



Information to Support Families of Students in 3rd through 8th Grade During Fall 2013 Parent-Teacher Conferences

As part of the New York City Department of Education's commitment to preparing students for future opportunities, students have been increasingly challenged by the new Common Core Learning Standards. These standards describe what all students need to know and be able to do in reading, writing, and mathematics in order to be on track to graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

As part of the Common Core, students are reading a mix of fictional and informational books and spending more time writing. When students share their opinions, teachers are asking them more often to use evidence to back up their points. In spring 2013, for the first time, the grades 3-8 State tests began to assess these skills. These new tests help educators by showing where students are on the path to graduating from high school ready for college and careers. This information can be used to help schools broaden students' options for the future—not to punish students, teachers, or schools. With time and support, students can meet this higher bar.

To support you in learning about how the Common Core impacts your child, please see the suggested questions below to use during the upcoming round of parent-teacher conferences. Although the Common Core focuses on reading, writing, and math, please ensure you talk to your child's teachers about his/her development in the other subjects ranging from science to the arts, social studies to physical education. Additional resources to learn more about the Common Core in New York City schools and how you can support your student at home are available by going to NYC.gov, searching for "Common Core Parent Resources," and clicking on the Common Core Library.

Suggested Questions and Topics for Families to Discuss During Parent-Teacher Conferences

- What is my child expected to learn, know, and do at this grade level?
- What are the big projects my child will be doing in your class this year? Throughout the year, how will I know if my child is meeting grade-level expectations?
- What does my child do well, and what does he or she struggle with? Can you give me examples?
- If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, what resources can support his or her learning outside the classroom?
- Where did my child do well and where did he/she struggle on the 2013 State Common Core tests? What are you doing to support him/her this year?
- Is my child happy at school? How does my child get along with classmates and adults?
- Does my child participate in class discussions and activities? What would make my child more effective in doing his/her work?
- What can I do at home to reinforce what my child is learning at school?
- Are there ways that I can help you in the classroom or the school?