
ACHIEVE THE CORE

Core Advocate Newsletter

New Tools, Core Advocate Stories and Ways to Get Involved



Welcome Back

We at Student Achievement Partners hope you all had a restful winter break and enjoyed celebrating the holidays with friends and family. As we start the second half of the school year, please take note of upcoming opportunities to learn with us.

- Our monthly Core Advocate Webinars take place on the third Tuesday of each month from 7:00-8:00 EST. Upcoming webinar topics include the **Instructional Practice Suite for Math** in January and **Text Complexity** in February.
- Several regional networks will be hosting Catalyst convenings to kick off their state campaigns. Washington, Arizona, North Carolina, and New Jersey will welcome new Core Advocates in the upcoming months.

- In May we will host our second annual **Core Advocates Conference** in Denver.

As always, we are grateful for the hard work and commitment of our Core Advocates to their students, families, and schools across the country. Here's wishing each of you an amazing 2016!



January Webinar

On January 19, 2016, the Field Impact Team at Student Achievement Partners will proudly host math team member Barbara Beske as she discusses the **Instructional Practice Suite for Math**. The webinar will take place from 7:00-8:00 PM and registration is available [here](#). Please join us, and invite your math teacher colleagues as well!



Spring Core Advocate Conference

Our second annual Core Advocate Conference will feature workshops, keynote speakers, and unconference sessions, and more! In addition to access to the conference sessions, a \$200 registration fee (per participant) covers travel, lodging, breakfast and lunch, making this one of the most affordable professional learning experiences for teachers in the country! Applications for the May 14-15, 2016 event are available [here](#), and are accepted through February 14, 2016. Can't wait to see you there!

Your Feedback Needed

The Math and ELA/Literacy Teams at Student Achievement Partners are interested in hearing about the textbooks your schools and districts are currently using. Please provide information to shape our work by taking [this 30-second survey](#) about textbooks!

[Textbook Survey](#)

Share What You Know

Core Advocate Emily Williams won a \$25 Amazon Gift Card for her wonderful response to last month's question: *Where do you go to find complex texts?* See Emily's response and other great complex text resource ideas below.



Library Science Specialists

In order to find complex texts, I have established a relationship with our library sciences specialist. Media center staff have the knowledge of and access to tremendous literary sources. They are thrilled to work with content-area teachers to develop literacy skills. Teachers, don't reinvent the wheel! Talk to the experts!

-Emily Williams

More great ideas

In order to find complex texts, I visit the [Classic Reader](#) website and match fiction with poetry by theme. Primary source documents usually provide complexity, so I search for these by theme as well.

-Linda Hutchins

I use the [CIA Unit of Study](#) books written by Sarah Collinge. The six teacher guides coincide with six chapter books for each grade level, third through sixth. Each book features a different genre, such as historical fiction, fantasy, or legend.

-Brenda Rossnagle

There are many rich primary sources in social studies found at [Teaching American History](#) and at the [National Humanities Center](#). For younger grades, many [beloved children's stories](#) are a helpful resource.

-Silas Kulkarni, SAP Literacy Team

I like magazines, such as the [New Yorker](#), the [Atlantic](#), [National Geographic](#), and [New Republic](#). Original versions of Aesop and the Brother's Grimm, and the free online journal [Science for Kids](#) are options as well.

-David Liben, SAP Literacy Team

Share your answer to this month's question to enter into the next drawing for a \$25 Amazon Gift Card.

This month's question:

Q: What positive changes have you seen in your classroom since implementing the Shifts?

Submit Your Answer

What Question Would You Ask Our Readers?

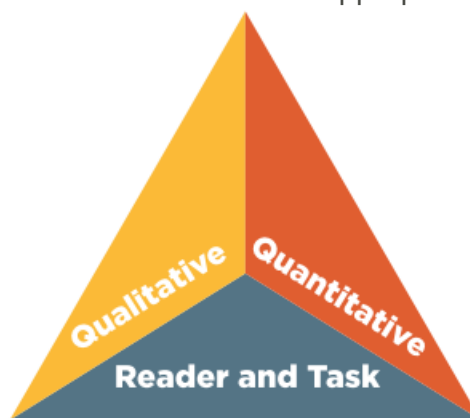
Text Complexity

Please note: This section has been revised from its original version to include the live link to the February Core Advocate Webinar.

