

Top 10 Things Parents Need to Know about the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards

In school year 2013-2014, Maryland implemented new, higher standards for student learning – the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards – in all schools across the State. Maryland’s new standards are based on the Common Core State Standards, a set of consistent, high-quality academic goals in English/language arts (ELA) and mathematics, adopted by Maryland and over 40 other states. The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards define the knowledge and skills all students should master by the end of each grade level in order to graduate from high school fully prepared to enter college and the workforce. They raise the bar for student achievement and will help Maryland build a world-class education system.

Why do we need new educational standards and what do they mean for Maryland students?

Here are the top 10 facts about the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards all parents should know.

#1

The goal of Maryland’s new educational standards is college and workforce readiness for all students.

As students progress through the grades, they will build the skills and knowledge they will need to be prepared for college-level coursework and the demands of the 21st century workplace. Students will receive an education that not only leads to a high school diploma, but also to success in college, career, and life after graduation.

#2

The new standards were developed by the State, not the federal government.

Maryland’s new standards are based on the Common Core State Standards, which were developed by the nation’s governors and education commissioners, in collaboration with teachers, researchers, education experts, and members of the higher education and business communities. Maryland took the higher, internationally benchmarked Common Core Standards and refined them to meet the State’s needs, creating the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.

#3

The standards are not a curriculum and do not tell teachers how to teach.

Educational standards provide the foundation for a curriculum – establishing what students need to learn, but not dictating how those standards should be taught. State education experts and teachers have worked to determine the essential skills and knowledge that students must know and be able to do to meet each standard. This framework will help teachers create lesson plans, guide their instruction, and tailor how they teach the standards to the specific needs of their students.

#4

Better standards call for better assessments.

New tests are being developed to measure the critical content and skills of the new standards. Maryland is part of a consortium of states, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), working together to develop a common set of tests aligned to the Common Core Standards. The PARCC assessments will test writing skills in each grade, as well as critical thinking and problem solving skills. Students will take the new assessments on computers, allowing teachers to see test results quickly and adjust classroom instruction to the needs of their students.

#5

Maryland's new standards focus on 21st century skills.

The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards emphasize the development of skills – like problem solving, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity – that are vital to success in college and today's workplace. They also allow students to apply their learning to real-world situations that simulate the type of work they may do in the future.

#6

The standards create consistent learning goals for all students regardless of where they live or go to school.

The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards were developed from the Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by over 40 other states nationwide. By having consistent standards, parents can be assured that their children are being taught the same rigorous skills and knowledge as other students across Maryland and across the country. Having consistent standards also provides students, parents, and teachers with a clear understanding of what students should be learning in each grade level.

The standards are aligned to college and workplace expectations.

#7

Maryland's new standards reflect the knowledge and skills most valued by employers and higher education. Leaders in the higher education and business communities played a valuable role in their development – providing insight on the learning most needed by students entering college and the workforce. Students who master the standards will be on track to graduating from high school fully prepared for their next steps.

The standards are benchmarked against academic standards from the world's top-performing countries.

#8

Maryland's education system is consistently ranked as one of the best in the nation, but in today's global economy, competition for jobs comes not just from across the country, but spans the globe. Students must be prepared with the skills and knowledge to compete with their peers here at home as well as students from around the world. Development of Maryland's new standards was informed by the academic standards from a number of high achieving countries, such as Japan and Singapore.

The standards call for changes in learning for ELA and mathematics.

#9

In ELA, students will read more complex nonfiction and fiction texts. They will learn to create written arguments using evidence from multiple texts and to gather evidence to defend their opinions. In middle and high school, students will apply their literacy skills to mathematics, science, social studies, and technical subjects – learning to read and write well in all subjects.

In mathematics, students will develop a foundation of mathematical skills and learning from kindergarten through 12th grade, giving them the building blocks to understand why and how math works in the real-world. Students will still memorize math facts, but they will also be asked to show their understanding by explaining in writing how they solved math problems.

#10

Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards delve deeper into core concepts.

The standards ask teachers and students to dig deeper into the core skills and concepts at each grade level, focusing on the most important topics that students need to know. Teachers will have more time to cover subjects in greater detail and help students master critical skills and develop a deeper understanding of key concepts.

The clearly defined goals of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards allow families and teachers to work together to help students succeed. Parents can continue to play an active role in their children's education by communicating with their teachers and monitoring their children's academic progress at home.

To learn more, visit: MarylandPublicSchools.org