. When submitting a Letter to the Editor, include your phone number or email address. The editors will want to contact you to confirm that you are the writer.)*

### WHERE TO SUBMIT

There are many other newspapers in Orange County. Most of them are weekly publications and are devoted to news in a single city. Many of these papers are owned by either the Times or the Register.

When talking to an editor, ask what other local publications would consider publishing your letter.

### NEWSPAPERS IN ORANGE COUNTY

#### The Los Angeles Times

letters@latimes.com, 1.800.LATIMES, ext. 74511

#### The Orange County Register

letters@ocregister.com

Avery Bissett, editor for letters

abissett@ocregister.com, 714.796.3644

### Letter #1

As a parent, I feel very fortunate that my children will benefit from California's higher education standards called Common Core. That's because I believe Common Core will help our children develop important life skills, such as critical thinking. Going forward, our kids can use these skills to make informed choices, get a job and stand on their own two feet.

Here's an example of what I mean. The cell phone in my pocket looks very different from the one I had when my *[daughter or son]* was born. It's staggering to think of the skills students will need to be successful in college and throughout their careers. In fact, we are hearing from university administrators and business leaders that students need to be better prepared in order to be successful. This doesn't mean they need to memorize more information. It means they need to learn to analyze information, think things through and solve problems.

### Letter #2

California's Common Core educational standards are helping prepare students to keep up and be competitive in today's workforce and in the future. Common Core is focusing on critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication.

One of the things I value is that local teachers maintain control of their classrooms. Common Core sets out what each student is expected to know by the end of the school year. However, the standards do not tell the teacher how to teach. The curriculum, specific books, lesson plans and classroom exercises are left up to each district to decide on its own. By doing this, the core learning standards are allowing individual communities to tailor learning exercises and lessons to their own students.

Because of Common Core, I believe that my *[daughter or son]* and *[his/her]* classmates will stand a better chance of gaining the skills they need to be successful and have a good life.

# VIDEO TESTIMONIALS

Be inspired by Orange County parents & students. Share the videos.



**CELIA JAFFE**, Orange County Parent

<http://youtu.be/RUsGRK6eTT8>



**HELEN KIM**, Orange County Student

<http://youtu.be/MFJT1X-Nkd0>



**TAN LUONG**, Orange County Parent

<http://youtu.be/xYMytTmDQtE> (English)

<http://youtu.be/yOmZc1u1GmY> (Vietnamese)



**AMELIA RAMOS**, Orange County Parent

<http://youtu.be/jLMojFyZ4XY> (English)

<http://youtu.be/suTh4m-5F-Q> (Spanish)



**ANA ROBLES**, CSUF Student

<http://youtu.be/wBq-ythoGec> (English)

<http://youtu.be/mjrSFS9lnHQ> (Spanish)



**JULIAN RODRIGUEZ**, Orange County Student

<http://youtu.be/SjMCQxreJyl>



**RAISSA URRELO**, CSUF Student

<http://youtu.be/wkLlicgjxig> (English)

<http://youtu.be/BQpgMVEd9x8> (Spanish)



**KEVIN YOON**, Orange County Student

<http://youtu.be/YdstlGQj9f4> (English)

<http://youtu.be/8jC7q8utQZo> (Korean)



**SHANIN ZIEMER**, Orange County Parent

<http://youtu.be/EosPL8gEIsQ>

Listen to Orange County teachers & administrators. Share the videos.



**JIM DOTI**

President, Chapman University

<http://youtu.be/Xu4XhbUPYwk>



**HOWARD GILLMAN**

Chancellor, University of California, Irvine

<http://youtu.be/o-JAdxRd0AA>



**MIKE MATSUDA**

Superintendent, Anaheim Union High School District

<http://youtu.be/tKC-9acB7nU>



**AL MIJARES**

Superintendent, Orange County Department of Education

<http://youtu.be/SIPWt7omrBU> (1 of 3)

<http://youtu.be/gLH2QeH3EoE> (2 of 3)

<http://youtu.be/9NxLm3RbvAc> (3 of 3)



**JEANNE JELNICK**, Orange County Teacher

<http://youtu.be/bFv8XX562IE>



**TERI ROCCO**, Orange County Teacher (retired)

<http://youtu.be/BXia28uKwnM> (English)

<http://youtu.be/1lc-DG7fKPI> (Spanish)

Hear from Orange County business & community leaders. Share the videos.



