

February 2014 Monthly Resource:



This month, our “mailing” includes a guide to “Debunking Myths of the Common Core,” several non-fiction text resources, “action briefs” for Secondary and Elementary School Leaders, Counselors and Librarians, a guide to support Common Core communications, Common Core-aligned lessons to use for Black History Month, as well as a list of free professional development opportunities.

I. Debunking Myths of the Common Core:

<http://www.aft.org/issues/standards/nationalstandards/debunkingmyths.cfm>

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) developed this resource to address common misconceptions regarding the development, adoption and implementation of the CCSS.

II. Non-fiction Text Resources:

The following links provide non-fiction passages that can be used to foster students’ ability to analyze multiple texts and write in response what they have read.

1. **Readworks** (www.readworks.org): Provides a wide variety of non-fiction reading passages and CC-aligned questions. Passages include social studies and science content so that teachers can support literacy development across disciplines. The site also includes units that address the study of various novels.
2. **Room for Debate** (<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate>): The NY Times invites guest writers to write arguments in response to controversial questions such as, "Should Tweets Cost You Your Job?" and "Should Kids Pick Their Own Punishments?" For each topic, several writers provide their opinions. This is an excellent resource for teachers who wish to engage students in the analysis of authors’ arguments or the examination of issues from multiple perspectives.
3. **Text Project**: (<http://textproject.org/>) Provides non-fiction texts for free download.
4. **Beginning Reads** (leveled readers for early readers)
<http://textproject.org/students/beginningreads/>
5. **Talking Points for Kids**: Provides non-fiction articles designed for students in grades 4-6. Articles address topics that can be used for writing prompts or discussion. <http://textproject.org/students/talking-points-for-kids/>
6. **FYI Magazine Articles for Kids**: Includes non-fiction articles that are leveled based on text complexity. <http://textproject.org/students/fyi-for-kids/>

III. Implementing the Common Core State Standards:

Developed by Achieve, these “Action Briefs” address the respective role of Secondary and Elementary School Leaders, School Counselors and School Librarians in supporting the CCSS. The Achieve website states that this resource is a “starting point, designed to increase awareness of the standards, create a sense of urgency around their implementation, and provide these stakeholders — who are faced with dramatically increased expectations in the context of fewer resources — with a deeper understanding of the standards and their role in implementing the standards.”

1. The Role of the Secondary School Leader
<http://www.achieve.org/publications/implementing-common-core-state-standards-role-secondary-school-leader-action-brief>
2. The Role of the Elementary School Leader
<http://www.achieve.org/publications/implementing-common-core-state-standards-role-elementary-school-leader-action-brief>
3. The Role of the School Counselor
<http://www.achieve.org/publications/implementing-common-core-state-standards-role-school-counselor-action-brief>
4. The Role of the School Librarian
<http://www.achieve.org/publications/implementing-common-core-state-standards-role-school-librarian-action-brief>

IV. Communicating the Common Core State Standards, a guide for Superintendents, School Board Members, and Public Relations Executives

<http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/4/FINAL%20Communicating%20Common%20Core%2011.13.pdf>

This 52-page guide, developed by the Council of Great City Schools, includes “recommendations for key elements of a successful communications plan about the Common Core, including content (messages), spokespeople (key and secondary messengers), and delivery (strategies and tactics). It offers sample resources and materials from Council member districts and partner organizations. It also includes information regarding Raise the Bar Louisville, the public engagement campaign led by Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky, the first state to begin implementation of CCSS.

V. Common Core-Aligned Lessons for Black History Month

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/student_assessment/smarter_balanced/Black_History_Month_CCSS_-_January_Newsletter.pdf

The Connecticut Department of Education's January newsletter suggests resources to use during Black History Month that are aligned with the CCSS.

VI. Professional Development

Below are some examples of the free professional development opportunities that will be offered by the NJ DOE in the coming months. Click on <http://education.state.nj.us/events/all/> to view the complete list.

ELA PD

- **The Importance of Text Dependent Questions and Academic Vocabulary**
This all-day workshop will provide participants with hands-on experience in development of text dependent questions. Facilitators will address the principles of evidence-centered design and the expectations of PARCC assessments. The afternoon will be devoted to an examination of academic vocabulary that transcends content area and helps students to produce academic writing.

Date/s: February 13, 2014

Time: 9:00am to 2:45pm

Location: Mercer County Community College

Registration Links:

<http://education.state.nj.us/events/details.php?recid=20465>

Math PD:

- **Addition and Subtraction in Grades K-2**
This workshop is intended for teachers in Grades K-2. Addition and subtraction are both identified as “major content” for these grade levels and lay the groundwork for understanding of multiplication and division in grade 3 and beyond. Instructional strategies for building conceptual understanding with the operations of addition and subtraction will be the focus. A variety of models that help students make meaning of the concepts, including discrete objects and length based models, will be presented. Instruction of problem solving strategies will also be addressed.

Date: February 24 and 26, 2014

Time: 8:30am – 9:00am Registration, Session 9:00am – 3:00pm

Location: Raritan Valley Community College and Trenton

Registration Links:

February 24, 2014	Addition and Subtraction in Grades K-2	Branchburg
February 26, 2014	Addition and Subtraction in Grades K-2	Trenton

ELA and Math PD:

- **Assessment Literacy: Utilizing Benchmark Assessments**

This professional development session will focus on the role of the school leader in supporting the use of a balanced, data-driven assessment system that provides teachers and administrators with feedback to raise academic achievement. The session will address how to use teacher-created assessments that are fully aligned to the Common Core to create, organize and implement a benchmark assessment system that will identify students and teachers who require additional support. Presenters will include content specialists who will address topics specific to mathematics and English language arts.

Date/s: March 3 and 5, 2014

Time: 8:30am to 3:00pm

Location: Raritan Valley Community College

Registration Links:

March 3, 2014	Assessment Literacy - Central	Branchburg
March 5, 2014	Assessment Literacy - Central	Branchburg