



Coming in to Common Core

By Marguerite Johnson, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services

Staff and students are immersed in the work of transitioning to the Common Core State Standards. Adopted by 44 other states and the District of Columbia, the development of the new standards was led by the National Governors' Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The new standards provide a clear, consistent set of expectations of what students should be able to know and do at each grade level so that they are ready for college and a career by the time they graduate from high school. Built upon the best of the contributing states' standards and grounded in research, these internationally-benchmarked standards address knowledge, content and skills.

Among the significant differences between the California Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History Social Science and Technical Subjects and the old California English Language Arts standards, which they replace, are the emphases placed upon:

- Building students' knowledge through content-based non-fiction, informational text
- Reading and writing based on evidence from the text
- Regular practice with complex text and the academic vocabulary contained within these texts

Special Edition
2014

Serving nearly 9,000 students spread across 346 square miles, Westside Union School District prides itself on being "the district of choice" with more choice-based programs than any other district in the Antelope Valley. Westside Union School District features 12 schools, providing world-class education to students from kindergarten to 8th grade. Continuing a tradition of high academic achievement, a majority of Westside Union School District schools exceed the coveted 800 score on the Academic Performance Index administered by the California Department of Education.

Common Core (continued)

Common Core Condensed

- New state standards in English, social studies and science
- Standards focused on college and career preparation
- Same standards across 44 states
- New California Math Standards
- Math standards focused on why and how math works and when and where to use it
- New computerized assessments

Research and media skills are woven throughout the standards at all grade levels. Students are expected to use these skills to communicate with a variety of audiences using a variety of tools. As the title, Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History Social Science and Technical Subjects, indicates, the responsibility for developing students' knowledge and skills is shared between all content areas.

The California Common Core Standards: Mathematics are focused, coherent and rigorous. They lay the foundation for a strong mathematics program that strikes a balance between students' conceptual understanding ('why'), computational and procedural

processes ('how'), and problem solving skills ('where' and 'when'). The standards outline a clear progression of skills from grade level to grade level.

State assessments for the standards are being developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. The new assessments will be administered online and, when fully operational, will be computer-adaptive, adjusting to the test-takers ability level. This spring, Westside students in grades 3 - 8 will be participating in the Smarter Balanced field test in the areas of English Language Arts and mathematics.

Parents and community members are invited to participate in the Common Core 101 series (see below). On Thursday, April 17th at 6:00 p.m. we will be taking a look at the standards for mathematical practice. This session will be repeated Saturday, April 26th, at 11:00 a.m. On Thursday, May 15th, the topic will be Literacy and the Common Core. The session will be repeated Saturday, May 17th. Sessions are held at the District Office.

Common Core 101 Parent Series

41914 N. 50th St West, Room 4

Thursday Sessions

6:00pm-7:30pm

April 17 - A look at the new assessments

May 15 - Literacy and the Common Core

Saturday Sessions

11:00am-12:30pm

April 26 - A look at the new assessments

May 17 - Literacy and the Common Core

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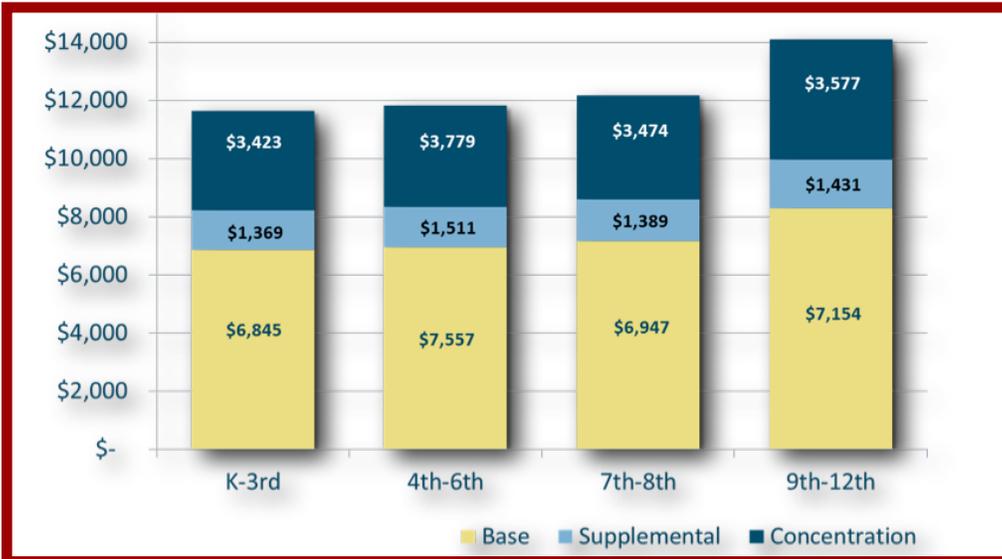
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This graph shows the division of funding into the four grade spans and the amount of funding received through base grants, supplemental grants and concentration grants.

A Look at the Local Control Funding Formula

By Marguerite Johnson, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services

The 2013-2014 state budget replaced the previous K-12 Revenue Limit funding structure with the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Under LCFF, all school districts throughout the state will receive the same funding per student for four grade spans called a base grant. The four grade spans for the base grant are Kindergarten through 3rd grade, 4th through 6th grade, 7th through 8th grade, and 9th through 12th grade. In addition to the Base grant, supplemental grants will be provided for English Learners, low-income students and foster children. Districts in which more than 55% of their students are identified as English Learners, low-income, or foster children will also receive a concentration grant. The supplemental and concentration grants must be used to “increase or improve services for English Learners, low-income and/or foster students.” Implementation and full funding of the Local Control Funding Formula will be phased in over an 8-year period.

Under the Local Control Funding Formula, school districts must work with parents, educators, and other community stakeholders to develop and adopt Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP). A district’s LCAP must describe its vision for students, the district’s annual goals and the specific actions that it will take to achieve this vision. The

LCAP must also clearly demonstrate how its budget will help achieve the goals.

The goals included in the LCAP must address eight state priorities:

1. Providing all students properly credentialed teachers, standards-aligned instructional materials, and safe facilities
2. Implementation of California’s academic standards
3. Parent involvement
4. Improving student achievement
5. Supporting student engagement
6. Supporting a positive school climate
7. Ensuring all students have access to classes that prepare them for college and a career
8. Measuring other student outcomes related to required areas of study

LCAPs may also incorporate additional district priorities and goals.

Westside welcomes your participation in the process. Several informational meetings will be held over the next three months. Additionally, all parents will have the opportunity to participate in a survey that will be conducted.

Contact Westside

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