

PA Core Standards Higher Education Fact Sheet

WHAT ARE THE PENNSYLVANIA CORE STANDARDS?

The State Board adopted Common Core Standards in July 2010. Since that time, the decision was made to craft a set of Pennsylvania (PA) Core Standards tailored to meet our state specific needs in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as for Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science/Technical Subjects. A group of Pennsylvania educators crafted the PA Core Standards, which mirror the academic rigor of the Common Core State Standards, are attainable for students, practicable for teachers and districts, and reflect the organization and design of the PA Academic Standards.

In compliance with Chapter 4 (§4.11), Pennsylvania's Core Standards are a set of rigorous, high-quality academic expectations in English Language arts (ELA) and mathematics that all students should master by the end of each grade level. The PA Core Standards are robust and relevant to the real world and reflect the knowledge and skills our young people need to succeed in life after high school, in both post-secondary education and a globally competitive workforce.

WHAT DO THE PA CORE STANDARDS MEAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS?

- The PA Core Standards aim to set clear, realistic expectations for learning that are consistent within the state and to ensure high school graduates are prepared for college.
- The PA Core Standards should influence every part of every teacher preparation program.

PA CORE STANDARDS SHIFTS	
ELA/LITERACY	MATHEMATICS
1. Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction .	1. Focus strongly where the Standards focus.
2. Reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from text , both literary and informational text.	2. Coherence: Think across grades, and link to major topics within grades.
3. Regular practice with complex text and its academic language .	3. Rigor: In major topics pursue conceptual understanding , procedural skill and fluency , and application with equal intensity.

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IMPLEMENTING THE PA CORE STANDARDS:

The PA Department of Education worked with state teachers and curriculum experts to develop a **model curriculum** that schools may **voluntarily** use if they wish. The PA Department of Education continues to provide educational resources through the Standards Aligned System (www.pde.sas.org). Information and resources related to PA Core Standards are located in the Standards, Assessment, Curriculum Framework, Instruction, and Materials & Resources section of the website. Currently, state assessments are being developed that align to the PA Core Standards. Because these standards are more rigorous than the previous state standards, Pennsylvania has the following implementation schedule for the PA Core Standards aligned assessments:

- Students in grades 3 – 8 will continue to be assessed using the current PSSA, which will include PA Core standard related questions ONLY if the PA Academic Standard and PA Core Standard are similar. In 2015, students in these grades will be assessed on the PA Core Standards.
- PA has replaced the 11th grade PSSA with end of course exams in Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology. These exams are called Keystone Exams. They have been aligned to the PA Core Standards.
- Although Keystone Exams were given during the 2012-13 school year, it is not until the 2016-17 school year that students must score at least “proficient” on these exams in order to graduate. Pennsylvania has developed an alternative means for some students to demonstrate proficiency on the PA Core Standards, if needed.
- Pennsylvania has developed an online testing option that is available to schools for both the PSSA and Keystone Exams; however, completing the test online is not a requirement.

WHAT CAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS DO NOW?

The PA Core Standards will be fully implemented in 2015 with the administration of the PA Core Standard aligned PSSAs. Higher education can support smooth transition to the new standards by:

- Aligning higher education with K-12 curriculum (which includes both adapting admissions standards and revising curricula of first year courses that act as bridges between K-12 and college majors).
- Preparing and educating teachers, both prospective and practicing (which includes revising curriculum in disciplinary departments to prepare teachers to

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teach the PA Core, revising professional preparation coursework and experiences, and working in partnerships with professional development programs).

- Conducting research on issues of teaching and learning the PA Core Standards, educator effectiveness, and the implementation of the PA Core Standards.
- Establishing and sustaining long-term partnerships with LEAs and agencies in the educational system.

HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES:

[Four Guiding Strategies and Key Questions \(pdf\)](#)

[PA Core Standards Implementation Stages Graphic \(pdf\)](#)

[PA Core Standards Stages of Implementation Table \(pdf\)](#)

[PA Core Standards Timeline\(pdf\)](#)