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AASL/ALSC/YALSA Interdivisional Taskforce on the Common Core

# Common Core State Standards Action Toolkit for Public Librarians

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Association for Library Service to Children



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# Common Core 101: A Guide to Learning and Action for Librarians

The Common Core State Standards Initiative represents a major shift for schools. As public librarians, especially those who focus on youth services, you are in a unique position to support your patrons and fellow librarians during this time of educational transition. This support requires familiarizing yourself with the standards to understand how they will be implemented.

As you become familiar with the standards, you will likely have an “Ah-ha!” moment and realize that most of the work you are already doing supports the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

To better orient yourself to the standards and to start planning your library’s response, please take this introductory “course.” The first part is to **LEARN** more about CCSS, and the second part is to **APPLY** what you have learned about CCSS to your practice.

## LEARN

There is a huge role for the public library in terms of student support, parent education, and collaboration with educators. But first, public librarians and library workers need a basic understanding of the Common Core State Standards and how they impact student learning.

### What Are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards (frequently referred to as the Common Core, CCSS, or CC) are clear, consistent standards that provide an understanding of what students need to learn to be career- and college-ready and what teachers need to teach to ensure that readiness. The CCSS are a set of academic content standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in math, English language arts, and literacy in the content areas (science and technical subjects, social studies/history). Their intent is to deliver, in a brief format, a clear understanding of the fundamental skills students are expected to learn. The CCSS were developed by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers and, as of March 2014, they are being implemented in 45 states, the District of Columbia, and four territories.

The Common Core State Standards are also:

- Designed to help ensure that all students are college- and career-ready in literacy and mathematics no later than the end of high school. “College- and career-ready” means able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The CCSS are aligned with college and work expectations.
- Meant to describe what students should know and be able to do at each grade level.
- Intended to provide a progression of expectations for learning.

### Why Do the Common Core State Standards Matter to Public Librarians?

Although public libraries are not directly accountable to CCSS in that they are not implementing the standards, public librarians are accountable to their users, many of whom are children and youth. As

such public libraries can:

- Engage and support students without being directly responsible for curriculum
- Educate parents and answer their questions
- Provide support for teachers and school librarians
- Collaborate with schools in ways that benefit school and public libraries and provide seamless support to students

Learning about the CCSS is for all public library staff—not just those working in children’s and teen services! Library staff members in all areas, including adult services, outreach, marketing, technical services/cataloging, IT, and administration, have a role to play in supporting patrons.

## To Learn More:

1. Watch this 3-minute video from the Council of the Great City Schools which provides a brief, clear, and entertaining introduction to the CCSS: <http://www.cgcs.org/domain/157>.
2. Explore the official Common Core State Standards website: <http://www.corestandards.org/>. Consider these sections:
  - a. Read the Mission Statement on the homepage: <http://www.corestandards.org/>.
  - b. Read the FAQs: <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>.
  - c. Read the Basic Design Considerations: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/introduction/key-design-consideration>.
  - d. Read the section Students Who are College and Career Ready in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, & Language: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/introduction/students-who-are-college-and-career-ready-in-reading-writing-speaking-listening-language>.
  - e. Read the English Language Arts Anchor Standards to understand how they are organized and what they contain: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>.
  - f. Familiarize yourself with the CCSS Grades 6-12 Literacy Standards in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>.
  - g. Browse the CCSS Mathematics Standards: <http://www.corestandards.org/Math>.
3. Familiarize yourself with Common Core Works: <http://www.commoncoreworks.org>, including the Myths v. Facts about the Common Core State Standards: <http://www.commoncoreworks.org/Page/314>.
4. Read these articles for some insights on the role of the public librarian:
  - a. “The Public Library Connection: The New Standards Require that Public and School Librarians Pull Together” by Olga Nesi. *School Library Journal*, December 2012: <http://www.slj.com/2012/12/opinion/on-common-core/the-public-library-connection-the-new-standards-require-that-public-and-school-librarians-pull-together-on-common-core/>.
  - b. “A School and Public Librarian Find Common Ground on the Common Core” a conversation with Nina Lindsay and Olga Nesi, moderated by Daryl Grabarek. *School Library Journal*, October 21, 2013: <http://www.slj.com/2013/10/standards/common-core/a-school-and-public-librarian-find-common-ground-on-the-common-core/>.
  - c. “Cut to the Core: On the Frontlines of the Common Core Rollout” by Margaux DelGuidice and Rose Luna. *Publishers Weekly*, November 29, 2013: <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry->

