

Introduction

Connecticut's Common Core of Learning has been created as a set of high expectations we hold for *all* of Connecticut's students. While it is understood that students enter school at different levels of readiness, with different interests and with varying aspirations, these differences do not justify the development of a different Common Core for each student. To the contrary, the goal of each student developing to his or her fullest potential argues for the creation of one Common Core that sets no limits on anyone and allows each to attain his or her dreams.

Accordingly, the Common Core establishes a vision of what Connecticut's high school graduates should know and be able to do as a result of participating in the entire K-12 school experience. The Common Core articulates Connecticut's expectations for all its schools and all its youth by describing abilities that are necessary not just for employment and further education, but also for becoming a productive member of society. The Common Core is not meant to define a minimum set of competencies; rather, it is designed to set and define the high standards required for students to become fully educated citizens.

This revision of *Connecticut's Common Core of Learning* is organized under the three major headings that follow, with subheadings that reflect significant groups of skills, knowledge and aspects of character:

Foundational Skills and Competencies

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking, Listening and Viewing
- Quantifying
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Creative Thinking
- Learning Resources and Information Technology
- Working Independently and Collaboratively

Understandings and Applications: Discipline-Based and Interdisciplinary Skills

- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- World Languages
- The Arts
- Health and Safety Education
- Physical Education
- Technology Education

Applied Education

- School-To-Career Transition
- Preparing for Adult Life and Lifelong Learning

Aspects of Character

Responsibility and Integrity

Effort and Persistence

Intellectual Curiosity

Respect

Citizenship and Sense of Community

The order of the three major headings does not represent their relative importance, nor does it imply a sequence of instruction. Rather, the order reflects a belief that discipline-based content must be interconnected. This represents a larger view of curriculum in which instruction across the disciplines includes the development of the necessary aspects of character and foundational skills.

Students learn best when they are appropriately motivated and self-confident. Although these are by-products of effective instruction, the attitudes and aspects of character delineated in the Common Core are also preconditions for mastering specific skills. While generally taught directly or included in a written curriculum, these aspects of character, along with many of the skills and competencies, must continually be developed during instruction in the traditional curriculum described in the understandings and applications area and through guidance formally provided in the schools.

Further, the Common Core of Learning should not be misconstrued as a set of isolated skills and understandings. To the contrary, it should be viewed as an integrated and interdependent set of expectations. Users of the Common Core should continually look for cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches and for the transfer of skills and knowledge from one subject area to another. In fact, many items listed under a particular subheading could easily have been included under others.

The Common Core is not a curriculum. Each school district's curriculum will be more comprehensive and significantly more specific, including a wide range of learning experiences and instructional strategies. To assist districts in setting forth their own curriculum standards, the State Department of Education is publishing a companion document to *Connecticut's Common Core of Learning* titled *The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards*.

Finally, the Common Core of Learning has been developed neither as a state mandate nor as a condition for graduation. It has been developed to generate discussion and stimulate change in school programs, student objectives, resource allocations and teaching. It is offered as a catalyst for curricular change and school improvement by providing a statement of the high expectations needed in order that all Connecticut students become fully educated.

Connecticut's Common Core of Learning reflects a commitment to excellence in public elementary and secondary education. The implementation of the Common Core will help develop young people who can think and act independently and work with others, and will assist Connecticut's schools in leading its students into the 21st century with confidence and clear direction.