

# I AM AN Alabama Parent

*What do Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards Mean for My Child?*

Raising the bar and expecting more is hard work, particularly for students and teachers. New standards mean new ways of teaching and learning in classrooms, and ultimately harder tests. To stay the course with higher standards and expectations, Alabamians need to be more vocal about better-preparing students for the future.

## ? What are Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards / Common Core?

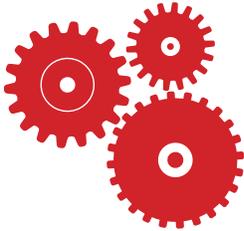
*Every student a graduate; every graduate prepared for real life*



- The Alabama College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS), which are based on the Common Core State Standards, are a **set of academic standards for math and English** being taught in K-12 classrooms across Alabama.
- Academic standards are **goals for what students should know** by the end of each school year. Alabama's standards focus on helping our students gain a **deep understanding of the concepts** being taught and how they apply to real life.
- Alabama's State Board of Education has the only authority on what standards (*goals*) our state adopts. Local school systems still develop their own curricula (*how it's taught*) and choose their own textbooks to teach from every day. Individual teachers still develop their own lesson plans.

## ? What does this mean for my child?

*Real learning for real life*

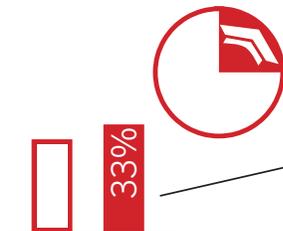


With the CCRS, Alabama students rely less on memorization and filling out worksheets. Instead, they **focus on critical-thinking and problem-solving skills** that will benefit them long after they finish their academic career.

Alabama adopted the CCRS after conversations with officials from Alabama's colleges and employers about what our schools need to do in order to prepare all of our kids for success in their next phase in life – *whether they are going on to college or starting a career.*

## ? Why was a change necessary?

*Setting higher and clearer goals for a successful future*



Our state's academic standards have not kept up with the changes in technology and the real-life skills students need to be successful. As a result:

One in four students that enter Alabama high schools do not graduate.<sup>1</sup>

33% of Alabama graduates are required to take high school-level classes their freshman year in college to reteach concepts they were supposed to learn in K-12 schools. This percentage is higher than the national average.<sup>2</sup>

1 <http://www.wsfa.com/story/22563032/alabama-department-of-education-releases-2011-2012-graduation-rate-statistics>

2 [http://blog.al.com/wire/2013/10/are\\_alabamas\\_high\\_school\\_gradu.html](http://blog.al.com/wire/2013/10/are_alabamas_high_school_gradu.html)



## How are Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards / Common Core Different From Previous Courses of Study?

*Students must do more than retain information long enough to regurgitate it on an exam*



The Alabama College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) **expect more of students** than previous standards, and they will help ensure students are prepared for real life. University of Alabama professor Jeremy Zelkowski, a former high-school math teacher, has extensively studied Alabama's new math standards and says that the new standards will help make Alabama schools **more competitive** internationally. According to Zelkowski, Alabama's old standards only asked students to have a basic understanding of what was being taught, while the CCRS require students to *do more than just memorize material long enough for their next exam.*<sup>3</sup>

3 [http://www.decatordaily.com/news/local/article\\_c63e5392-28bc-11e3-9458-0019bb30f31a.html](http://www.decatordaily.com/news/local/article_c63e5392-28bc-11e3-9458-0019bb30f31a.html)



## What Can I do to Support My Child?

Our students are up for the challenge, but parental involvement is critical to helping a child achieve more. Things you can do at home include:

- Set aside time every day when your child can concentrate on reading, writing, and math.
- Ask your child questions about their schoolwork and encourage them to explain how they got to an answer. Remember that students are learning to be problem solvers and critical thinkers.
- Asking questions is a great way to help them learn.
- Talk to your child's teacher and ask how you can help at home.



## What Questions Should I ask my Child's Math and English Teachers?

- What do the CCRS mean for your class?
- What kinds of changes can I expect to see in the types of work my child will be doing?
- How have your lesson plans changed because of CCRS?
- Will CCRS be used in other areas in school?

## How can I help? *Learn. Connect. Advocate.*

**Join** the effort to make CCRS success locally.

**Speak-Up** about how setting high expectations will help your business and community.

**Visit** [www.alabamaGRIT.org](http://www.alabamaGRIT.org).

**Sign** the "Got GRIT" pledge located at [alabamaGRIT.org](http://alabamaGRIT.org).

**Like** Alabama GRIT on Facebook and share the resources posted on that page.

**Follow** @AlabamaGRIT on Twitter and post tweets with #realllearning.

**Tour** a classroom in your community.

**Talk** to teachers in your community.

**Organize** an CCRS Informational Meeting.

**Spread the Truth** about what is really taking place inside Alabama classrooms.

