



Curriculum Committee Report  
Spring 2013

Committee Members

Eileen Bowles – Sycamore Trails Elementary School  
Anita Costabile – Prairieview Elementary School  
Brock Friedman – Laurel Hill Elementary School  
Maria Garbarz – Centennial Elementary School  
Sally Hoelterhoff – Centennial Elementary School  
Ian Horn - Hilltop Elementary School  
Tracy Kelly - Sunnydale Elementary School  
Pat Kressin – Kimball Middle School  
Tim Krzyzanowski - Sunnydale Elementary School  
Melissa Lane – Larkin High School – co-chair  
Kamlini Potdar – Liberty Elementary School  
Mary Van Slyck – Canton Middle School – co-chair  
Shameka Turner – Timber Trails Elementary School  
Julie Winterhalder – Bartlett Elementary School

School District U-46 Liaison - Tony Sanders – Chief of Staff

The committee sincerely thanks Tony Sanders for his forthright assistance and  
patience as we work together for the good of our students!

Report approved by CAC Executive Committee – March 21, 2013

Report approved by the CAC General Council – April 11, 2013

Report to be presented to the Board of Education - School District U-46 – May 20, 2013

For the 2012-2013 school year, the Curriculum committee continued to work with the Secondary Grading Committee and started a new task of educating ourselves about Common Core. In turn, our knowledge of Common Core State Standards would then be assimilated into an easy to understand set of FAQs that could be shared with members of our school community.

### **Secondary Grading Committee**

The Secondary Grading Committee continues its work into the 2<sup>nd</sup> school year. Committee members have met several times this school year, three of those since January alone. Seven guiding principles for grading have been developed. A preliminary set of findings was presented to Instructional Council. After discussion, it was agreed that not all of the seven principles would be presented at this time. Fall 2013 will see the presentation of two principles with professional development opportunities available. The remaining guiding principles will be presented to the Board of Education at a later date. While the work of this committee started as simply a change in grading policy, it now encompasses larger concerns of professional development and coordination with Common Core State Standards. The CAC curriculum Committee thanks Pat Kressin for her continued work with the Secondary Grading Committee.

### **Common Core State Standards**

Educational standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning. For many years, each individual state determined these standards. Expectations may have varied from one state to another, and may have varied from the United States to foreign countries. In this age of global competition, students are competing on a larger and wider scale than before. Because of these reasons, learning standards needed to be updated.

State governors and education commissioners led the effort to develop Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These standards were not developed by the federal government. Teachers, parents, school administrators and experts from across the country, together with state leaders, provided input into the development of these standards.

To this date, forty-five states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense schools have adopted the CCSS. No state was asked to lower their standards to align with the CCSS. In fact, many states will see an increase in expectations as the standards are adopted. The Common Core State Standards were built on the best and highest state standards in existence in the U.S. The commission examined the expectations of other high performing countries around the world, and studied the research and literature available on what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in college and careers in the twenty-first century.

1. What is Common Core?

Illinois is moving forward with new learning standards called the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). CCSS cover two areas of learning, English Language Arts & Literacy and Mathematics, for grades K-12. Language Arts includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Illinois has always had learning standards. CCSS are the new standards that have been developed in a nationwide initiative. While standards are for these two areas right now, ALL classes from Physical Education to Foreign Language to Art are expected to help support and teach to the new standards.

2. What about science and social studies?

Common Core does not explicitly include science and social studies. Science standards are being developed as part of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which Illinois hopes to adopt in 2013.

3. Do the standards apply to all students?

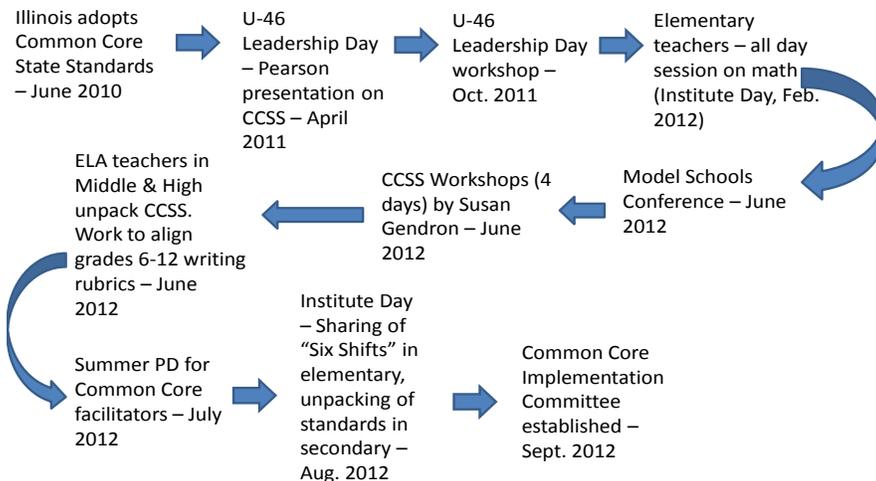
Yes - all. That means all classes including special education, English as a Second Language (ESL), dual language, and gifted will be taught to the new standards.

4. When is this all happening?

Illinois adopted the new standards in 2010. Students will be tested using the new standards by the spring of 2015. In order to help students and parents gear-up for the new standards, Illinois has raised the cut-off scores for meeting state standards on the ISAT. This means that students who met the ISAT standards before may not meet them under the new cut-off scores.



