



Common Core Questions (FAQs) What Every Parent Needs to Know...

1. Why are we making the change to Common Core?

The Common Core State Standards were born from a realization that in an ever-changing world, our students need better knowledge and tools to prepare them to compete in a global economy. Leaders from business, higher education, and K-12 have come together to create the Common Core Standards. The intent of the new standards is to revolutionize teaching and learning so that our students graduate college and career ready for the 21st Century.

2. Is the change to Common Core only taking place in AUHSD?

The Common Core is a state-wide initiative. By 2015 every school in California will be implementing these standards. California is one of 47 states that have adopted the Common Core State Standards.

3. Does the change to Common Core only impact English and math?

Common Core addresses essential components of learning and literacy in all content areas. Under Common Core teachers in every class will work to develop students' ability to think critically, collaborate, communicate effectively, and be creative. One area of pride in the AUHSD is that our students have always had access to a broad, relevant curriculum that promotes college/career pathways. Under Common Core this will continue to be the case.

4. Why did the math classes change their names?

Classes will no longer be purely, "Algebra" or "Geometry" as they were in the past. For example, in Math 1- over one-half of the 'old' Pre-Algebra standards/concepts remain. The rest have been shifted down to 5th or 6th grade or up to grade 8. Math 1 also contains some concepts that were formerly in High School Geometry and Probability and Statistics. Concepts are introduced to students as they need to experience them with emphasis placed on students being able to understand, describe, apply and defend how they solve mathematical problems.

5. How do classes look different under common core?

Common core emphasizes both content and skills that have been identified by business and educational leaders, as necessary for college and career success. This emphasis on skill development recognizes that language is central to all academic areas and will mean more writing and speaking in the classroom. You can also expect to see more interactive and group work in classrooms.

6. How will this change affect my school's state test score (API)?

In the spring of 2015 state testing and accountability of the school will be based in part on assessments built on the Common Core. This change was precipitated by evidence that previous standards did not measure and predict college readiness and success. Starting in 2016, under the new API formula, 60 percent of the school score will come from standardized assessments, while 40 percent will assess students' college and career readiness, as evidenced by indicators such as graduation rates, A-G college-entry course completion, and completion of Career Technical Education pathways. Because of the changes in the state assessment, attempting to measure skills and content (as opposed to just content), we want our stakeholders to be aware that comparisons to past outcomes will not be applicable.

7. Will the change to Common Core affect my child's test scores?

Recent legislation passed by the state will impact STAR testing. Parents should expect to see less standardized testing being administered to students on a yearly basis. Students will still need to take the required test for graduation (CAHSEE) in California. Additionally, students interested in applying to four year universities will continue to need to complete the SAT/ ACT for college admissions.

8. Are students taking Common Core classes eligible for college?

Students who successfully complete course work under Common Core will meet the A-G requirements of the UC/ CSU system. Importantly, they also will develop the habits of mind and dispositions needed to be successful once they are in college.

9. What does it mean to be "college and career" ready?

As a result of the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the instructional strategies they require, students will not only master core content, they will also develop key cognitive strategies such as: the ability to formulate problems, conduct research, interpret data and information, communicate verbally and in writing their understanding and reasoning behind the how and why of their work, and complete tasks with precision and accuracy. These skills are needed both in higher education and in the work place.

10. Will my child's privacy be protected?

As in the past, your child's privacy and safety is our utmost concern. This will continue to be the case as we transition to the Common Core State Standards. Testing information will be gathered and disseminated with the utmost care. Our students' well-being is our priority.

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Dear AUHSD family,

This is an exciting time to be in education. The reforms embodied in the Common Core State Standards hold great promise for the direction of education in our district and across the state and country. As with any large-scale reform, communication of information is vital to avoid misunderstanding and confusion. This being said, there is bound to be a certain amount of ambiguity and concern. It is important as we communicate with our stakeholders: students, parents, and community members, that we do so with a common voice and in a professional manner so as to allay any fears and clarify any misinformation. To this end, we have created a FAQ of 10 questions parents may have regarding our transition to the Common Core State Standards. Please become familiar with this document and disseminate as necessary to parents and other stakeholders.

Once again, it is an exciting time in education and the AUHSD is leading the way for others to follow.