

Answers to questions from the 5/28/15 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) meeting:

1. How will failing to meet one or more grade level standards impact students' promotion to the next grade?
 - a. This decision has not been made yet.
2. Do standards allow a student to figure out a math problem different ways or just one way? If a student can show that $2 + 2 = 5$, is he/she "correct?"
 - a. No... $2+2$ is still 4, but we are working to help students build understanding of the concepts behind the mathematics. Rather than just memorizing facts, we want students to know how math "works" so that they can apply that knowledge to new and different problems. While at first we want students to explore a variety of methods to solve problems (in order that they understand the concept, not just get the right answer), we help students to transition to the most efficient methods.
3. How much, and where, are we teaching CCSS now?
 - a. The Common Core State Standards include learning expectations for grades K-12 in English Language Arts and Mathematics. We have made a transition to these standards in all grades and in both content areas.
4. In math, if there is a stronger focus on fewer topics, which "topics" are being omitted?
 - a. There is a greater focus on some topics so that students can build a deeper knowledge or skill. For instance, the following are focus areas in grades K-8:
 - i. In grades K–2: Concepts, skills, and problem solving related to addition and subtraction
 - ii. In grades 3–5: Concepts, skills, and problem solving related to multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions
 - iii. In grade 6: Ratios and proportional relationships, and early algebraic expressions and equations
 - iv. In grade 7: Ratios and proportional relationships, and arithmetic of rational numbers
 - v. In grade 8: Linear algebra and linear functions
 - b. It's also true that the sequence for some topics has changed in order to help students build their understanding.
5. Why not show us the standards?
 - a. The standards can be seen at: <http://www.corestandards.org/read-the-standards/>
6. South Africa and Australia stopped Common Core completely. What will happen if other countries stop in the future? Where will that leave our children for future schooling, including states within the U.S.?
 - a. To our knowledge, only states in the United States have implemented the CCSS. (They are standards developed by state leadership organizations in our country.) There is a great deal of benefit in knowing that students moving across state lines

are transitioning between schools that are using the same guidelines (the Standards) for teaching and learning.

7. Are standards different for learning disabled students? (PBL - Problem Based Learning)
 - a. The standards are not different, and there are laws that prohibit us from lowering expectations for students with disabilities.
8. What happens to students with I.E.P.s?
 - a. The goals in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) are now being written to support students achievement of the standards. Students with IEPs will continue to receive a variety of supports such as accommodations and individualized instruction.
9. What happens when a learning disabled student is unable to express an "argument" or explain his/her answer?
 - a. As in the response to question 8, students will be provided a variety of accommodations within their IEPs. We are still exploring the implications for students with the greatest challenges.
10. For children with I.E.P.s or learning disabilities, will there be a bridge to help, or will they have some leverage with their strengths? (PBL)
 - a. See questions 8 and 9.
11. How will learning disabled students be supported or will they fall behind?
 - a. See questions 8 and 9.
12. In Sanford, Maine, 60 percent of ninth grade students are going to summer school due to lack of meeting standards. Do we see this happening?
 - a. One crucial component of a proficiency-based learning system is the collection of supports for all students. Though we can't speak to specifics in Sanford's situation, we certainly do not intend to have that many students going to summer school.
13. Will teachers be the ones selecting the standards given the fact that they educate the children?
 - a. The standards we use are typically determined in two ways: through legislation (such as [state standards](#)), or through local Board adoption.
14. Who decided to adopt Common Core?
 - a. Our state's standards, known as the Maine Learning Results, were updated by legislation in 2011 to include the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics.
15. How does Common Core impact students who meet grade level standards early in the year?
 - a. The Common Core does not impact students directly. Instead, the standards articulate learning expectations for students. How we support students that

achieve standards before their peers is a system-based decision. One example of this would be our Gifted and Talented services.

16. Will we still have the right to opt out of testing? If so, will the child be penalized?
 - a. The Common Core does not involve testing. Instead, we use a variety of ways to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency in standards. One way we do this is through state-required testing, known in Maine as the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA). The MEA this year (2014-2015) was developed by the [Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium](#). Opt-out, though not something that is included specifically in any law, is an option for parents. Opting out does not penalize a student, but if the percentage of students that were tested drops below 95%, the school and/or district might be penalized.
17. Will students be continually tested? How often will we see children tested: monthly, yearly?
 - a. Testing students comes in many forms. More frequent, smaller scale, sometimes informal check-ins help students and teacher check on growth and progress. These are often referred to as “formative” assessments. On the other hand, “summative” assessments are use at specific milestones throughout a learning process to measure student achievement.
18. How will long-term subs be educated to follow the system?
 - a. Long-term substitutes are surrounded by assistance in order to help the students continue to grow. From fellow grade level teachers, to teacher leaders (instructional coaches), to school administrators, a long-term substitute will have ongoing support.
19. The Common Core website states it will use science and social studies books to enhance language arts. Where is the published book list?
 - a. There is not a published book list. Instead, [Appendix B](#) of the English Language Arts Standards states the that included text samples, “serve to exemplify the level of complexity and quality that the Standards require all students in a given grade band to engage with. Additionally, they are suggestive of the breadth of texts that students should encounter in the text types required by the Standards. The choices should serve as useful guideposts in helping educators select texts of similar complexity, quality, and range for their own classrooms. **They expressly do not represent a partial or complete reading list.**”

For clarification on these or other questions, please contact Daniel Chuhta, ASsistant Superintendent of Schools: chuhtad@link75.org 729-9961