## Where We've Been



## 5. What is U-46 doing about these changes?

School District U-46 has a website devoted to information on the CCSS.

<http://www.u-46.org/spps/ahpg.cfm?spgid=396>

A lot has happened already and more will happen as Illinois reaches decisions about testing and the funding needed for major change. This is not a federally mandated program. The decisions flow from the state using the standards, to districts choosing curriculum and texts, and finally teachers implementing these choices in their classrooms.

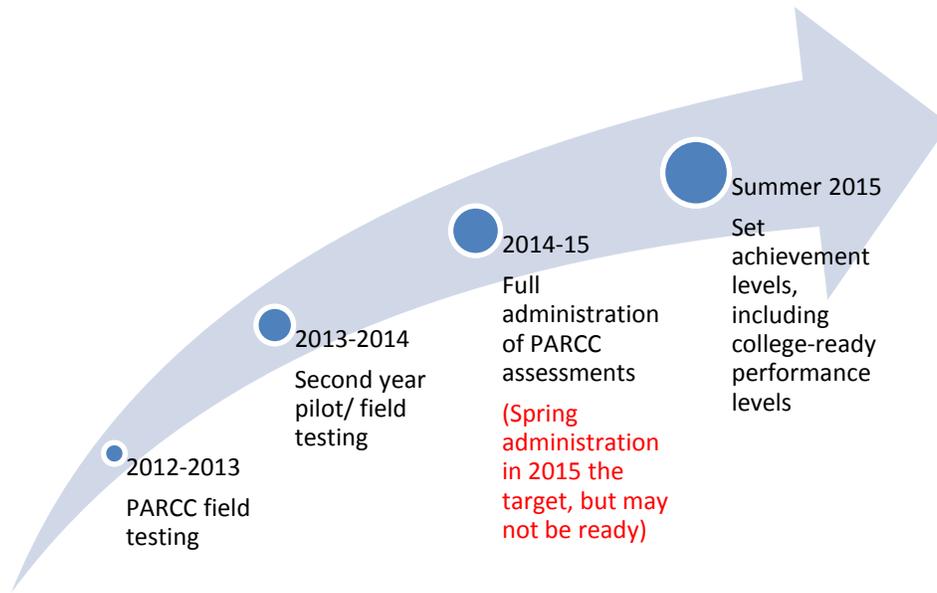
U-46 has assembled a Common Core Steering Committee composed of central office administrators, principals, and teachers from all grade levels. This committee is driving the needed changes for the district to meet the new standards. They have four goals that must be included in all decisions about curriculum and curriculum adoption. Any decisions will:

- apply to dual language classes from the beginning, not as an afterthought.
- use multiple levels of support to help all students succeed.
- be appropriate for all demographics of students.
- build on students' life skills, including those gained in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

The District has a trained common core facilitator/teacher at each school to help teachers as they move to the new standards. Professional development in CCSS for teachers has started.

## 6. What will the assessments be like?

The state of Illinois has joined PARCC, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, as the creator of assessments in English Language Arts and Math. Illinois is one of 22 states that is planning to use the PARCC assessments. PARCC's assessment system will provide students and educators with the tools needed to identify whether students — from grade 3 through high school — are on track for postsecondary success. In addition, any gaps may be identified and addressed well before students enter college or the workforce. These assessments are designed to gauge if students are meeting the requirements of the CCSS. These assessments will be online, and students will test at school on school computers. It is unknown which if any of the current assessments will be used. The technology sub-committee of the U-46 Common Core Steering Committee is looking into what technology will be needed for this process. As you see from the graphic below, some details about the assessments are still unclear. School District U-46 is aware that additional computers and technical support will be needed, but does not yet have enough information to proceed with planning. The support needed in terms of servers, computers, software and all things technical is a looming question.



7. Do the new elementary report cards relate to the new standards?

Yes. The new elementary report cards are tied to the new standards and reflect the desired outcomes. <http://www.u-46.org/spps/ahpg.cfm?spgid=346>

8. Where can I learn more about CCSS by grade level?

The district website provides links to information on the standards for parents by grade level in English and Spanish. <http://www.u-46.org/spps/ahpg.cfm?spgid=396>

9. How much will this big change cost?

There are too many unknowns about state requirements for U-46 to predict the costs yet. It will not be easy or cheap.

10. What can parents do to help their students meet these new standards?

Read to and with your children. Make reading a priority in your own life. Use cooking and shopping to bring math into daily life. The district also has useful information for parents about supporting your student. <http://www.u-46.org/parents/>

11. Where can I get more information?

Use the links in this document. For further information and discussion about what is happening at your school talk to your child’s teacher or principal.

Our recommendations for this reporting period :

1. Translate these FAQ's into Spanish and other languages as needed to reach our entire school population.
2. Provide these FAQs at each school during a multitude of events including open houses, PTO meetings, parent-teacher conferences, reading nights, fun fairs, etc.
3. Post these FAQs – and translated versions - on the district website and on individual U-46 school websites.
4. Include the Council of the Great City Schools introductory CCSS video in as many school events as possible.

These recommendations share a common link. Many people may not remember or realize the importance of this information the first time it is presented to them. Sharing the information at repeated times - throughout the school year - allows for multiple learning opportunities.