

## Common Core GPS FAQ

Georgia joined with 47 other states to develop a set of core standards for K-12 in English language arts and mathematics. These standards provide a consistent framework to prepare students for success in college and the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.

### ***The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards provide the.... Students of Rome City Schools:***

- \*Rigorous knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and careers.
- \*Consistent expectations across states, regardless of whether they decide to go to school at Georgia Tech or UCLA, or pursue a career in Georgia, Maine, or Indiana.
- \*Relevant content and application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills.

### ***Educators of Rome City Schools:***

- \*Clear, focused expectations that empower teachers to increase the instructional rigor for ALL students.
- \*A framework that establishes what students should know and be able to do by the time they complete a grade level and ultimately graduate from high school.

### ***Parents of Rome City Schools:***

- \*The assurance that their children will graduate from Rome High School, college and career-ready.
- \*The assurance that their children will be well-prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete globally.

### ***Is Georgia lowering its standards with Common Core GPS?***

No. The Common Core GPS are the most rigorous, ambitious set of standards that Georgia has ever adopted. The English language arts standards are driven by three key shifts in instruction that have resulted in increased rigor in Rome City Schools' classrooms. These three shifts include a balance between reading fiction and non-fiction texts, close analytical reading of complex texts, and an increase in argumentative writing, with a focus on providing evidence from the text to support an argument.

***"Our focus is shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered instructional practices. Students are spending more time in texts analyzing, discussing, and writing about them in a more in-depth way. They are thinking critically in a way they have never thought before. We are finally focusing on what it really means for students to be college-and-career ready." Dr. Ellen Brewer, Literacy Coach, Rome High School***

***"Teachers are asking high-level questions, and students are responding with deep and thoughtful comments and ideas.... It's an exciting time of learning for both teachers and students." Ruth Cipolla, Literacy Coach, West Central Elementary***

In Mathematics, the Common Core GPS lay a solid foundation in grades K-5 in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals. These topics are introduced and taught in a developmentally-appropriate manner. This foundation supports a student's ability to learn and apply more demanding math concepts and procedures. The middle school and high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare student to think and reason mathematically. The Common Core GPS for math set a rigorous definition of college and career readiness by demanding that students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, just as college students and employees regularly do.

***"The implementation of Common Core has acted as a catalyst for teachers to deliver instruction with deeper rigor in our math classrooms. Students are working collaboratively, enabling them to have rich discussions and arguments related to the standards being mastered. Students regularly analyze tasks involving error analysis, requiring them to apply their understanding of a concept and provide written explanations of the discovered misconception." Jennifer Vaughn, Math Coach, Rome Middle School***

***"Students are taking risks, trying out their own ideas for problem-solving, and have increased their stamina for perseverance in solving problems. Students are making many more connections between concepts without teacher prompting." Teresa Fricks, Math Coach, West Central Elementary***

***Do the Common Core Standards amount to a national curriculum that tells teachers how to teach?***

No. The standards are not a curriculum. Standards are a clear set of shared goals and expectations that outline the knowledge and skills students need at each grade level. Curriculum encompasses all the learning which is planned and guided by the school. Curriculum development is the responsibility of school districts and schools. Teachers and leaders in Rome City Schools have spent the last two years revising the ELA and mathematics curricula, developing instructional units and lesson plans, selecting materials and resources, and providing professional learning around instructional strategies to support the Common Core GPS.

***Do the Common Core GPS lock teachers into a required reading list?***

No. The Common Core GPS include sample texts in Appendix B that demonstrate the level of text complexity appropriate for the grade level and compatible with the learning goals set out in the standards. The exemplars of high quality texts at each grade level provide a rich set of possibilities, but teachers have the flexibility to make their own decisions about which texts to use. The teachers and literacy coaches in Rome City Schools have made their selections of complex texts based on the Lexile/reading level of the text and the rich content and age-appropriateness of the subject matter. Rome City Schools actually selected very few texts from the Appendix B Exemplars for the Common Core ELA units they developed.