- [news/libraries/article/60184-ala-2014-preview-cut-to-the-core-on-the-front-lines-of-the-common-core-rollout.html](http://www.slj.com/news/libraries/article/60184-ala-2014-preview-cut-to-the-core-on-the-front-lines-of-the-common-core-rollout.html). The article focuses on the role that public librarians play in the rollout of the CCSS.
- d. "Reading Nonfiction for Pleasure" by Myra Zarnowski, Mary Ann Cappiello, and Marc Aronson, *School Library Journal*, June 1, 2013: <http://www.slj.com/2013/06/standards/curriculum-connections/reading-nonfiction-for-pleasure-on-common-core/>. The authors discuss how to use the summer to provide young readers with more opportunities to grow confident as nonfiction readers. The article includes several title recommendations and many links to awards lists and recommended-reading lists from the ALA, Horn Book, and other trusted sources.
  - e. "Classroom Connections: Informational Texts and the Common Core" by Terrell A. Young and Barbara A. Ward. First published September 2012 (Book Links): <http://www.booklistonline.com/ProductInfo.aspx?pid=5641482&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>.
  - f. "Common Core in the Public Library?" by Kiera Parrott. Posted September 25, 2012: <http://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/2012/09/common-core-in-the-public-library/>.
5. View these selections from the *School Library Journal* On Common Core webcast series 1 hour each):
    - a. Part 1: Getting Real (presented by Marc Aronson and Sue Bartle)
    - b. Part 5: The Common Core and the Public Librarian: <http://www.slj.com/webcasts/commoncore/archive-registration/> (free; registration required).
  6. Study the parent guides in the "Parents' Guide to Student Success" from the National PTA: <http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583&navItemNumber=3363>. These guides are intended to help parents understand what students are expected to learn at each grade level. The guides are available in English and Spanish.
  7. Study the Parent Roadmaps available from Council of the Great City Schools: <http://www.cgcs.org/domain/104>. Like the PTA parent guides, these publications help parents understand expectations in English language arts and math, grade by grade. They are available in English and Spanish. Check out additional resources available from ALSC: <http://www.ala.org/alsc/node/800>.
  8. Understand that there are myths and much controversy that surround the rollout of the CCSS. This article is a good starting point to understanding these myths: [http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/publications/policypoints/PolicyPoints\\_Common\\_Core\\_State\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/publications/policypoints/PolicyPoints_Common_Core_State_Standards.pdf).

## APPLY

The next step is to determine and develop your role in helping students, parents, teachers, school librarians, and the community as the CCSS are implemented in your schools.

**Needs Assessment:** Work with library administration, school personnel, parents, students, and other stakeholders to assess your community's particular needs in light of CCSS.

**Programming:** Did you know your programming is already aligned to the CCSS? Public library storytimes, early literacy activities, school-age and teen programs, book discussion groups, and outreach programming all help develop and strengthen the literacy and critical thinking skills called

for by CCSS. Library summer reading programs encourage students to practice reading skills during out-of-school time to maintain proficiency. When you promote summer reading programs and library programs in your community, lead with the message that your programs support student learning.

## Some Programming Hints

### Collaborative Programming Resource for All Levels:

AASL/ALSC/YALSA Interdivisional Committee on School/Public Library Collaboration – This resource aims to identify, develop, promote, and disseminate information on effective cooperative or collaborative projects that link schools and public libraries:

[http://wikis.ala.org/readwriteconnect/index.php/AASL/ALSC/YALSA\\_School/Public\\_Library\\_Cooperation](http://wikis.ala.org/readwriteconnect/index.php/AASL/ALSC/YALSA_School/Public_Library_Cooperation)

### For Younger Readers:<sup>1</sup>

*We already know that literacy-rich early experiences contribute to the reading readiness of young children and to the developing reading proficiency of K-3rd graders. Libraries play a key role. Library storytimes promote early literacy skills in a fun, social environment. Children’s library environments engage multiple senses and promote self-directed, experiential learning. Children’s library staff interactions with parents and caregivers help them learn simple early literacy practices to get their children ready to read.*

*Under CCSS, children as young as kindergarten are asked to engage with text (books) in various ways. They are expected, with support, to identify the main topic of a story, retell key details, describe connections, infer meaning from words and illustrations, describe the relationship between illustrations and text, and notice and think about nonfiction features.*

A few enhancements can make storytimes and early literacy activities into CCSS stepping stones:

