

Three-Minute Video Explaining the Common Core State Standards

Video Transcript

Like it or not, life is full of measuring sticks. How smart we are, how fast we are, how well we can, you know, compete. But up until now, it's been pretty hard to tell how well kids are competing in school and how well they're going to do when they get out of school. We like to think that our education system does that, but when it comes to learning what they really need to be successful after graduation? Is a girl in your neighborhood being taught as much as her friend over in the next one? Is a graduating senior in, say, St. Louis as prepared to get a job as the graduate in Shanghai? Well, it turns out the answer to both of these questions is no because for years, states have been setting different standards for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. That's making it too hard to know if our kids are really doing well enough overall. And if they can really compete for a job someday, what we really need are clear goals. That's where the Common Core State Standards come in. They're like a total sea change in education, consistent, strong, clear benchmarks for English language, Arts and Math. Here is how it works. You can think of kindergarten to 12th grade like a giant staircase. Each step is a skill your child needs to learn before stepping up to the next one. But right now, too many kids aren't really confident with like two plus two before they have to move on to two times two. We need more focus on the skills that help them move up the stairs or they can slip up and fall behind. And there's another problem, what if everyone's stairs were made of different heights. Well, here we go again, they are. So a boy in Seattle who's rocking an A in English literature could be getting a C on his Chicago friend staircase. Oops, we need to create consistent steps in education too. So first, each standard creates a landing on the staircase, a stop along the way as your child heads toward high school graduation. Each stop is a chance for every parent and teacher to focus on the skills their students are supposed to know at that step no matter the ZIP code, language or race. And more importantly, each standard make sure all students are learning what they need to know to get to graduation and beyond. Because something like coming to a hundred leads to understanding dollars and cents which eventually leads to understanding how to manage a budget. Secondly, the standards are consistent from school-to-school and they match up against international standards too. Now, we know how we're doing compared to just about everyone. So even though local communities will still design their own curriculum, with the same rules, everybody can compete on the same kind of staircase but standards aren't learning. That's why we need teachers, parents and students to help make that happen by working together to help kids meet these standards. The world is getting more and more competitive everyday. But now, when our kids get to the top of their staircase, they can have way more options on where their life goes from there. Clear goals, confident well-prepared students, that's the Common Core State Standards.