



Mill Valley School District Common Core

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Superintendent's Message

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) represent an exciting opportunity for our teachers and students to expand the depth of teaching and learning in our schools.

We fully embrace these changes to the standards, recognizing that they represent more than just a change in content. These standards will further enrich our students' critical thinking and communication skills, which have always been part of Mill Valley School District's instructional program.

This shift in standards continues to provide our talented and innovative Mill Valley teachers the freedom to focus on what's most important for our students.

-Paul Johnson
Superintendent

The 2013-14 School Year

The Mill Valley School District teachers have been diligently working to implement the CCSS in Math and English Language Arts. District teachers have met several times throughout the school year meeting as grade levels and departments to present key information on the standards and discuss shifts in instruction and learning. Teachers have analyzed lessons and instructional materials to best support implementation of standards.

On March 21, 2014 our District-wide professional development day focused on grade-level meetings and vertical articulation. In addition, Kindergarten through 5th grade teachers (K-5) worked to further refine the newly developed K-5 Common Core report card.

Middle School 6th grade teachers participated in Math and ELA articulation meetings with 5th grade teachers, while 7th and 8th grade teachers met in departments (ELA, Math, Science, World Languages) to continue their CCSS professional development. Middle School staff continued exploring "flipped learning".



Flipped learning is a blended learning model where the teacher's direct instruction is viewed via podcasts, videos, etc., at home in advance of class time. This frees up classroom time for team project work and more teacher to student 1:1 time.

Elementary and Middle School P.E., Art, and Music teachers also held articulation meetings. District Special Education staff took part in a workshop by RETHINK Autism. RETHINK Autism provides web based Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) curriculum resources for both teachers and parents.

Summer Professional Development

This summer, K-8 language arts and core teachers will have the opportunity to participate in a week long professional development course from the [Columbia University Teachers College Reading and Writing Project](#). Already over 112 teachers have registered to participate in this amazing opportunity.

The Common Core standards will further enrich our students' critical thinking and communication skills, which have always been part of Mill Valley School District's instructional program.

Key Points in English-Language Arts Standards

The standards establish staircase of increasing complexity in what students must be able to read so that all students are ready for the demands of college- and career-level reading no later than the end of high school. The standards also require the progressive development of reading comprehension so that students advancing through the grades are able to gain more from whatever they read.



Through reading a diverse array of classic and contemporary literature as well as challenging informational texts in a range of subjects, students are expected to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspective. Because the standards are building blocks for successful

classrooms, but recognize that teachers, school districts and states need to decide on appropriate curriculum, they intentionally do not offer a reading list. Instead, they offer numerous sample texts to help teachers prepare for the school year and allow parents and students to know what to expect at the beginning of the year.

The standards mandate certain critical types of content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, foundational U.S. documents, seminal works of American literature, and the writings of Shakespeare. The standards appropriately defer the many remaining decisions about what and how to teach to states, districts, and schools.

Writing

The ability to write logical arguments based on substantive claims, sound reasoning, and relevant evidence is a cornerstone of the writing standards, with opinion writing a basic form of argument extending down into the earliest grades.



Research both short, focused projects (such as those commonly required in the workplace) and longer term in depth research is emphasized throughout the standards but most prominently in the writing strand since a written analysis and presentation of findings is so often critical.

Annotated samples of student writing accompany the standards and help establish adequate performance levels in writing arguments, informational/explanatory texts, and narratives in the various grades.

Speaking and Listening

The standards require that students gain, evaluate, and present increasingly complex information, ideas, and evidence through listening and speaking as well as through media.



An important focus of the speaking and listening standards is academic discussion in one-on-one, small-group, and whole-class settings. Formal presentations are one important way such talk occurs, but so is the more informal discussion that takes place as students collaborate to answer questions, build understanding, and solve problems.

Language

The standards expect that students will grow their vocabularies through a mix of conversations, direct instruction, and reading. The standards will help students determine word meanings, appreciate the nuances of words, and steadily expand their repertoire of words and phrases.

The standards help prepare students for real life experience at college and in 21st century careers. The standards recognize that students must be able to use formal English in their writing and speaking but that they must also be able to make informed, skillful choices among the many ways to express themselves through language.

Vocabulary and conventions are treated in their own strand not because skills in these areas should be handled in isolation but because their use extends across reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Media and Technology

Just as media and technology are integrated in school and life in the twenty-first century, skills related to media use (both critical analysis and production of media) are integrated throughout the standards.



Key Points in Math Standards

The K-5 math standards provide students with a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and decimals which help young students build the foundation to successfully apply more demanding math concepts and procedures, and move into applications.



In kindergarten, the standards follow successful international models and recommendations from the National Research Council's Early Math Panel report, by focusing kindergarten work on the number core: learning how numbers correspond to quantities, and learning how to put numbers together and take them apart (the beginnings of addition and subtraction).

The K-5 standards build on the best state standards to provide detailed guidance to teachers on how to navigate their way through knotty topics such as fractions, negative numbers, and geometry, and do so by maintaining a continuous progression from grade to grade.

The standards stress not only procedural skill but also conceptual understanding, to make sure students are learning and absorbing the critical information they need to succeed at higher levels - rather than the current practices by which many students learn enough to get by on the next test, but forget it shortly thereafter, only to review again the following year.

Having built a strong foundation K-5, students can do hands on learning in geometry, algebra and probability and statistics. Students who have completed 7th grade and mastered the content and skills through the 7th grade will be well-prepared.

The middle school standards are robust and provide a coherent and rich preparation for high school mathematics.

The high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically.

The high school standards set a rigorous definition of college and career readiness, by helping students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do.

The high school standards emphasize mathematical modeling, the use of mathematics and statistics to analyze empirical situations, understand them better, and improve decisions.

Source: www.corestandards.org

Parent/Guardian Resources

In addition to the resources found on <http://www.mvschools.org/commoncore> the web sites below provide the most current information from the California Department of Education (CDE).

California Department of Education
Common Core State Standards Website
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc>

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium:
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smarterbalanced.asp>

K-8 Common Core State Standards Parent Handbook:
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/ccssresourcesparents.asp>

Mill Valley School District Common Core Videos



Message from our Principals
<http://vimeo.com/78290004>



Message from our Teachers
<http://vimeo.com/79446539>