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Using Parent Guides to Support the Common Core State Standards

National PTA
February 28, 2011

Today's Moderator: Charles J. "Chuck" Saylor



- Serves as President of National PTA.
- Selected to be the first-ever male National President of PTA.
- Has been a member of PTA for more than 20 years.
- Is a father of four from South Carolina.

National PTA

- PTA is the nation's oldest and largest child advocacy association.
- PTA advocates for every child with one voice and delivers programs to serve schools and communities across the country.

Purpose

- Today we will:
 - Help PTA leaders and parents understand what their role is in using and supporting academic standards
 - Increase PTA leaders' and parents' understanding of the Common Core State Standards
 - Educate PTA leaders and parents how to effectively use the Parents' Guides to Student Success

Overview of Today's Webinar

- What are Standards and Why are They Important?
- Overview of the Common Core State Standards
- Parents' Guides to Student Success
- How to Use the Parents' Guides
- Parents' Perspective
- Administrator's Perspective
- Q&A

Susan Pimentel



- Specializes in standards-driven school reform.
- Works as an education writer, analyst, and consultant.
- Served as one of the writers for the Common Core State Standards in English language arts/literacy.

Jason Zimba

- Co-founded Student Achievement Partners, an organization that designs policy actions for raising student achievement.
- Served as one of the writers for the Common Core State Standards in mathematics.
- Co-founded The Grow Network, an education technology company that helps state and district school systems use assessment to inform instruction



Why Standards?

- Standards are our compact with students and parents.
- Standards make students and parents partners in education.
- Standards promote a meeting of the minds. Standards ensure ALL students have access to quality.
- Can you imagine a world without standards?

Standards are the Centerpiece of a Strong Academic Program

The Power of Common Standards

- Create one set of clear and consistent expectations—high goals—for ALL students.
- Address student mobility issues.
- Keep students' dreams alive.
- Help to ensure a skilled workforce and an enlightened citizenry.
- Offer economies of scale for development of curriculum, assessments and teacher preparation programs.

Recap of Standards' Development Process

- College and career readiness standards developed summer of 2009
- Based on those exit standards, K-12 learning progressions were developed
- Multiple rounds of feedback from states, teachers, researchers, postsecondary faculty, parents, and the general public
- Final standards released on June 2, 2010

Standards Grounded in Research & Evidence

- Shaped by scholarly research
- Informed by surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training (American Diploma Project, ACT, College Board)
- Built on assessment data that identifies college and career readiness performance
- Informed by standards from high-performing nations

Priorities from ELA/Literacy Standards

- Grade-by-grade progressions anchored in college and career readiness
- Spotlight on the complexity of what students read
- Focus on building vocabulary Contents
- Offer new grounding in informational text
- Highlight logic, reasoning, evidence and the art of argument
- Stress ability to conduct and report on research

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Parents' Guides to Student Success

- PTA partnered with experts on the Common Core State Standards to create grade by grade guides that reflect the Common Core State Standards.
- Individual Guides were created for grades K-8 and two were created for grades 9-12 (one for English language arts/literacy and one for mathematics). Eleven (11) Guides were created in all.


Parents' Guides to Student Success

The Parents' Guides include:

1. Key items that children should be learning in English language arts and mathematics in each grade, once the Standards are fully implemented.
2. Activities that parents can do at home to support their child's learning.
3. Methods (questions and sample topics) for helping parents build stronger relationships with their child's teacher.
4. Tips for planning for college and career (high school only).

The Guides are available in both English and Spanish online at PTA.org/parentsguides.

Parents' Guides to Student Success



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PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

3RD GRADE

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 3rd grade in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in these subjects, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by more than 40 states. These K-12 standards are informed by the highest state standards from across the country. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 4th grade.

WHY ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

Academic standards are important because they help ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and the workforce. They help set clear and consistent expectations for students, parents, and teachers; build your child's knowledge and skills; and help set high goals for all students.

Of course, high standards are not the only thing needed for our children's success. But standards provide an important first step — a clear roadmap for learning for teachers, parents, and students. Having clearly defined goals helps families and teachers work together to ensure that students succeed. Standards help parents and teachers know when students need extra assistance or when they need to be challenged even more. They also will help your child develop critical thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

You should use this guide to help build a relationship with your child's teacher. You can do this by talking to his or her teacher regularly about how your child is doing — beyond parent-teacher conferences.