**JIM EVERETT**

Former NFL Quarterback & School Board Member

<http://youtu.be/i6MlleefixY>



**MARY ANNE FOO**, Executive Director, Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance

<http://youtu.be/ZMsCHnK4H10>



**MAX GARDNER**

President & CEO, Orange County United Way

<http://youtu.be/E5mibjAPygl>



**JIM MAZZO**

Chairman & CEO, AcuFocus

<http://youtu.be/la48FZVsGKA>



**TRICIA NGUYEN**

CEO, Vietnamese Community of Orange County

[http://youtu.be/x8SQa1LA\\_I0](http://youtu.be/x8SQa1LA_I0)



**HENRY SAMUELI**, Co-founder, Chairman of the Board & Chief Technical Officer, Broadcom Corp.

<http://youtu.be/XHmA402HU0c>



**LUCY SANTANA**

CEO, Girls Inc. of Orange County

<http://youtu.be/zn75v1wmsMU>



**ROBERT SANTANA**

CEO, Boys & Girls Club of Santa Ana

<http://youtu.be/nnzNhGrhhOQ>

# FACEBOOK POSTS



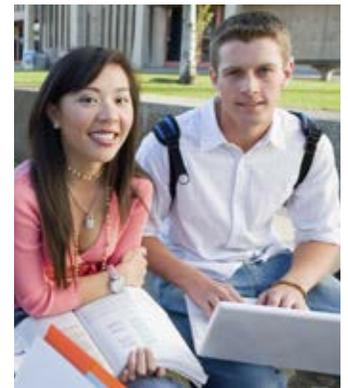
Drive the conversation. Share the benefits of higher standards.

*(These posts will get you started. Insert them into personal or parent-sponsored Facebook pages. Try adding a link to one of the videos in this Toolkit. Post at least once a week.)*

- Parent Information: Common Core standards help students become critical thinkers ready for college and career, putting them on a path to prosperity in Orange County's bright economic future.
- Common Core provides clear standards for grade levels and across schools. Parents can be confident they understand what their children need to know for each grade level.
- With California's Common Core standards, students continue to learn factual information, but will also receive a deeper education that will focus on critical thinking and analysis. Students will benefit by being better prepared to succeed in college and careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- Common Core learning standards give far more power to teachers and districts than they have had before. These standards set out what each student is expected to know by the end of the school year. However, the standards do not tell the teacher how to teach.
- Common Core standards allow the curriculum, specific books, lesson plans and classroom exercises to be left up to each district to decide on its own. By doing this, the Common Core learning standards allow individual communities to tailor learning exercises and lessons to their own students.
- With Common Core standards, students will learn factual information, but they will also develop the ability to solve problems as they arise. That's what we all need to do in real life and what businesses are looking for in the people they hire.



- In a world where we don't know what the jobs of tomorrow will look like, being able to analyze the situation and solve problems will be key for a student's future success. That's why Common Core learning standards are valuable.
- Business leaders are looking for critical thinkers and problem solvers. These skills, at the center of Common Core standards, are needed in today's workplace.
- As jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century continue to change, business leaders need people who can analyze the changes and determine how the business can evolve to meet them. Common Core standards will help students – as future employees – be more successful.
- Business leaders are looking to high schools, community colleges and universities to help their students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Common Core standards focus on these capabilities.
- Capable employees are not only critical to the health of their individual businesses, but to Orange County's economy as a whole. Common Core standards help students become critical thinkers ready for college and career.
- Homework will be tougher, as students work to meet new, higher standards. Families are uniquely positioned to help children build a bridge between their schoolwork and the world. Students are more likely to succeed and have a positive attitude when family members encourage them to persist.



# TWEET SHEET



Put your 140 characters to work. Tweet the value of Common Core.

