
Principal's Newsletter

Verner Elementary School

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

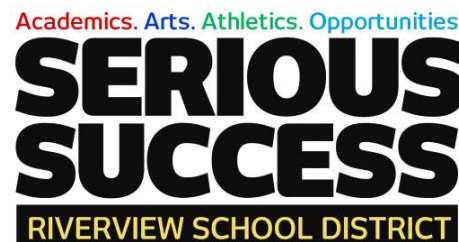
Over the past couple of years Pennsylvania and the nation has been working on transitioning to a new set of academic standards for our children K-12. These standards, known as the Common Core, are designed to ensure that every child across the nation is held to the same standards and enter college or the workforce with the same base of knowledge and skills to further their education or enter with workforce prepared to succeed. The 2014-2015 school year is the first year, in Pennsylvania, that these standards will be effective for our children. These standards are more rigorous and go more in-depth on important topics to be sure that students thoroughly learn the content and skills and retain them for years to come. Below you will find a general overview of the Common Core and how it applies to us here at Verner.

Common Core State Standards

What is the Common Core?

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a near-universal set of academic standards agreed to by 45 states and the District of Columbia. They are created for students K-12 by educators and academic experts to help our students compete in a global market.

Why Change?



Upcoming Events

November 3

No School (Teacher clerical Day)

November 4

No School (Parent-Teacher Conferences)

November 4

Election Day (Don't forget to Vote)

Important Announcement

Be sure that when plans dealing with your child's pick-up change that you send a note to the teacher about the change. If the person picking up your child is not on the emergency card they will be required to provide a photo id prior to picking up the child. This is for the safety of every child here at Verner Elementary. Thank you for your support and cooperation.

The world is changing and the American education system has not kept pace. In a 2012 report the United States ranked 14th among 37 countries in the percentage of 25-34-year-olds with higher education. And too many of today's high school graduates-25% according to a recent study-must take remedial classes to enroll in college courses. Experts agree that we must retool education to better prepare our children to confront the challenges of the ever-changing future. We must help them retain their competitive edge in the new global marketplace.

How are these standards different from current state standards?

The primary goal of CCSS is to teach critical thinking and problem solving. Students will become active learners rather than passive – in a dynamic classroom environment. They will become independent thinkers who can create informed opinions, critique the opinions of their peers and their world, defend their arguments with evidence, and communicate their points of view effectively. On tests, they will be required to reason out the best answer, rather than memorizing the “correct” answer

HOW WILL THIS CHANGE THE CURRICULUM?

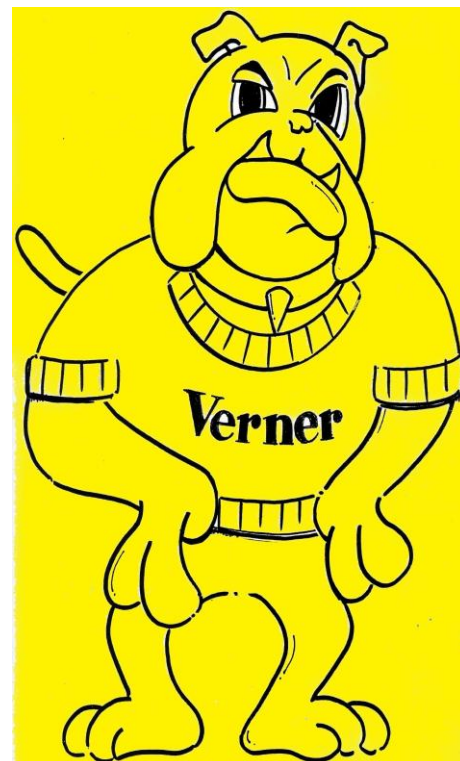
CCSS should require fewer topics but give teachers and students more time to explore the most important ones in greater depth. Students will develop a deeper understanding of key concepts, and be able to apply their knowledge to real-world situations. All PPS curricula K-12 will be aligned to the Common Core by 2013-14

HOW WILL STUDENTS LEARN MATH?

Students will acquire the habit of mathematical thinking. Mathematical thinking is a way of problem solving across all math courses. The foundation, which will begin in kindergarten and continue through 12th grade, will give students the building blocks to understand why and how math works in real-world situations. While memorization of math facts is still important, more emphasis will be placed on true comprehension. To demonstrate their depth of understanding, students will be required to explain in writing how they solved a math problem.

HOW WILL STUDENTS LEARN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS?

Students will read more complex texts, both nonfiction and fiction.



They will learn to:

- create written arguments using evidence from multiple texts;
- gather evidence to defend their opinions;
- In middle school and high school, to apply their literacy skills to math, science, social studies and technical subjects; and read and write well across all subjects in preparation for college and careers.

How will this affect teaching?

CCSS offers teachers the opportunity to teach deeper rather than wider; and allows them more time to help students master critical concepts and skills.

How will my child be tested on the CCSS?

Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, the PSSA's in grades 3-8 will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

As a Parent, what can I do to help my child succeed?

A great resource for parents can be found on the national PTA website:

<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583>

What are the principles of the Common Core?

- ✓ Students, regardless of circumstance, achieve at high levels
- ✓ Students must be career and college ready
- ✓ Students will be able to move from school to school across the nation and have continuity of curriculum
- ✓ Curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades.
- ✓ Students read increasingly complex texts with increasing independence.
- ✓ Students focus on math practices to learn and apply rigorous content.