The **Common Core State Standards** (CCSS) require all students to be able to comprehend texts of increasing complexity as they progress through school. The importance of complex text is highlighted in the Shifts for ELA/Literacy, and is well supported through the 2006 ACT report *Reading Between the Lines* and other research studies. Additionally, **Appendix A** to the CCSS ELA/Literacy notes that "reading demands in college, workforce training programs and life in general have held steady or increased over the last half century, [while] K-12 texts have actually declined in sophistication, and relatively little attention has been paid to students' ability to read complex texts independently(p. 2)."

Within the Standards, three important components contribute to the complexity of a text: (1) qualitative dimensions: those measured by a human reader, such as levels of meaning or purpose, structure, language conventionality and clarity, and knowledge demands; (2) Quantitative dimensions: numerical descriptors that consider word length or frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion; and (3) reader and task considerations: the variables specific to particular readers and particular tasks. **Achieve the Core** offers **numerous resources** to help teachers select and assess appropriately complex text for their students.

You can also learn more about **Text Complexity** during our February Core Advocate Webinar, featuring SAP ELA/Literacy Team member, Silas Kulkarni. The webinar is on Tuesday, February 16, 2016 from 7:00 - 8:00 PM EST. Register today by clicking [here](#), and share the link with your colleagues. We hope to see you there!



Network News

Kentucky State Catalyst Meeting:

Louisville, KY was the site of the first state Catalyst Meeting on December 5-6, 2015. Over 75 educators joined the Kentucky Core Advocates network and launched their state campaigns in math (Coherence in Math) and ELA/Literacy (Text Sets). The **Prichard Committee** for Academic Excellence provided some great coverage of the event. Check it out [here](#)! Congratulations to the Kentucky Core Advocate leadership team, and thanks for your hard work hosting this event.

Arizona Core Advocates:

In November, 2014 the Arizona state Board of Education adopted a new state achievement test, the **AzMERIT assessment**. Currently, the Arizona Department of Education is looking for educators to get involved in several projects related to the assessment. Arizona Core Advocates won't want to miss this opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise with the Standards and the Shifts! Apply [here](#) to be part of this important work.

Good to Great: The New Teacher Project (**TNTP**) is taking New Orleans by storm this summer! The Good to Great Institute is an intensive summer experience that prepares teachers to rise to the challenge of the Common Core State Standards in ELA and math by working with highly successful experienced teachers, attending content-specific training, collaborating with peers, and practicing teaching students. TNTP is looking for experienced teachers to lead this work, and provides a competitive salary and travel expenses. Email **Valerie Barron** at TNTP for more information about the application process.

Upcoming Events:

- Washington State Catalysts Convening - January 9-10, Seattle, WA
- Volusia County Schools *Classrooms Connect to Achieve the Shifts* - January 15-16, Deltona, FL
- Teach for America 25th Anniversary Summit - February 5-7, Washington, DC
- Arizona State Catalysts Convening - February 20-21, Phoenix, AZ
- Core Advocate State Captains Retreat - February 27-28, Philadelphia, PA
- New Jersey State Catalysts Convening - March 5-6, TBD
- North Carolina State Catalysts Convening - April 22-23, Greensboro, NC
- Core Advocate Conference - May 14-15, Denver, CO

A Core Advocate's Voice

*In the essay below, Core Advocate Laura Mayer shares her work designing and implementing a Literacy Institute Teacher Training at Buncombe County Schools in Asheville, NC. Share **your** Core Advocate story using the link below.*



"All of my coaching colleagues agree that the professional learning modules from SAP and the Core Advocate training we've received is some of the best professional development we have experienced."

