

# A PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS



Denver Public Schools has embraced the Colorado Academic Standards to ensure students are prepared for college and career in the 21st century. The standards, which include the Common Core State Standards in math and in reading, writing and communicating, represent a shift in education to provide a consistent and clear understanding of what students are expected to learn at each grade level. The goal is to make your child's classroom an even more engaging setting, with increased opportunities for collaboration, conversation and problem-solving. You may even notice your child using more technology in the classroom to enhance learning.

The guide below shows how the standards will affect your child, what changes you will see reflected in your child's schoolwork and what you can do at home to help your child in the classroom.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

WHAT'S CHANGING:	WHAT TO LOOK FOR:	WHAT YOU CAN DO:
In addition to high-quality literature, your child will now <b>read more non-fiction</b> at each grade level.	Look for your child to have more reading assignments based on real-life events, such as biographies, articles and historical stories.	Read fiction and non-fiction books with your child. Show that reading both can be fun and exciting.
Your child will <b>learn about the world through reading</b> .	Look for your child to bring home more fact-based books about the world that lets him/her learn about science and social studies through his/her reading.	Know what non-fiction books and magazines are grade-level appropriate and are interesting to your child, and make sure he/she has access to these reading materials.
Your child will <b>read challenging texts very closely</b> to make sense of what he/she reads and learn to draw his/her own conclusions.	Your child will have reading and writing assignments that might ask him/her to retell or write about key parts of a story or book.	Provide more challenging texts for your child to read as well as texts he/she wants to read and can read comfortably. Show him/her how to dig deeper into difficult pieces.
When it comes to writing or retelling a story, your child will <b>use "evidence" gathered from the text to support what he/she said</b> .	Look for writing that asks your child to draw on concrete examples from the text that serve as evidence. Evidence means examples from the book to support a response.	Ask your child to provide evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements. Help him/her understand the difference between giving evidence and giving an opinion.
Your child will learn how to <b>write from what he/she reads</b> .	Look for writing that asks your child to make arguments in writing using evidence.	Encourage writing at home. Write together using evidence and details.
Your child will have an <b>increased academic vocabulary</b> .	Look for assignments that stretch your child's vocabulary and teach him/her that "language is power."	Talk to your child. Read to and with your child. Listen to your child. Encourage him/her to explain in detail when discussing assignments.

## MATHEMATICS

WHAT'S CHANGING:	WHAT TO LOOK FOR:	WHAT YOU CAN DO:
Your child will <b>learn much more about fewer topics</b> , which will help ensure full understanding.	Look for assignments that require your child to show his/her work and explain how he/she arrived at an answer.	Know what concepts are important for your child based on his/her grade level and spend time working on those.
Your child will <b>keep building on learning year after year</b> , starting with a strong foundation.	Look for assignments that build on one another. For example, your child's focus may move from adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing to fractions, and then to algebra.	Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support him/her to move forward in those areas. If you need help, ask your child's teacher what grade-level concepts your child can work on at home.
Your child will <b>focus on mastering major math concepts and skills</b> .	Your child will have assignments that focus on mastering basic math facts and math concepts that are important for success in more advanced math.	Help your child use his/her math knowledge to solve problems and "do the math" that pops up in daily life.
Your child will <b>understand why math works and be asked to talk about and prove his/her understanding</b> .	Your child will have assignments that focus on not only solving the problem but also explaining "how" and "why" he/she solved it in a certain way.	Encourage your child to explain how he/she got answers to problems.
Your child will now be asked to <b>use math in real-world situations</b> .	Look for math assignments that are based on the real world. For instance, homework might include adding fractions for a recipe or determining how much pizza a friend ate.	Provide opportunities for your child to use his/her math knowledge at home.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS

WHAT'S CHANGING:	WHAT TO LOOK FOR:	WHAT YOU CAN DO:
Your child's teacher will <b>emphasize the academic language needed for each subject</b> .	Look for assignments that ask him/her to explain, compare analyze, and justify his/her work. Writing expectations will include how to structure sentences and styles of writing such as arguing, persuading, explaining and narration.	Encourage your child to talk about what he/she is learning at school. Ask him/her to speak in complete and detailed sentences. We also encourage you to continue to read, write and speak in your native language.
Your child will have <b>access to specialized supports according to his/her English language development needs</b> .	Look for assignments with real-world situations that encourage collaboration with classmates and family members, where your child can discuss and share his/her thinking.	Additional hands-on activities at home can help develop your child's English language development. There are several online resources you can use at home with your child, including Khan Academy, Learn Zillion and the DPS Safari Montage videos.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional information on Standards and Assessments for parents can be found on the Parent/Student portal

- <http://myportal.dpsk12.org>

*Adapted from EngageNY, Parent's Backpack Guide to Common Core State Standards*