- Include more nonfiction picture books in storytimes and preschool programs.
- Pair fiction and informational books on the same topic.
- Read selectively if the text is too long or difficult for storytime. A chapter or a page is fine.
- Ask questions in storytime that require children to refer back to the text and pictures in the story for evidence.
- Point out aspects of craft and structure in storytime books directly for the children and as a model for parents.
- Use the same book in different ways over several weeks/sessions.
- Integrate hands-on, fun math, science, and social studies activities into your children’s programming.
- Use asides to share the CCSS connections of your practices with parents and caregivers (similar to the asides in early literacy-enhanced storytimes).
- Give young readers opportunities to use age appropriate technologies, websites, and apps.
- Give children opportunities to speak, listen, and collaborate.

### For Older Readers:

- Pair nonfiction and fiction books around the same theme when you display books.

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<sup>1</sup> “Public Libraries Play a Key Role in Ensuring That Every Ohio Child Starts Kindergarten Ready to Learn to Read.” Ohio Ready to Read. 2013. Accessed January 26, 2014.  
[http://www.ohreadytoread.org/student\\_learning\\_strategies.html](http://www.ohreadytoread.org/student_learning_strategies.html). Reprinted with permission.

- Order more nonfiction titles for your older readers. See *Collections* section for selection ideas.
- Ask more questions that require children to go back to the source.
- Keep providing fun speaking and listening opportunities.
- Keep offering fun writing opportunities.
- Help your children find appropriate databases for their interests and research. Many children and young adults do not want to read a whole book on a topic. They are often looking for a very specific area of interest or research; databases might just fit their needs.
- Organize book discussions that focus on debating and discussing high interest nonfiction titles that are paired with engaging literary fiction.
- Use digital platforms such as Edmodo to draw students into literary discussions. This can be done during the summer months to prevent “summer slide.”
- Create a maker space in your library for teens to research an idea and then play, innovate, build, and create to bring their idea to life: <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2013/10/make-it-your-library-website-launches-connecting-librarians-makerspace>.
  - YALSA Making in Libraries  
Toolkit: [http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Maker %26 DIY Programs](http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Maker_%26_DIY_Programs)
- Continue to offer fun, upbeat, and innovative programming that draws older readers into the library and emphasizes the importance of reading for pleasure, including summer and afterschool opportunities.
- Give teens opportunities to use age appropriate technologies, websites, and apps.
- Give teens opportunities to speak, listen, debate, defend, and collaborate.

**Collections:** Build and promote your nonfiction collection, but remember that fiction is still important. Use and share your electronic resources, library catalog, special collections, and the discovery tools you create (displays, booklists, etc.) to support student learning and CCSS. Use, share, and teach a wide variety of technology tools, websites and apps with children and teens. Let children and teens create and collaborate.

There are some important considerations when purchasing nonfiction materials. Look for:

- Quality text that is presented in a manner that is easy for patrons to navigate; this includes access to glossaries, indexes, captioned photos, and other descriptive illustrations such as graphs, charts, and timelines.
- Materials that include excerpts from primary documents to enhance the text.
- Text complexity. Measuring text complexity is an important part of the CCSS. According to the standards, the complexity of a piece of text (book, article, excerpt, speech, etc.) has three aspects:
  1. Quantitative: includes readability formulas, quantifiable aspects such as word count or Lexile® measure. For more information on Lexile levels visit [www.lexile.com](http://www.lexile.com).
  2. Qualitative: includes layout/design, purpose and meaning, background information needed, and structure and presentation.
  3. Reader and Task: includes motivation, knowledge, and reading capacity of the specific reader and what the reader is being asked to do with the text.

Some important resources for high-quality nonfiction material:

- The NCTE Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children is an annual award that promotes and recognizes excellence in the writing of nonfiction for children: <http://www.ncte.org/awards/orbispictus>.
- YALSA's Award for Excellence in Nonfiction honors the best nonfiction book published for young adults (ages 12–18) during a January 1–December 31 publishing year: <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/nonfiction-award#current>.
- The Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal is awarded annually to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished informational book published in the United States in English during the preceding year: <http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/sibertmedal>.
- YALSA's Teen Book Finder is a free app to help teens, parents, librarians and library staff, educators, and anyone who loves YA literature access to the past three years of YALSA's awards and lists on their smartphone: <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/products/teenbookfinder>. This app includes nonfiction titles as well as a variety of book recommendations in other genres.
- Use standard reviewing tools. Look for starred reviews at appropriate grade levels.
- National Science Teachers Association Outstanding Trade Books: <http://www.nsta.org/publications/ostb/>.

