

# **What is This Iowa Core and Common Core Curriculum?**

And where are we in the implementation process?

# What is the Common Core?

The **Common Core State Standards Initiative** is sponsored by the [National Governors Association](#) (NGA) and the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#) (CCSSO) to establish consistent education standards across the states as well as ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter two- or four-year college programs or enter the workforce.

# What is the Common Core?

- Establishes national standards in the areas of **Language Arts**, and **Math**.
- Details what students in grades K-12 should know at the end of each grade level.
- Have been adopted in Iowa and replace the original literacy and math standards of the Iowa Core.

# What is the Iowa Core?

A set of essential concepts and skills mandated by the state of Iowa to be taught to ALL students in five content areas.

- Literacy (English/Language Arts)
- Math
- Social Studies
- Science
- 21st Century Skills

# 21st Century Skills?

- Employability skills
- Financial literacy
- Health literacy
- Technology literacy
- Civic literacy

**What is the difference between the Iowa  
Core and the Common Core?**

- The **Iowa Core** was created by Iowa educators and leaders as essential concepts and skill sets for all students to master.
  
- They are written in grade level spans
  - K-2
  - 3-5
  - 6-8
  - 9-12
  
- Outlines research-based teaching strategies that assist in learning the essential concepts and skill sets called “Characteristics of Effective Instruction.”

- The **Common Core** are standards that were written by teachers and national leaders.
- Written for each grade level K-12
- Does not specify specific teaching strategies or theories that will guide learning and teaching.



# Why Use the Iowa Core?

- The Iowa Core outlines essential concepts and skill sets that all students should know, understand and be able to do by the end of each grade span.
- Allows for consistency among Iowa schools.
- Lead to improved student achievement and will allow our students to be more competitive nationally and internationally.

# What Differences Will I See in the Classrooms?

- A focus on many of the Characteristics of Effective Instruction
- A focus on a teaching and assessing based on standards
- Use of formative assessment to monitor student learning, and adjust instruction to meet student needs
- Student-centered classrooms and teachers focusing on the individual needs of your child

# **What Are the Characteristics of Effective Instruction?**

- Student Centered Classrooms
- Teaching for Understanding
- Assessment for Learning
- Rigor and Relevance
- Teaching for Learner Differences

# Student-Centered Classroom

- Students are directly involved in active learning and the discovery of knowledge.
- Students engage in experiential learning which is authentic, holistic, and challenging.
- Students use prior knowledge to construct new learning and are able to apply that learning to real life examples.

# Teaching for Understanding

- Students engage activities such as:
  - explaining,
  - finding evidence and examples,
  - generalizing,
  - applying,
  - making analogies, and
  - representing the topic in new ways.

# Teaching for Understanding

- Teachers:
  - make learning a long-term, thinking-centered process,
  - engage students in assessment for learning processes,
  - support learning with representations and conceptual models,
  - teach for learner differences
  - induct students into the discipline, and
  - teach for transfer of knowledge

# Assessment for Learning

Used by teachers and students as part of instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of core content.

Formative assessment practices provide students with clear learning targets, examples, and models of strong and weak work, regular descriptive feedback, and the ability to self-assess, track learning, and set goals.

# Rigor and Relevance

Lessons are cognitively demanding and challenge students to apply essential concepts and skills to real-world, complex and open-ended situations.

Content is linked to core concepts or skills and requires authentic work, discipline-specific methods, and applying what is learned to solve complex problems.

Involves use of prior knowledge, development of in-depth understanding, and the ability to develop and express ideas and findings.



# **Teaching for Learner Differences**

Planning for and responding to variances among learners creates the best learning experience possible.

It includes processes to determine effectiveness of instruction, use of data to guide instructional decision-making, and better ensure to success for all students.

## How is Alta-Aurelia Meeting the Requirements of the Iowa Core?

- Working on aligning the local curriculum, standards and benchmarks with the expectations of the Iowa Core
- Working in consortium with other area schools on
  - Developing implementation plans specifically for:
    - English/Language Arts
    - Mathematics
  - Writing and implementing conceptual units
  - Educating teaching staff on the Characteristics of Effective Instruction

## **How Will We Know If the Implementation of the Iowa Core is Successful?**

Examples:

- Student achievement data on standardized assessments
- Classroom assessments
- Walk-through data and notes
- Post-graduation surveys on college or career readiness

**The greatest impact is going to come from the shift in “how we teach”, not so much “what is being taught where.”**

# For Further Information

Common Core State Standards Initiative

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

Iowa Core (can follow Iowa Core Curriculum link on our website under “District”)

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/iowacore>