

Common Core, Technology, and 21st Century Learning at West Platte Schools: An Eight Article Series for Parents and Patrons

Education across the United States is changing, and changing fast! When properly equipping teachers for the school year, districts may as well issue track shoes, sweat bands, and water bottles as issue pencils, paper, and erasers. That's because a sense of urgency has been created across our country to ensure America is preparing students for success in college and career in an increasingly competitive global economy. This sense of urgency has formalized into a newly defined curriculum called the Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by 46 states, including Missouri.

But, don't be fooled. Teachers do not get to throw the baby out with the bathwater; every teacher is still accountable for the Three R's of the 20th Century: Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. But, the Common Core calls for an additional Three R's of the 21st Century: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. Altogether, these six targets represent a new level of accountability for all educators, and the stakes are high! And, that's not all! Another huge piece of the Common Core is the seamless integration of technology into instruction across the entire curriculum. For the last several decades, teachers have approached "test time" by having students sharpen two pencils and grab a sheet of scratch paper; those days are over. Starting next school year, students in grades three and beyond will be testing digitally. That's right! Third grade students and beyond are scheduled to use computers for standardized testing across the nation. Altogether, it is clear that the Common Core State Standards and the requisite technology is changing the face of classrooms across our country, and West Platte classrooms are no exception.

In an attempt to further communicate and educate our parents and community on the migration into the Common Core Era, a series of eight articles will be disbursed over the next few months. These articles will cover significant topics and actions being taken within the West Platte School District to align our instruction with the Common Core and with 21st Century Learning. The actions being taken at West Platte are not unlike the actions being taken in many other districts across the country, not to mention across Platte County. So, if you are a West Platte patron, or a patron in another community, this article series may be of interest to you.

An interactive "anchor" presentation which covers topics addressed in this article series may be accessed on the all new West Platte website: wpsd.net. This anchor slideshow will connect you with a variety of multimedia and in-depth details on components of this movement. On behalf of our students and teachers, thank you for your time to investigate this initiative. I encourage you to seek out these articles and additional information over the next few months. We look forward to partnering for progress with you in the Common Core Era!

Seeking a World Class Education,
Jerrod Wheeler, Ed. D., Superintendent of Schools