Some important resources for technology tools, websites and apps:

- ALSC Great Websites for Kids—Great list of websites arranged by category: <http://gws.ala.org/>
- YALSA's App of the Week column—Follow this column to learn apps that will support teen learning: <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/category/apps/>
- AASL Best Apps for Teaching & Learning - The Best Apps for Teaching and Learning is a recognition honoring apps of exceptional value to inquiry-based teaching and learning as embodied in the American Association of School Librarians' *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*: <http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards-guidelines/best-apps>
- YALSA STEM Resources—STEM stands for **S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, and **M**ath. YALSA has built an outstanding list of resources, both print and digital, that support STEM: [http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/STEM Resources](http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/STEM_Resources)
- AASL Best Websites for Teaching & Learning honors websites, tools, and resources of exceptional value to inquiry-based teaching and learning as embodied in the American Association of School Librarians' *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*: <http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards-guidelines/best-websites>

**Collaboration, Communication, and Support:** Begin or enhance a collaborative relationship with your local school librarians. School librarians can help you translate the jargon and keep you informed about CCSS plans, assignments, and other news from the school; they can be a bridge for you. Guided by your school librarians, introduce yourself to school principals, reading specialists, and classroom teachers and offer your services and support.

**The CCSS from a School Librarian's Perspective:** The role of the school librarian in implementing the CCSS is outlined in an action brief from Achieve and AASL that provides action steps and examples. The action brief, titled *Implementing the Common Core State Standards: The Role of the School Librarian*, is freely available on the AASL website. A complimentary webinar, titled *Powerful Partnerships: Libraries, Technology, and the Common Core*, featuring an idea swap led by the AASL volunteers who wrote the action brief is also available in the AASL eCOLLAB archive.

- Action Brief: <http://www.ala.org/aasl/CCSSActionBrief>
- Webinar: <http://www.ala.org/aasl/ecollab/achieve-ccss>

Use the attached [Checklist for Planning a Parent Event on the CCSS](#) to create educational opportunities for parents. Public libraries have a pivotal role in parent education as they are often open after school hours, including weekends and summers. They are accessible to parents who may be unable to attend every school meeting or function. Working in conjunction with the school district, the public library can be a distribution point for CCSS information and the National PTA Parent Guides. Links to parent guides are in the [Checklist for Planning a Parent Event on the CCSS](#).

## IN CLOSING

As public librarians move forward with supporting their patrons during the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, it is important to always remember the importance of reading. Public librarians should continue to offer children and teens a welcoming, literacy-rich environment that promotes competency, comfort, and joy in reading. This rich atmosphere advances the goal of children becoming independent, avid readers, supports student learning, and is compatible with the Common Core State Standards.



# Planning a Parent Event on the CCSS

## Introduction

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have been adopted by almost every state in the United States. Yet what they mean and how they will impact curriculum, assignments, and testing remains largely a mystery for many parents. As a public librarian, you are in the unique position to provide information, access to resources, and a forum for parent discussions on this important topic.

The following guide was created to help you plan a parent event around the CCSS. The suggestions and resources have been selected by members of the Interdivisional Taskforce on the Common Core, made up of members of the American Library Association's three major youth services divisions: the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC), and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA).

The following resources and links are suggestions; additional information on the CCSS may also be found at <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

## PLANNING CHECKLIST

- ❖ **Educating Yourself and Your Staff.** Familiarize your staff with CCSS basics. Before you can plan an event for parents in your community, it is important that you take the time to understand the basics of the CCSS. [Common Core 101: A Guide for Learning and Action for Public Librarians](#) will help with that.
- ❖ **Selecting the Best Partners.** Determine which community resources/leaders to involve in your event. Do not forget to reach out to your library friends group for assistance with possible funding needs. Determine which to invite to be speakers and/or facilitators. Suggestions:
  - School librarians—they may well be your strongest allies!
  - School superintendent or principal
  - Curriculum coordinators and classroom teachers
  - Important community members who support the CCSS. Examples might be the mayor, school board member, city council member, local celebrity.
  - Head Start
  - PTA
  - Parents as Teachers
- ❖ **Finding the Ideal Time and Place**
  - Consider location:
    - Public library
    - Community facility
    - School library
  - Consider time:
    - After school
    - Evening
    - Saturday
    - Several time and date offerings

❖ **Publicizing the Event**

- Social media
- Newspaper
- Website
- Brochures
- Signs/Posters
- Newsletters
- Phone calls
- Displays
- Communicate in English and Spanish (or other language) if relevant for your community

❖ **Building Interest.** Determine what you will offer beyond information that will pique and build interest, such as:

- Meals
- Snacks
- Babysitting service for the event
- Homework help
- Library card applications

❖ **Choosing a Format.** Determine how information will be presented. Determine the format of your event. Suggestion: Use multiple methods (see **Event Content**).

