New Mexico adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010 with the goal of better preparing students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in college and careers. The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), have developed a set of standards for consistent use across the U.S. The skills included in the English language arts and mathematics standards focus on student confidence in the ability to read, write, communicate, complete projects with groups of peers, and use technology so that students are successful in graduating from high school and prepared for college and/or careers. Now, 45 states are working with school communities to implement the CCSS.

Visit corestandards.org for the actual standards and more information.

Here’s what you should know and how to help your child prepare for the CCSS:

**The Common Core Standards are State-Driven**

The common core state standards are a set of learning skills that all American students should achieve, not a national curriculum. They set the benchmarks and guidelines for what each student should learn, not how or what teachers teach.

- **Parent Tip:** Visit newmexicocommoncore.org for information on the New Mexico Public Education Department Initiative. Talk with students, other parents, teachers and school staff about the standards.

**The Standards are a Progression**

In general, standards set a progression of skills that students learn as they move through school. Students learn skills that they can build on and expand on each year.

- **Parent Tip:** Look through the standards to get a feel for what your child will be learning as he moves through school. Read the English-language arts standards and the math standards at www.commoncore.org. Visit pta.org/parents to access Parents’ Guide to Student Success for each grade level. These give you specific grade level questions and language to use with your children and their teachers.

**Students will Delve Deeper into Core Concepts**

The common core state standards focus on the most important topics that students need to know. In math, that means that students focus on really understanding numbers in elementary school before they start to apply that understanding of numbers to data in middle school.

- **Parent Tip:** As your child completes homework, help them hone in on the most important aspects and core concepts. Show positive attitudes towards math and languages. Use teachable moments in your home, with daily chores, through play, and in the community, to engage with your children in math, language, science, research, news, etc.

**The Reading Standards will Get More Complex**

As the common core is implemented, students will be expected to read text and discuss what they read at a more complex level. Informational text will be used frequently as students seek information on relevant topics.

- **Parent Tip:** Support your children in using resources to access reading material through electronic readers, the internet, libraries, family centers, etc. As you read with your child, ask her in-depth why and how questions that encourage her to compare, contrast, analyze and summarize texts. See Appendix B of the English language arts standards for a wide range of book titles.
A Parent’s Guide to the Common Core State Standards

Focus on Informational Text
To prepare students for college-level work, there will be more of a focus on informational and expository/explanatory text. In middle school especially, students will be reading informational text, including original historical documents, significant speeches, etc.

- Parent Tip: Encourage your child to research a topic he’s interested in using informational texts and original documents. Share historical stories about your family and community events. Model using many resources for information.

Assessments Will Change
Instead of multiple choice tests, students will be analyzing and synthesizing information, writing essay responses, and answering in-depth questions to show how much they understand. Much more of classroom work, quizzes, and exams will involve computers and technology.

- Parent Tip: Ask your child to explain or show how they’re solving problems. Then, have them think of multiple ways to solve a math problem, answer a reading discussion question, respond to a news event, and think like scientists, mathematicians, artists, speakers, readers, and writers. Visit parcconline.org for more information.

Focus on Practical Skills
The common core standards were designed with the workplace in mind. So, students will be working on taking the role of scientists, historians, researchers, and more. The focus will be on making sense of problems and critiquing solutions and reasoning.

- Parent Tip: As your child works through his homework, ask him how someone might use what he’s working on in “real life.” Help connect thinking in school to thinking at work by explaining how you solve problems, or use math every day.

As the common core state standards start to be implemented in schools, there will be some changes, but many things will stay the same. The most important aspect, as always, is to stay in contact with your child’s teacher to find out how you can support educational advancement at home.

For videos, parent information brochures and resources visit:
pta.org/parents
National PTA Parents’ Guide to Student Success K-12
The pamphlets are available in Spanish and English and provide an overview of what children will learn by the end of each grade in mathematics and English language arts. They also include specific parent tips, vocabulary, and questions to use with your children and their teachers at each grade level.

commoncoreworks.org
Parent Roadmaps to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics
These publications are available online and for printing in English and Spanish. The Council of the Great City Schools developed these guides by grade level to provide guidance to parents about what their children will be learning and how they can support that learning, K-12.

Some key websites with videos and more information are included below:
- http://www.corestandards.org
- http://vimeo.com/51933492
- http://www.youtube.com/user/TheHuntInstitute