New Jersey Department of Education

Educational Partnerships

Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS)

PASS Common Core Inspired Homework

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are meant to teach students to think in different ways that are research and evidence-based. This type of thinking can really help students expand their minds and better prepare them to solve real-world problems.

The CCSS have already prompted significant changes in the way students are taught and the homework they bring home. In mathematics for instance, students are sometimes expected to solve arithmetic problems (like 23 x 42 or 1,709 + 2,350) using multiple methods, some of which may be unfamiliar to their parents. New methods in math mean not just learning 2 + 2 = 4, but why that is the case.

For English language arts students will be involved in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Class is not based on memorizing words and definitions nor is it in a lecture format anymore. Students will continue to read classics and the CCSS focuses on increasing vocabulary and getting students ready to study current events and nonfiction. Parents will see their children reading articles about current events, bringing home more nonfiction literature that prompts higher levels of thinking, practice better ways of communicating, and understand new ways to apply knowledge.

Parents do not need to re-teach a subject at home. The best support is to facilitate the learning process so that it helps your child in school and in life. New teaching and learning methods can be confusing and challenging content and instructional methods can intimidate some parents. Attend parent academies for student Success (PASS) and other opportunities to learn about the changes. The best ways that parents can help their child is by support the process of "learning how to learn" and communicating regularly with their child's teacher. Here are some tips:

HOMEWORK IS A BIG PART OF THE WAY THAT PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILD SUCCEED

- Ask questions at school and learn more about how the CCSS is applied in your child's classroom.
- Help your child learn to prioritize and manage their time to learn the skills they need for success.
- Read to, with, and in front of your child. Discuss what you read. Encourage your children to read both literature and informational texts.
- Help children build independence and confidence about learning. Give them opportunities to figure things out for themselves and help them identify why and how they came to that conclusion. Encourage them to apply reasoning.

- Attend parent/teacher conferences and talk with teachers about his/her strengths and weaknesses. Ask how you can best support your child at home.
- Encourage your child to "stick with it" even when a problem becomes difficult.
- If your child consistently struggles with homework talk with his teacher and don't hesitate to use homework hotlines, peer support, and after-school-tutoring.
- Any new change at school can cause anxiety and frustration for some students and when that is coupled with stress over things outside of school it can be overwhelming for some children. Don't hesitate to contact the school's counselor and teacher to support your child.
- When students are working on homework, limit multi-tasking and teach them to concentrate on one thing. Minimize distractions as they learn outside of school.
- Over time, extend their working time 15 or 20 minutes to 45 minutes or an hour.
- Encourage openness to learning new ideas, curiosity, and innovation.
- Educate your child about your job and use examples of how the skills that they are learning apply to the work world.
- Motivate children by linking their strengths to various potential careers.
- Notice when teachers give your child more personalized learning goals. Encourage your child to use his/her strengths to achieve those goals.
- Point out your child's ability to work through more complex problems. When a challenge presents itself again, remind them of their previous success.
- If your child becomes frustrated with the new challenges of the CCSS, encourage him/her to continue to do his/her best and work with the teacher to get support until all of the changes have been put in place.
- Students may not bring home textbooks and they may receive assignments where technology is used to perform tasks and find information. Support your child and monitor smart use of all technology.
- Take initiative to learn and understand the specific skills and knowledge that all students are expected to learn at the end of each grade level.
- Work closely with your child's teacher(s) to identify what he/she should know and be able to do so that they can be successful in college and their careers.
- Encourage the school to offer workshops and Parent Academies for Student Success (PASS) events.

While this list is certainly not exhaustive, it is meant to provide parents support as they seek to understand the CCSS and how to best support their child/children at home and at school. Talk to your child's teacher for more ideas.