



Established 1858

Center Joint Unified School District

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Scott A. Loehr

November 1, 2013

CJUSD Families,

The news of late has been overrun with sweeping changes in education. Much attention has been given to the implementation of Common Core State Standards, changes to the student assessment and school accountability system, and radical changes to the formula that provides funding to schools. However, little has been shared about the positive impact these changes will have on your child's educational experience. I am reaching out to all of our Center families to explain these changes and provide additional resources. With each of these changes, your child continues to be our priority at Center Joint Unified School District, where we continue to work together to ensure the best possible education.

Implementing Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Our district has been working for the past three years on a plan that will position us to be ready for full implementation of the CCSS starting in the 2014-15 school year. Our teaching staff has been provided with ongoing training and collaboration time to prepare for the instructional changes you will see.

As we begin this transition, you can expect to see new instructional materials being used in your child's classroom. These new materials, aligned to the CCSS, will provide problem-solving and problem-based learning by exposing your child to more informational and complex reading. Your child will use higher level thinking skills to make relevant real-world connections to learning. Writing will be for more authentic purposes, to justify thinking and reasoning in the learning process.

Additionally, as a result of the adoption of the CCSS, you will see changes to student writing prompts, grading rubrics, student assessments, pacing guides and report cards. We are confident the final result will be an even richer learning environment for your child.

Assessment and Accountability

With the transition to the CCSS, California has suspended most Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) and has adopted a new system of accountability and assessment. With the exception of science, students will not take the California Standards Test (CST). The familiar CST paper and pencil tests have been replaced with a new computer-based program. Students in grades 3-8 & 11 will participate in a field test of the CCSS aligned Smarter Balanced Assessments in reading and math.

Since this computer based assessment is being field tested, your child's score will not be reported to you or to your child's school. In fact, no students in California will receive scores for this year's assessment. The individual scores and results you are accustomed to receiving will resume during the 2014-15 school year. This year of 'no score' really gives teachers and students an opportunity to 'test the test' to better understand the expectations. With the absence of student assessment scores this year, we will be without an API (Academic Performance Index) score. California's school ranking system known as API, will be rebuilt to reflect the assessment and accountability changes.

The information we have about the new tests strongly indicates that they will be far more difficult than the past assessments. I am confident that our curriculum and teaching practices are preparing your child for these instructional "shifts", but like all new things, it will take time to address these changes.

(For high school students, the California High School Exit Exam will still remain in place and students will be required to earn a passing score to receive a high school diploma.)

With the upcoming changes in education, there is a lot of new information for families to take in. I encourage you to speak to the principal and classroom teacher at your child's school site to learn more about the new standards and the impact of these changes. For continued updates, visit our district and school websites, pick up a copy of our *CenterLine Newsletter* from the front office at your child's school and visit the web resources provided below.

This is an exciting time in education with positive changes on the horizon. As with any major change there may be challenges along the way. However, I am confident that the staff of Center Unified are here to support your family and to provide the best educational experience for your child. If we can assist you or provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Scott A. Loehr
Superintendent

Common Core Resources

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/index.asp> - California Department of Education - Common Core State Standards

<http://cqcs.org/Page/328> - Parent Roadmaps to the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts

<http://www.smmusd.org/edservices/commoncore/pdf/CCSParentHandbook.pdf> - K-8 California's Common Core Standards handbook

http://scoecurriculum.net/estandards/math_resources.html - 6-12 California's Common Core Content Standards for Mathematics

Accountability and Assessment

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/> - Smarter Balanced Assessment

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/> - California Department of Education -- Testing and Accountability