

# DEAR PARENT,



We all want our children to be prepared for success in the real world. 94% of parents say they want their kids to go to college, yet, today only 29% of Illinois high school students will earn a 2- or 4-year degree. At the same time, jobs in Illinois are going unfilled because employers can't find workers with the skills they need in a modern economy.

We owe it to our children to ensure that they graduate with the skills they'll need to be successful. That's why 45 states, including Illinois, are raising the bar for kids by adopting the Common Core State Standards.



These new learning standards are designed to create clear, consistent expectations for what all students should learn at each grade level to prepare them for college and career. That's why the Common Core is real learning for real life!

## THE NEW COMMON CORE STANDARDS ARE:



Math and English Language Arts learning standards for kindergarten to 12th grade, with more subjects in development



Fewer, clearer, deeper and based on what students must learn at each grade level to succeed in college and modern careers



Creating the same expectations for all students so families can understand exactly what every student should be learning no matter where they live



Emphasizing skills students will need for the modern workplace: collaboration, critical thinking, communication and creativity



Built upon strengths and lessons from the highest-performing states and countries

# READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER...

We must hold high expectations for each of our students and help them develop the real life skills they need to be successful. The Common Core does this by:



Building upon what is learned in the previous grade all the way up to college-level expectations;



Emphasizing vocabulary development and more nonfiction reading;



Concentrating on a deeper understanding of more focused math concepts and having students use them in everyday life; and



Requiring strong writing and communication skills for all subjects.

# CHANGES TO TESTS ARE COMING...

1. The state will transition to the new PARCC exam in math and English Language Arts in 2014/15. PARCC will provide teachers, parents, and students with a more detailed picture of student learning (including skills necessary for college and career like critical thinking and problem solving), so that instruction can be tailored to meet individual needs.
2. For now, PSAE will remain the same and students will continue to take the same college entrance exams (ACT & SAT) since these tests already accurately predict college readiness. By mastering the Common Core standards, students will be better prepared to tackle these tests as well.

# HOW CAN YOU HELP?

## 1 LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CORE

Connect with [CommonCoreIL.org](http://CommonCoreIL.org) for the latest information and resources.



## 2 TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS

Find tips for talking to teachers and PTA Parent Guides at [www.CommonCoreIL.org](http://www.CommonCoreIL.org)

## 3 STAY IN TOUCH

Sign up for the Core Connection newsletter at [CommonCoreIL.org](http://CommonCoreIL.org)