



Dr. Barry L. Kayrell
Superintendent

Dr. LaFaye Platter
Deputy Superintendent

Dr. Sally Cawthon
Assistant Superintendent

Vincent Christakos
Assistant Superintendent

**Professional Development
Service Center**

1791 W. Acacia Avenue
Hemet, CA 92545
(951) 765-5100
Fax: (951) 765-5115

**Professional Development
Academy**

2085 W. Acacia Avenue
Hemet, CA 92545
(951) 765-5100
Fax: (951) 765-6421

www.hemetusd.k12.ca.us

Governing Board

Paul Bakkom
Dr. Lisa DeForest
Marilyn Forst
Bill Sanborn
James Smith
Ross Valenzuela
Joe Wojcik

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

There are some exciting changes coming to California and Hemet Unified in the coming school years. A State-led initiative known as the Common Core State Standards is now being implemented in California and 45 other states. These new standards in both English-language arts and mathematics are built to better prepare our students for the 21st Century economy. In fact, the outcome of these standards is to prepare all students to be College and Career ready by the time they exit our schools.

The world economy has shifted and changed greatly over the past 10 years. This shift requires workers to possess much more critical writing and reading skills, higher level math as well as computer literacy than ever before. Most importantly, these skills are required in virtually all professional, skill and trade careers. Indeed, for our students to be able to compete with their peers from any country in the world they will need to increase their abilities beyond what we have been teaching them with the current California standards. This is the driving force behind the Common Core State Standards.

Hemet Unified is prepared to begin this shift to teaching using the Common Core State Standards. Beginning in the fall of 2013, all K-5 classrooms will be teaching the Common Core State Standards in English-language arts. 6-12 classrooms in both English-language arts and math will make the shift to the Common Core State Standards.

These new standards will bring with them new end-of-year tests. The latest information from the California Department of Education tells us that in the spring of 2015 California will no longer use the STAR tests and will instead move to a computer-based test called the Smarter Balanced Assessment. This new test will assess student's abilities in the new Common Core State Standards.

The major shift in teaching and learning will be seen as teachers deliver these new standards by engaging students in real-world tasks where the students will show and demonstrate their mastery of content. These tasks mirror the skills and actions needed in the real-world to perform on-the-job as well as in college. These tasks will require teamwork, deeper thinking, critical reasoning, non-fiction reading and writing, complex problem solving and logic to name a few.

This shift to the new standards will be a learning experience for all of us. We ask for your support and patience as our teachers learn to deliver lessons that match the expectations of these new standards. Our teachers are and will continue to receive high-quality training to develop their skills and readiness to teach these new standards and tasks.

Please visit our website www.hemetusd.k12.ca.us to watch some videos about the Common Core State Standards. While there, you can also read more about these standards and assessments. Included in this information is a Frequently Asked Questions section.

We are excited to begin this new journey in education to teach your students in the Common Core State Standards. If at any time you have questions about these changes please do not hesitate to contact the principal of your school or Educational Services at the Hemet Unified District Office 951-765-5100 ext 3001.

It is our privilege to serve you and your students and we look forward to an exciting 2013-14 school year. Have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Sincerely,

Barry Kayrell, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Hemet Unified School District