At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child in meeting them. If your child needs a little extra help or wants to learn more about a subject, work with his or her teacher to identify opportunities for tutoring, to get involved in clubs after school, or to find other resources.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in 3rd grade
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her academic program

English Language Arts & Literacy

Third grade is a pivotal year for your child. Learning to read with fluency and confidence will serve as a foundation for the reading demands in later grades. By practicing with learning-to-read strategies, your child will reliably be able to make sense of multisyllable words in books. He or she will come to appreciate that words have meanings that are not literal (e.g., *a piece of cake*) and have relationships to other words (e.g., *company* and *companion*). Recognizing and understanding words will help your child read increasingly challenging stories and books and build knowledge about the world around him or her. By the end of the year, your child also will be writing clear sentences and paragraphs on a range of topics, drawing on an expanding vocabulary.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 3rd Grade

- Reading closely to find main ideas and supporting details in a story
- Describing the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in stories (e.g., first, second, third; cause and effect)
- Comparing the most important points and key details presented in two books on the same topic
- Writing opinions or explanations that group related information and develop topics with facts and details
- Writing stories that establish a situation and include details and clear sequences of events that describe the actions, thoughts, and feelings of characters
- Independently conducting short research projects that build knowledge about various topics
- Asking and answering questions about information he or she hears from a speaker or while participating in classroom discussions, offering appropriate elaboration and detail that build on what others have said
- Reading stories and poems aloud fluently, without pausing to figure out what each word means
- Distinguishing the literal and nonliteral meanings of words, such as *something's fishy* and *cold shoulder*
- Spelling correctly and consulting dictionaries to clarify meanings of words

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 3rd grade, these include:

- Reading grade-level books, stories, poems, and articles fluently
- Writing and speaking well, following rules of punctuation and grammar

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?

Mathematics

In 3rd grade, your child will learn important new ideas and gain important new skills. One of the most important topics this year is multiplication and division. Another is fractions. Multiplication, division, and fractions are the building blocks for many life skills that students will learn in later grades, such as percentages. Students also need to master these topics to be ready for algebra and advanced math, so it is essential to get a good start with these topics in 3rd grade.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 3rd Grade

- Multiplying and dividing up to 10×10 quickly and accurately, including knowing the times tables from memory
- Solving word problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- Beginning to multiply numbers with more than one digit (e.g., multiplying 9×80)
- Understanding fractions and relating them to the familiar system of whole numbers (e.g., recognizing that $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{6}$ are the same number)
- Measuring and estimating weights and liquid volumes, and solving word problems involving these quantities
- Reasoning about shapes (e.g., all squares are rectangles but not all rectangles are squares)
- Finding areas of shapes, and relating area to multiplication (e.g., why is the number of square feet for a 9-foot by 7-foot room given by the product 9×7)

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 3rd grade, these include:

- Multiplication and division
- Fractions

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Help Your Child Learn at Home

Learning does not end in the classroom. Children need help and support at home to succeed in their studies. Try to create a quiet place for your child to study, and carve out time every day when your child can concentrate on reading, writing, and math uninterrupted by friends, brothers or sisters, or other distractions.

You should also try and sit down with your child at least once a week for 15 to 30 minutes while he or she works on homework. This will keep you informed about what your child is working on, and it will help you be the first to know if your child needs help with specific topics. By taking these small steps, you will be helping your child become successful both in and outside the classroom.

Additionally, here are some activities you can do with your child to support learning at home:

English Language Arts & Literacy

- Make reading for fun a part of your child's daily routine. Set aside quiet time, with no phones, computers, or other distractions, when your child can read for pleasure, books such as *Amos & Boris* by William Steig or *The Fire Car* by Esther Avarill. To find more books for your child to read, visit www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf.
- Encourage your child to find a picture from a newspaper or magazine, cut it out, paste it on paper, and write a story about it.
- Start a family vocabulary box or jar. Have everyone write down new words they discover, add them to the box, and use the words in conversation.

Mathematics

Look for "word problems" in real life. Some 3rd grade examples might include:

- Notice those everyday occasions when you find yourself using your times tables—such as to determine how many days there are in four weeks. Ask your child for the answer.
- Involve your child when you notice yourself using division to "work backward" in the times tables—such as determining how many candies each child will get if 36 candies are shared equally among nine children at a party, or determining how many six-inch lengths can be cut from a string 18 inches long.

For more information, the full standards are available at www.corestandards.org.



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Building Partnerships with Parent Leaders and Educators

Parents and Education Administrators Can Partner Together to Develop a Plan to:

- Share the Guides with Parents When the Standards are Implemented in Your State
- Ensure that the Standards are Effectively Implemented in Your State and School District

A Parent's Perspective: Melisa Yeoman

- Been involved with Ohio PTA for 11 years
- Serves as the Director of Advocacy, Federal Legislative Chair, and Chair of the Common Core State Standards Initiative Committee for Ohio PTA.



An Administrator's Perspective: Denny Thompson

- Director Office of Curriculum and Instruction for the Ohio Department of Education
- Former elementary school principal, counselor, teacher and coach.
- He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Cincinnati and a Master's from Xavier University.

Q&A

For Additional Information:

- Visit PTA.org/parentsguide
- Talk with your State PTA or Local PTA (find yours at PTA.org)
- Learn more about the Common Core State Standards at www.corestandards.org
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- To find out about your state's current standards visit your State Education Agency's web site (find yours at PTA.org/parentsguide)

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