

District Curriculum Update

COMMON CORE STANDARDS WINTER 2012 UPDATE

Important – Please Read

Happy New Year!

Unfortunately, the New Year does not mean that the Common Core standards are gone, despite some New Year's resolutions to that effect!

Over the last several months, as you know the goal with regards to the Common Core standards for our district has been for each teacher to become familiar with the standards. The very first step that we asked all teachers to do back in the early fall was to visit the Common Core standards document at <http://www.corestandards.org>. This site is **absolutely critical** in gaining a basic understanding of the standards that are now the law in Maine and 45 other states in this country. The standards are not going away and they do replace the Maine Learning Results.

At this point, you should not be using the Maine Learning Results any further in your classrooms as they are no longer the standards by which our schools lawfully operate. Yes, it is okay to recycle them!

Therefore, it is absolutely important that every teacher in our district understands the basic idea behind the standards, how the standards are laid out, and specifically the standards for your grade level and or content area. This is a minimum expectation in order for you to be truly effective with your students in the next few years.

Starting in 2014, a new assessment will replace the current NECAPs and MHSA. The only way for our students to be prepared for this new assessment is for every teacher to make it their job to get acquainted with the Common Core standards.

It is for all the reasons above that I have dedicated this Curriculum Update to helping you understand and recognize the importance of the standards and my commitment that our district be prepared for the future. We are all in this together.

Jeff Porter

POWER STANDARDS ARE HERE

As I mentioned at the beginning of the school year at our opening day meeting, the next step beyond becoming familiar with the standards at your grade level and/or content area is to start developing the most essential standards that can be realistically taught in an academic year. This process is called **power standard development**.

On Wednesday, January 25, the early release program will include a PowerPoint presentation by Susanne Dunn regarding how to effectively develop power standards at your grade level and/ or content area. Below is the schedule for these presentations, location BMS auditorium:

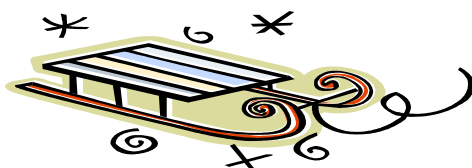
BHS/COT presentation at 11:30 AM.

JFK/BPS/BIS presentation at 1:00 PM.

Please note that all staff should be in attendance for these presentations, including teachers and educational technicians, specialists, and administrators. BMS faculty and staff have seen this presentation so they will not be attending. Instead, they will be working on developing power standards as applying the power standards.

As you begin the work of developing power standards, keep in mind the three criteria that should be met before a **power standard** is determined to be essential:

1. **Endurance:** Can the given standard be practiced and utilized beyond merely the assessment at hand?
2. **Leverage:** Can the standard carry over to other content areas?
3. **Readiness:** Does the standard allow students to be ready and successful at the next level of instruction?



CROSSWALKS

The Maine Department of Education opted not to create curriculum crosswalks, or alignment documents, that would show the differences between the Maine Learning Results and the new Common Core standards. Instead, they left it to districts to do.

Thankfully, our K-5 math program, Investigations, now has alignment with the new standards. For grades 6 – 12 in mathematics, this alignment will need to be completed.

Our resident standards expert, Susanne Dunn, has developed a K-12 crosswalk for reading and literature. This crosswalk can be used to update the ELA curriculum maps that were developed a couple of years ago. This document will be made available shortly so the teachers may begin looking at this for those areas.

THEY'RE GIVING US A HEAD START: ELA



There are two companies that are working to develop new common assessments that all states will use. The state of Maine has contracted with a company called SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium that will impact English language arts, literacy in history and social studies, science, technical subjects, and mathematics.

SMARTER Balanced recently released what they call "Claims" by which the new assessments, starting in 2014, will be based on. These are important. This is what our students will be judged on and tested on. Essentially we're being given a running start.

ELA Major Claims:

1. Students can read closely and critically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex literacy and informational text.
2. Students can produce effective writing for a range of purposes and audiences.
3. Students can employ effective speaking and listening skills for a range of purposes and audiences.
4. Students can engage appropriately in collaborative and independent inquiry to investigate and research topics, pose questions, and gather and present information.
5. Students can skillfully use and interpret written language across a range of literacy tasks.

INFORMATIONAL TEXT

It is very evident that informational text is very, very, important when it comes to the new Common Core standards. What is even more obvious is that informational text crosses virtually every single learning environment in our school district. It is applicable to all disciplines in some way. Whether it's reading a science or social studies texts, reading word problems in a math book, analyzing research from the Internet, or deciphering a manual at COT, informational text and the ability to read it are now considered to be essential learning outcomes.

For all the reasons above, every teacher should be familiar with the ELA standards, especially when it comes to **Informational text and text complexity**. Text complexity is located in **Standard 10** of the **ELA** document. Please make sure you check out standard 10 for your grade level and/or content area.

WORTH REFLECTING...

Half of all college students do not finish college. Why? Research has shown that it is because of college text complexity more than any other single reason.



MAJOR MATH CLAIMS

Below are the SMARTER Balanced claims for **Mathematics**:

1. Students can explain and apply mathematical concepts and carry out mathematical procedures with precision and fluency.
2. Students can frame and solve a range of complex problems in pure and applied mathematics.
3. Students can clearly and precisely construct viable arguments to support their own reasoning and to critique the reasoning of others.
4. Students can analyze complex, real world scenarios and can use mathematical models to interpret and solve problems.

DID YOU KNOW?

On average, 40% of all errors on standardized tests are reading errors.

YOUR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT: Make it a point to download **Standard 10 of the ELA** document for your grade level/content area and become familiar with the informational text and text complexity standards.

YOUR 2011-12 DISTRICT CURRICULUM LEADERS

Assistant Superintendent/ Curriculum Director

Literacy Coach

RTI Chair

ELA Chair

Math Chair

Science Chair

Social Studies Chair

Technology Chair

Standards-Based Chair

PLCSS Chair

Study Group Leaders

Mentor Coordinators/Trainers

Common Core Leaders

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