
2013-2014

FAMILY GUIDE

to the Maryland State Common Core Curriculum,
NextGen Science Standards, and PARCC Assessments



Wicomico County Public Schools

101 Long Avenue
Salisbury, MD 21804
410-677-4400
www.wcboe.org

About the Common Core

In June 2010 the Maryland State Board of Education unanimously adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. These national education standards establish a set of shared goals and expectations for what students should understand and be able to do in grades K-12 in order to be prepared for success in college and the workplace. Common standards help ensure that students are receiving an equally rigorous, high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state.

The CCSS ask teachers and students to dig deeper into the core skills and concepts for each grade level. This means that students will learn much more about fewer topics and teachers will have more time to cover subjects in greater detail – ultimately giving students an opportunity to really understand what is being taught.



Key Instructional Shifts of the Common Core State Standards:

Shifts in English/Language Arts (ELA)

These apply to English teachers as well as content area (Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects) teachers:

1. Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts, in addition to literature.
2. Reading and writing grounded in evidence from the text, both literary and informational.
3. Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary.

Shifts in Mathematics

1. Focus: Learn more about fewer key topics in each grade.
2. Coherence: Concepts logically connected from one grade to the next and linked to other major topics within the grade.
3. Rigor: Fluency with arithmetic, application of knowledge to real world situations, and deep understanding of mathematical concepts.

Implementation 2013-2014

- ◆ **Reading/English/Language Arts**—The Common Core State Curriculum will be fully implemented this year. Teachers will integrate reading, speaking and listening, writing and language standards in their lessons. There will be an increased focus on reading complex texts, vocabulary development, and writing. Student responses in writing and speaking will require text evidence.
- ◆ **Mathematics**—Grades PK-8 and Geometry will fully implement the Common Core State Curriculum this year. Algebra I and Algebra II



continue to follow the Core Learning Goals. The Standards of Mathematical Practice will be infused into daily instruction.

- ◆ **Science/STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math)**—The Next Generation Science Standards have

been adopted by MSDE. For 2013-14, the emphasis will be on increasing student engagement in the Science & Engineering Practices. Lessons will incorporate many content areas as they relate to STEM subjects.

- ◆ **Literacy**—All content areas will require students to read and write using content specific material. There will be an emphasis on informational text in Science, Social Studies, and other technical subjects.



About the PARCC Assessment

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC), of which Maryland is a Governing Member, is developing a common set of K-12 assessments aligned to the CCSS in ELA/Literacy and Mathematics. The computer-based assessments will measure the higher order skills outlined in the new standards, such as critical thinking, communicating effectively, and problem solving. PARCC's approach includes producing timely snapshots of students' knowledge, giving parents and students better information and teachers the ability to adjust instruction and student supports accordingly. The time line for the new assessments is:

- 2013-2014 PARCC field testing (All MSA and HSA testing continues)
- 2014-2015 Full implementation of the PARCC assessments (MSA is discontinued; HSA continues in Biology and Government)



Parent Resources and Contacts

- ◆ Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher and/or school principal with specific questions about the changing curriculum. Questions regarding specific content can also be addressed to the appropriate Instructional Supervisor by calling 410-677-4587.
- ◆ <http://www.pta.org/> Find a guide for each grade level which includes an overview of Common Core Standards, activities to help your child learn at home, and topics for parents and teacher discussions.
- ◆ www.mdk12.org/instruction Find frameworks (specific skills and knowledge) for each content area and an online curriculum toolkit with model lessons.
- ◆ www.nextgenscience.org Find information about Next Generation Science Standards.

Wicomico County Public Schools
SUCCESS - Every Student, Every Day

It is the policy of the Wicomico County Board of Education to provide equal educational and employment opportunities regardless of age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, disability or sexual orientation.