

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS

Learning standards are not new in New York. For decades, schools have had a common set of learning goals and expectations to guide curriculum development and classroom activities at each grade level. Common Core is intended to be a set of standards that establish clear, modern and rigorous-learning expectations for all students in the country.

Educators in New York frequently talk about the state's previous standards as being "a mile wide and an inch deep." Many have welcomed the Common Core's shift in focus to critical thinking and in-depth study of fewer topics. The initiative was meant to bring consistency to classroom expectations so that all students receive a quality education based on high standards no matter where they live. The internationally-benchmarked standards are designed so that the skills and topics students cover in school reflect what they need to know to be successful as they advance to college and the workplace.

Common Core is meant to prepare all students to enter college and/or a viable career after high school graduation.

Common Core is meant to increase what students are learning. The standards are designed to be a "staircase of learning," with content growing in complexity from grade to grade.

Content learned in second grade, for example, will be more difficult than content learned in kindergarten and first grade, yet will reinforce what was previously learned.

The Common Core should result in fewer topics being covered in classroom lessons, but those topics will be covered in more depth than in the past.

Fewer topics, deeper understanding, clearer knowledge

Expanded vocabulary & comprehension

Giving evidence, showing analysis

Building knowledge through reading & writing

Equal standards for all students

Problem solving & critical thinking

Strong foundations in ELA & math

The SUNY Task Force on Remediation estimates that 40 percent of New York's high school students graduate under-prepared for college.

Georgetown University researchers found that 63 percent of all job openings by 2018 will require workers with at least some college education. In 1973, it was 28 percent.

Most experts believe that receiving a college degree or completing some level of advanced training is the key to being in the middle class.

In a 2014 survey, conducted by the Center on Education Policy at George Washington University, three-quarters of school leaders said that the Common Core is more rigorous than previous standards and will lead to improved student skills.

A 2014 Gallup poll found that among Americans who favor the Common Core, the most important reason is because it will help more students learn what they need to know regardless of where they go to school.