*(These tweets will get you started. Open a personal or parent-sponsored Twitter account. Try adding a link to one of the videos in this Toolkit. To be effective, tweet at least once a day.)*

- California's Common Core standards help students become critical thinkers ready for college and career.
- Common Core provides clear standards, so parents understand what their children need to know for each grade level.
- With Common Core standards, students continue to learn factual information, but will also focus on critical thinking and analysis.
- With Common Core standards, students will benefit by being better prepared to succeed in college and careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- Common Core learning standards do not tell the teacher how to teach.
- Common Core standards allow the curriculum, specific books, lesson plans and classroom exercises to be left up to each district.
- With Common Core standards, students will develop the ability to solve problems as they arise. That's a real-life skill.
- We don't know what the jobs of tomorrow will look like. Common Core teaches students to analyze a situation and solve problems.
- Business leaders need critical thinkers who solve problems. These skills are at the center of Common Core standards.
- As jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century continue to change, business leaders need people who can help the business evolve to meet them.
- Common Core standards will help students – as future college students and employees – be more successful.
- Businesses need employees who have critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Common Core standards focus on these capabilities.
- Capable employees are critical to the health of individual businesses and to Orange County's economy. Common Core supports this.
- Common Core raises learning standards. Students are helped to succeed when family members encourage them to persist.



# KEY TERMS & CONCEPTS

Take a deeper dive into Common Core. Here's what the experts say.

## CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is highlighted in almost every discussion of key competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Critical thinking includes inductive and deductive reasoning, as well as making correct analyses, inferences and evaluations. These competencies are important for deeply understanding academic content, and they also relate to later career performance. Research suggests that for a company to compete in the global economy, it needs workers who will think about how to continuously improve its products, processes, or services. In another study, executives say the heart of this continuous improvement process, knowing the right questions to ask, is a function of critical thinking.

Studies also tie critical thinking to other important societal outcomes. For example, one study says that citizens who think critically are likelier to be self-sufficient and therefore less of a drain on state resources. Meanwhile, others suggest that such citizens are better equipped to give back to society, including through social entrepreneurship aimed at benefiting others.

### *Reason Effectively*

- Use various types of reasoning (inductive, deductive, etc.) as appropriate to the situation

### *Use Systems Thinking*

- Analyze how parts of a whole interact with each other to produce overall outcomes in complex systems

### *Make Judgments and Decisions*

- Effectively analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs
- Analyze and evaluate major alternative points of view
- Synthesize and make connections between information and arguments
- Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis
- Reflect critically on learning experiences and processes

### *Solve Problems*

- Solve different kinds of non-familiar problems in both conventional and innovative ways
- Identify and ask significant questions that clarify various points of view and lead to better solutions

## 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS

A term intended to encompass the broad move toward deeper and more relevant learning, used by a variety of organizations. The "Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills" is a national organization that advocates for the integration of skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and communication into the core academic subjects, using the "four Cs" as guidance: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. About 20 states have adopted its goals and principles. For more information, go to: [www.p21.org](http://www.p21.org)

## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

The Common Core State Standards is an initiative that seeks to bring diverse state curricula and standards into alignment with each other by following the principles of standards-based education reform. It is sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Developed by education experts from 45 states, these K-12 learning standards go into key concepts in math and English/language arts. They require a practical, real-life application of knowledge that prepares students for success in college, work and life. They were developed around the principle that understanding is more important than memorization, and provide the national education community with consistent learning expectations for all students. Find additional information at:

[www.corestandards.org/](http://www.corestandards.org/)

# RESOURCES/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Learn more about the new California Standard from these trusted sources. Then pass it on. Accurate information deserves to be shared.

**OC STEM:** Find this Parents & Students Communications Toolkit on the OC STEM website, along with customized toolkits for Teachers & Administrators and Business & Community Leaders: <http://ocstem.org/>



## ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

### OC STEM thanks these organizations for their support:

#### California Department of Education

Common Core State Standards:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/>

Smarter Balance Assessment System:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>

#### Council of the Great City Schools

<http://www.cgcs.org/domain/72>

#### Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

<http://www.p21.org/about-us/p21-framework/260>

#### Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning

<http://www.p21.org/about-us/p21-framework>

#### Intel: Common Core State Standards

<http://www.businessandeducation.org/sites/default/files/resources/Intel%20-%20What%20Parents%20Should%20Know%20about%20Common%20Core.pdf>

#### Measuring 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies: *Guidance for Educators*

<http://asiasociety.org/files/gcen-measuring21cskills.pdf>

#### Silicon Valley Community Foundation

[http://embracecore.curatasite.com/pages/communications\\_toolkit](http://embracecore.curatasite.com/pages/communications_toolkit)

