

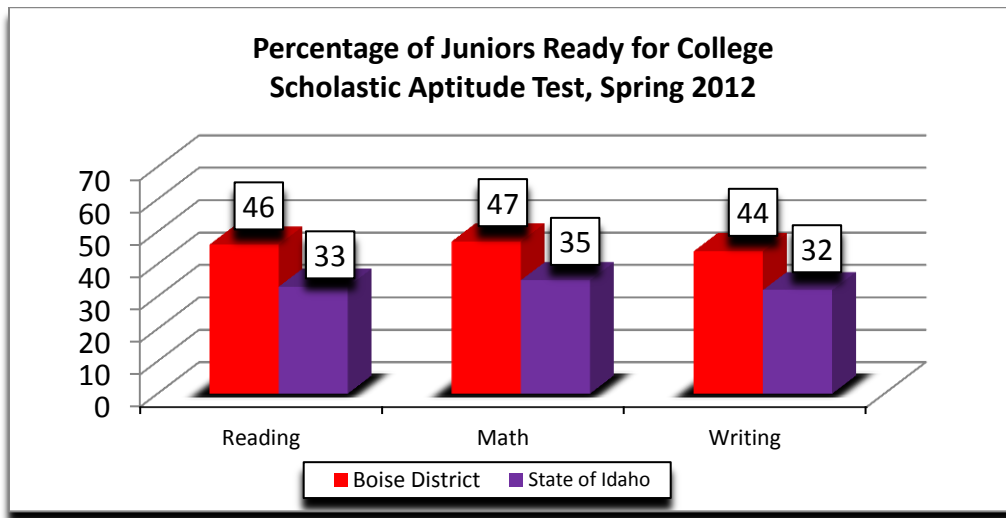
GOING BEYOND THE COMMON CORE – INCREASED RIGOR FOR ALL STUDENTS

The Idaho Core Standards, adapted from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), support the efforts of the Boise School District in increasing rigor and preparing students for postsecondary opportunities, as delineated in our Strategic Plan.

Key principles of the Common Core are:

- In-depth study of content
- Opportunities to use higher-level thinking skills in analyzing literature and mathematical concepts
- Reorganization of content to promote deeper study of prerequisites
- Rigor in the form of higher standards
- 21st Century math and literacy skills
- Career and college readiness skills for all students

In April, 2012, all Idaho 11th graders took the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for the first time. The Idaho State Board of Education set “cut scores” of 500 on each subtest of the SAT indicating “college readiness”.



Though larger percentages of Boise District students met the criteria for readiness than did students in the state of Idaho as a whole, we aspire to a higher standard for our students. Whether students go on to postsecondary pursuits or not, we must prepare all of them to compete in a global economy.

To that end, we’re making changes as we write the curriculum for implementation of the CCSS. In language arts, we’re increasing the depth of study of literature and the requirements for writing. In math, we’re increasing the depth of study of mathematical concepts, providing opportunities for daily remedial study, and “re-tracking” the courses in the system to provide more rigor for our students. In English classes, our End of Course assessments have focused on remembering facts from and details of works of literature, as was required for success on the ISAT, the NCLB assessment standard. In the new district curriculum, written from CCSS standards, students will go much more in depth in their study of literature. An example of the difference between the NCLB standards and the CCSS follows:

Idaho State Standard (NCLB)
0709.5 Acquire skills for comprehending
literary text

Determine characters traits by what the characters say about themselves in narration, dialogue, and soliloquy.

Idaho Core Standards (CCSS)
RL. 9-10.2: Key Ideas and Details

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of the text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

In the side-by-side comparison of Language Arts standards above, you can clearly see the higher level thinking, specificity and connection to purpose/meaning of the Common Core standard as compared to the NCLB Standard.

In Math, our goals are two-fold: provide students more rigorous content, so that many more are prepared academically for college and career, and allow for more in-depth study of concepts. This means that the vast majority of students must take at least Algebra 2, if not Math Analysis or Calculus. We have eliminated the intermediate courses that hold students back, and instituted daily “seminar” classes in which students who may have difficulty with concepts will enroll.

For our most advanced math students, we will provide opportunities to enroll in our Accelerated Summer School in order to move forward in the math course sequence. For example, an 8th grade student having success in Accelerated Algebra 1 may want to enroll in Accelerated Geometry during the summer in order to advance to Accelerated Algebra 2 the following school year. This would put that student on track for Advanced Calculus (BC) in senior year. As students take advantage of these opportunities, the District will investigate offering courses beyond Calculus in the math curriculum.

As in Language Arts, math standards in the Common Core go much deeper in investigating concepts than did the Idaho State Standards:

<p style="text-align: center;">Idaho State Standards (NCLB) Algebra 1 – Linear Equations Unit Sample Lesson Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find slope of a line on a coordinate plane and using a formula• Interpret slope in the context of a problem• Graph slopes in slope-intercept form• Write equations of lines from given information• Draw graphs and write equations for a line of best fit from a given data table

<p style="text-align: center;">Idaho Core Standards (CCSS) Algebra 1 - Linear Equations Unit Sample Lesson Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graph and write equations of linear functions from contextual situations• Interpret slope as a unit rate and/or rate of change• Graph and write equations of exponential functions from contextual situations• Compare and contrast a linear model from an exponential model for different contextual situations, and determine which best fits the data

The Idaho State Standards as adapted from CCSS are not curricula. District teachers are currently writing curriculum documents that will guide instruction reflecting the new standards. This approach allows the district to add content where appropriate, and to provide access to resources for teachers. One myth propagated by opponents of Common Core is that 70% of language arts reading will be non-fiction. The literature selections for District curricula will be determined as curricula are written. Classic literature from diverse sources will remain as a key component of Boise District curricula.

Another misperception is that implementation of the Common Core Standards will result in “watered-down” curriculum. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the Common Core math example above, students are required to compare and contrast linear and exponential models, and then to determine which model is most appropriate for particular data sets. In our current standards, students typically are asked to simply replicate processes over a series of problems.

These rigorous curricula in math and language arts, written by Boise District teachers, will challenge students at all levels. The power of Common Core is not in the shifting of the content standards but rather the shift in understanding the practices and processes that authentically lead to mastery. In making this transition, we are going beyond what’s required in the Common Core, so that increasing numbers of our students will be prepared for college and career.