New Jersey Department of Education

Educational Partnerships

Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS)

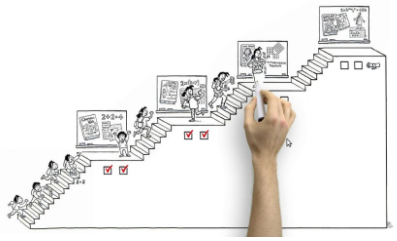
Back-to-School Talking Points for Principals to Welcome Parents & Families

Principals may want to consider using some of the talking points below when communicating with parents about the Common Core State Standards.

Dr./Ms/Mr., our Superintendent, and _____ from our Board of Education gave you their commitment to support your sons and daughters as we move into this exciting time of change in education. I, too, am committed to provide your child with every opportunity to become successful and enjoy their learning here at _____ School.

- The goal of the Common Core State Standards is simple: we will provide teaching and learning to ensure that all students - including *your* child - become successful and graduate college and career ready.

Together lets watch a 3-minute video that explains how the Common Core State Standards will help students achieve at high levels and help them learn what they need to know to get to graduation and beyond.
http://www.cgcs.org/domain/33 (English and Spanish)



- New Jersey adopted high academic standards, known as the Core Content Curriculum Standards, nearly 20 years ago. The nine content areas within the Core Content Curriculum Standards were English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, technology, 21st century life and careers, health and physical education, visual and performing arts, and world languages.

- In 2010, the New Jersey State Board of Education voluntarily adopted the Common Core State Standards to update the English language arts and mathematics standards in the Core Content Curriculum Standards.

- Using the Common Core, students are given challenging lessons that require them to seek out and acquire knowledge, apply what they have learned, and build upon that information to create *new* knowledge.

- This update is what many good educators have been trying to do for a long time. The CCSS help students move away from rote memorization and isolated skills and return to creativity and deeper learning in the classroom; provide rich content to students in personalized, innovative ways; and, allow students to both learn and to *apply* what they have learned.

- The standards are intended to help students clearly understand what they need to know and be able to do. Student learning activities are based on connecting what they have already learned and the academic work that will be introduced as they move forward.

- The standards allow teachers to design many different ways that students can show us how they can apply their new knowledge and skills. This helps students in all grades see how their schoolwork relates to real life.

- The standards are for all students, including those with special needs, who may require instructional supports, different ways of teaching and instruction in foundational skills to make progress with the standards.

- If you visit your child's classroom, you will see some new ways that our teachers are working with students.

- Like every parent in this room, I am sure that you are wondering about homework.
  - One of the most helpful things you can do is to show your child that you think homework is important.
  - Avoid doing your child's homework for him/her; teachers need to see where your child is having trouble.
  - Many children today do their homework while their parents are at work. When you are at home, ask to see your child's homework and discuss it with him or her. Ask questions and be supportive.
  - Today's students may learn subjects in new ways that are different from how you and I learned when we were in school. Don't worry; you can still help your child by praising progress, using resources that teachers send home, monitoring how your child uses the internet to get new knowledge, and communicating directly with teachers. You do not have to be an expert in a subject to help with homework. There are many places to go for help.

- So, as a parent, what can you do to help your child learn with the CCSS?
  - Encourage your child to stick with it, even when a problem becomes difficult.
  - Help build independence and confidence in your child.
  - Read to, with, and in front of your child and discuss what you read.
  - Ask questions and learn more about the CCSS in your child's classroom.
  - Connect with your child's teacher about your child's learning progress every month.
  - Attend parent/teacher conferences and talk with teachers about your child's strengths and weaknesses. Ask your child's teachers, or me, how you can best support your child at home.
  - Participate in academic events that invite you to the school.
  - Set a goal with your child to complete college or other advanced training after high school.
  - Make your child's success a family priority. This means that school comes before sports, entertainment, or work.

- Together, our communication about the Common Core will:
  - Help us set shared goals that help your child achieve all he/she needs to know and be able to do;
  - Allow us to help your child move beyond rote memorization to show critical thinking and problem solving skills;
  - Enable us to regularly check in on your child's progress to see where he or she may have mastered skills early and could benefit from further enrichment;
  - Help us identify if your child is struggling, talk to your child's teacher, and work together to determine a plan to help your child improve; and
  - Help us discuss if your child is on track to be successful in education or employment after high school.

- The Common Core State Standards were designed using the most advanced thinking about how to prepare all students for success in college and their careers. Using these learning standards, your child will be better ready to graduate from high school and compete with other students across the nation and the world.