- Choose a name for your event. Options include summit, symposium, workshop, or any other title that you feel will draw in parents and community members.
- Consider including a variety of media and venues, including:
  - Videos
  - Presentation slides
  - A school librarian discussing or demonstrating a short version of a CCSS-infused lesson
  - A public or school librarian demonstrating ideas parents can do with their children at home that support college and career readiness
  - Print materials
- Determine how the event will be organized. Several of the most common are:
  - **Panel discussion:** Invite several educators to speak to parents about various aspects of the CCSS. You may want representatives who can speak to both the math and English language arts components, or you may choose to focus on just one aspect (such as the literacy standards). Make sure to leave ample time for Q & A.
  - **Roundtable discussion:** Begin with a brief presentation on the CCSS (you can invite an expert speaker or simply show the “Three-Minute Video Explaining the Common Core State Standards” listed under **Finding Resources to Use in Presentations** below). Then, invite parents to discuss the various aspects with each other. For greater impact, invite local educators and curriculum coordinators to attend as well. You may consider having a moderator help keep the discussion focused and productive.
  - **Librarian-led presentation:** Use resources from the list below. While this format is not as interactive or dynamic as the discussions, you may consider a hybrid-format such as a presentation followed by a more organic discussion.

Note: You may find that offering one event is not enough. Consider scheduling several mini-events or smaller follow-up events to a main presentation.

- ❖ **Handing Out the Information.** Consider preparing packets that include:
  - ❑ The National PTA Parent’s Guide to Student Success tailored for each grade: <http://www.pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583&navItemNumber=3363>
  - ❑ Council of Great City Schools Parent Road Maps tailored for each grade in both English and Spanish: <http://www.cgcs.org/domain/36>
  - ❑ Lists of age-appropriate titles of nonfiction materials that the public library has available for checkout
  - ❑ Information on how to access library databases that are appropriate for students
  - ❑ Bookmarks and other fun “takeaways” for parents to share with their children
  - ❑ Library card applications for community members that need them
  
- ❖ **Articles about Successful CCSS Parent Events**
  - ❑ “A Common Core Learning Standards Summit” from *The Garden City News*: [http://www.gcnews.com/news/2013-02-07/Community/A\\_Common\\_Core\\_Learning\\_Standards\\_Summit\\_For\\_Librar.html](http://www.gcnews.com/news/2013-02-07/Community/A_Common_Core_Learning_Standards_Summit_For_Librar.html).
  - ❑ “Common Core at Curriculum Night” from the ALSC Blog: <http://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/2013/11/common-core-at-curriculum-night/>.
  
- ❖ **Resources to Use in Presentations**
  - ❑ Three-Minute Video Explaining the Common Core State Standards (in English and in Spanish): <http://www.cgcs.org/domain/157>.
  - ❑ The National PTA CCSS Toolkit of Resources includes presentations and videos: <http://www.pta.org/advocacy/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3552>.
  - ❑ Council of the Great City Schools Parent Roadmaps to the Common Core Standards includes roadmaps for English language arts and math in English and Spanish: <http://www.cgcs.org/domain/104>.
  - ❑ EngageNY has created a complete toolkit for hosting a parent workshop on the CCSS including several slide shows and detailed agendas: <http://www.engageny.org/resource/planning-a-parent-workshop-toolkit-for-parent-engagement>. Note: These resources were created for New York and may or may not apply to your state. Be sure to check with your local school librarian or administration.
  
- ❖ **Myths and Facts about the CCSS-Sites that may help answer questions from parents and patrons**
  - ❑ Myths vs. Facts from Common Core State Standards Initiative: <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/myths-vs-facts/>
  - ❑ Myths v. Facts About the Common Core Standards from the Council of the Great City Schools: <http://www.cgcs.org/Page/314>
  - ❑ Common Core State Standards Initiative from National PTA: <http://pta.org/advocacy/content2.cfm?ItemNumber=3008&navItemNumber=557>