

Southern York County School District

Pennsylvania Core Standards

Frequently Asked Questions

Due to the recent release of PA Core Standards by the PA Department of Education, we understand that there have been many questions about Common Core, and more recently, PA Core Standards, and what this means to our educational program in our School District.

We hope that this fact sheet provides you with some valuable information related to PA Core Standards and our instructional focus in our School District.

More importantly, we want you to know that, as always, we are committed to ensuring that all of our students receive the best education possible in a positive and caring environment. It is extremely important to us that all learning that takes place in our classrooms is structured with a curriculum that promotes academic growth of all students and includes a nurturing environment where all students are given the opportunity to succeed.

It is important to understand that PA Core Standards do not dictate our curriculum, what textbooks we use, or how our teachers instruct our students. Our curriculum is created through a collaborative effort between teachers and administration in order to provide the foundation for students to be successful in post-secondary endeavors, including college, career, or military service.

As always, please let us know if you have any questions. We thank you for your partnership.

FACT SHEET

Why do we need educational standards?

- We need educational standards to ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Core standards will help ensure that students are receiving a high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. Core standards will provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states that will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students.
- Standards do not tell teachers how to teach, but they do help teachers identify the knowledge and skills their students should have so they may create the best lessons and environments for their classrooms. Standards also help students and parents by setting clear and realistic goals for success. Standards are a first step – a key building block – in providing our young people with a high-quality education that will prepare them for success in college and work. Of course, standards are not the only things that are needed for our children’s success, but they provide an accessible roadmap for our teachers, parents, and students.

Facts from the Pennsylvania Department of Education:

- Pennsylvania Core Standards are not curriculum. They are a set of goals and expectations for the necessary knowledge and skills that will help our students succeed. State officials, local teachers, principals, superintendents, and others still decide how the standards will be met. Local school districts have complete control over what curriculum to use to meet the standards. In short, Pennsylvania teachers and administrators are still in charge of curriculum used in their classrooms.
- Pennsylvania Core Standards do not mandate a reading list. The new state standards recommend a wide range of texts, but specific curriculum and choices of reading materials remain a local decision.
- The regulations adopted in Pennsylvania in 2010, and any subsequent regulations under consideration, do not involve a national test. Pennsylvania students are not being asked to take a national test.

How were the PA Core Standards developed?

The PA Academic Standards were adopted in 1999 and used until 2010. These standards are not curriculum, rather a framework to describe what students should be able to know and do at different grade levels. In 2010, Common Core was developed to provide evidence-based rigorous content. Pennsylvania then improved upon these standards incorporating the aspects of Academic and the Common Core Standards, to create the PA Core Standards.

Below is an example of a third grade language arts standard. Please note the PA Core Standards (NEW) replaced the Academic Standards (OLD). Please note the Common Core Standards (National Standards) were never adopted by the PA Department of Education.

PA Core Standards (NEW)	Common Core Standards – National Standards (Never adopted in PA)	Academic Standards (OLD)
CC.1.3.3.B Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.	RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.	1.3.3.C Identify literary elements (characters, setting, and plot) in selected readings.

These changes can be viewed for all current PA Core Standards for grades K-12 at the following link: <http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/PACC%20ELA%20Crosswalk%20111413.pdf>

Why are the Core State Standards for just English-Language Arts and Math?

- English-Language Arts and Math were the first subjects chosen for the core state standards because these two subjects are skills, upon which students build skill sets in other subject areas. Additional PA Core Standards have been written for Reading and Writing in Science and Social Studies.

Will more standards mean more tests?

- No. Having one set of standards will make it easier to combine information and resources to better evaluate students' strengths, needs, and overall progress. These test results and data assist and guide teachers in planning instruction to meet individual student needs.

How does Southern use the standardized testing data?

- The Southern York County School District will continue to use student Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and Keystone data results to differentiate instruction to meet students' needs, make curriculum decisions, and identify strengths and areas of improvement.
- The School District uses the results of the standardized testing to assist in curriculum modifications.
- Teachers use daily classroom data to identify strengths and weaknesses and to differentiate instruction for individual students.

Facts from Southern York County School District:

- The Southern York County School District staff will continue to differentiate instruction to assist all students in meeting their individual potential.
- The Southern York County School District will continue to prepare all students with the life and academic skills necessary to be college or career ready.

FEEDBACK WELCOME

Pennsylvania Department of Education Feedback Survey:

- The Department of Education is seeking feedback on the English Language Arts and Mathematics Eligible Content from teachers, parents, students, and others who are interested in the chance to offer suggestions. Please access the following link to provide feedback if desired. <http://www.paacademicreview.org/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- To learn more about the Southern York County School District curriculum offered, please contact the Director of Curriculum and Instruction [Dr. Kimberly Adkins](#), or Assistant Superintendent [Dr. Robert Bryson](#) at 717-235-4811 Ext. 7230.