



DPS Curriculum Connection

The New Illinois Common Core Learning Standards

The Illinois State Board of Education has adopted new Math and English/Language Arts standards for K-12 education known as the *New Illinois State Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core*. In order to shorten that lengthy title, educators are referring to these standards as the *Common Core*.

The goal of the Common Core is to better prepare Illinois students for success in college and the workforce in a competitive global economy.

The previous standards in Illinois were adopted in 1997. Our expectations for what students must know and be able to demonstrate are different now. I think we can all agree that the previous standards were voluminous and didn't identify grade specific standards for learning. The new standards aim to provide clear, consistent academic benchmarks for learning. The Common Core provides benchmarks of skills and knowledge that students should have at the conclusion of each grade level. Fewer, clearer, and higher are three adjectives used when describing the Common Core.

This does NOT mean that we throw out our existing essential outcomes and replace them with the Common Core. As we proceed through this process, I think you'll be pleasantly surprised with how many of your essential outcomes are found in the Common Core. Just as the State Board of Education has a timeline for implementation, so does Dixon Public Schools.

We asked for Math and English/Language Arts standards to be identified by the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year. This year we are working on common formative assessments related to Math and English/Language Arts. These two tasks are important for two main reasons. 1) When we sit down to compare our essential outcomes to the Common Core, because we have identified what we deem to be important, it will be easier to see gaps and redundancies. 2) Our common formative assessments are going to yield data about our essential outcomes so we can see what's working and what needs to be tweaked.

By 2014-2015 a new assessment from I.S.B.E. is scheduled to be in place. That assessment will include the new Common Core. That seems like a ways off, but it will be here before we know it. The plans we have developed and are continuing to develop will ensure we are ready ahead of the 2014 date. Middle School and High School math teachers began working on Common Core this summer, so it is already starting in our district.

The administrative team and I are continuing to discuss roll out procedures that fit within the structure we've already established. I look forward to sharing this information and working with you on the new Common Core!

Created By: Mrs. Margo
D. Empen—Assistant
Superintendent DPS

Volume 1

Sept. 9, 2011

Special Announcements

Congratulations to:

- *Betty Leslie*
- *Barb Hermes*
- *Kim Stanley*
- *Kimberly Bork*
- *Dan Rick*

for being nominated and honored through *Those Who Excel*. We have a fantastic district, and these five individuals are shining examples of what

Academic Dates to Remember:

Washington School Book Fair	9/12
Washington School Back to	9/13
School Improvement Half-Day	9/19
Board of Education Meeting	9/21
NIU Band Day	9/24