



Expect More Achieve More Coalition: Suggested Talking Points

September 4, 2012

What is the Expect More, Achieve More Coalition?

- The Coalition is a statewide alliance of business, community, and education organizations in Tennessee that supports high academic standards in public education. **As of September 4, 2012, over 90 organizations from across Tennessee are coalition members.**
- The Coalition's goal is to build both statewide and local support and awareness of Tennessee's efforts to raise the bar in the classroom so that every student graduates high school prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce.
- **The Coalition believes that when we expect more, students achieve more.**

Why is this work important?

- A good education means better job prospects; in today's economy, competition for jobs comes not just from across town but from around the world.
- In Tennessee, only 16 percent of students meet college readiness benchmarks on the ACT in English, math, reading, and science.
- In a national survey, 97 percent of students indicated that they plan to continue their education after high school, but far too few are graduating with the skills they need to thrive after high school.
- This is a challenge because 7 of the 10 fastest growing jobs in Tennessee require some form of post-secondary education.

What is Tennessee doing to improve?

- Tennessee is improving; from effective teaching in the classroom to high academic standards, Tennessee is taking important steps to better prepare students for the future.
- One part of Tennessee's work to better prepare students for college and the workforce is to raise expectations by raising academic standards.
- **Standards are the knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn in each grade and subject.**
- Tennessee took the first step to raise standards in 2009 and now we are raising the bar again through an effort called the Common Core State Standards.



What are the Common Core State Standards?

- **The Common Core State Standards are a set of standards in math and English that were developed by state leaders to ensure that every student graduates high school prepared for the future.** To date, 47 states, including Tennessee, have voluntarily done so.
- With the Common Core, teaching and learning will include more critical thinking and problem solving. The goal is less memorizing and more understanding.
- Students will learn important concepts in earlier grades—just as they do in the highest performing schools internationally – and build on those each year.
- Eventually, new tests will replace the current TCAP tests in math and English/language arts and measure learning under the standards. These tests will be more difficult and they may mean that scores will be lower, at least initially.

Why is raising standards so important?

- **Ultimately, the Common Core standards will help better prepare students for success after high school graduation.**
- The skills and knowledge students will learn with the new standards are those needed for success in today's workforce. Whether in manufacturing or research, job applicants need critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills to succeed.

What can I do to help?

- Stay informed and educated – www.ExpectMoreTN.org contains resources for parents and community members, including a detailed look at what the Common Core will mean for students in each grade.
- Support your child – our students are up for the challenge, but parental involvement is critical to helping a child achieve more. You may notice that school is getting harder and that students are expected to learn in new ways. **Call your child's teacher or school and ask how you can help at home.**
- To move forward with higher standards and expectations, parents, businesses, and communities need to be vocal about the importance of better-preparing students for the future. Tennesseans are up to this challenge.