In the fall of 2013, I attended my first Core Advocate training in Chicago. I was inspired so much, and over the course of the next two years, I recruited four fellow literacy coaches and two math coaches from my district to be trained as Core Advocates. While in Wilmington for a Core Advocates training, we hatched a multi-faceted plan to hold our own CCSS training in Buncombe County. Our district has cross-content teams of teachers who collaborate to train and coach colleagues on literacy instruction. We planned to train 50 of these literacy leaders this school year, and 50 more next year.

We applied for and received a \$49,000 grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to cover the costs of an intensive, four-day dive into the Shifts, and also allowing us to treat these hard working teachers to breakfast and lunch each day of the training!

The training design included a close look at the Shifts, text complexity, vocabulary and knowledge, and 'questions worth asking.' We used the materials developed by SAP and added activities aligned with our district's Instructional Framework, *Read, Write, Speak, Think and Move: Every Student, Every Class, Every Day*. We also added a leadership component where participants assessed their leadership strengths and needs, built a team plan for taking the modules back to their schools, and created individual lesson plans around the Standards that will populate our district-wide CCSS-aligned lesson portal.

We have completed the first two days of the four-day institute, and we are incredibly pleased with the feedback we have received so far. All of my coaching colleagues agree that the professional learning modules from SAP and the Core Advocate training we've received is some of the best professional development we have experienced. As a result, our district's teachers and their students are reaping the rewards!

-Laura Mayer

Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization

On December 10, 2015, the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into law. This reauthorization, the **Every Student Succeeds** Act, replaces its predecessor, the *No Child Left Behind* Act. While standards, assessments, and accountability remain cornerstones of the legislation, *Every Student Succeeds* puts significantly more decision making in the hands of the states. Be sure to explore **this article** from Ed Week and **this one** from the Alliance for Excellent Education to better understand the components of ESEA.

Social Media Spotlight



RJ Longstreet @rjlCardinals · 4h

@tfjdaly 3rd gr Ss building arrays w/in arrays seeing distrib prop in action!
#CoreAdvocates #ThinkingMath

Jenny Dietz and Judi Watson

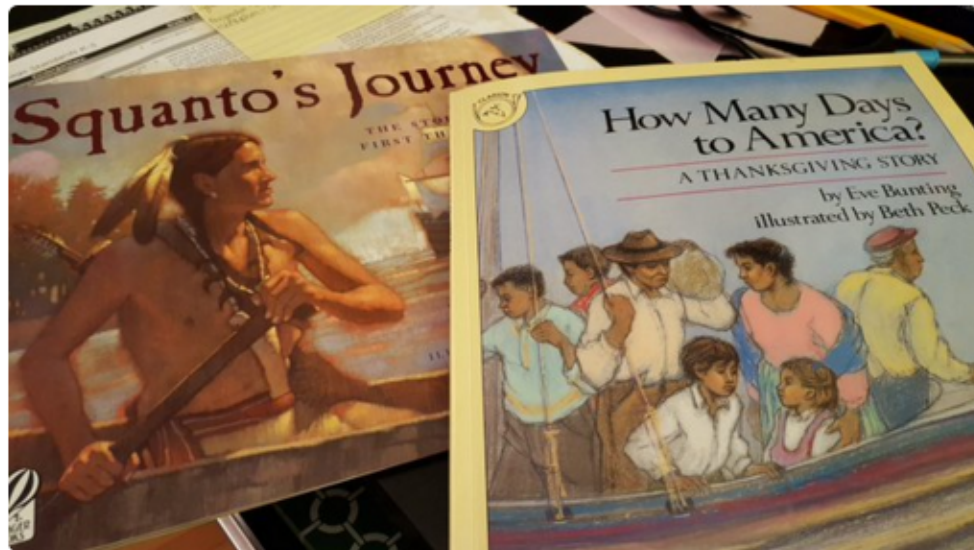


← ↻ ❤️ ⋮



Kate Crowe @kcrowe · Jan 4

Teaching about real stories of refugees, settlers, and native populations.
#coreadvocates @BVPrep



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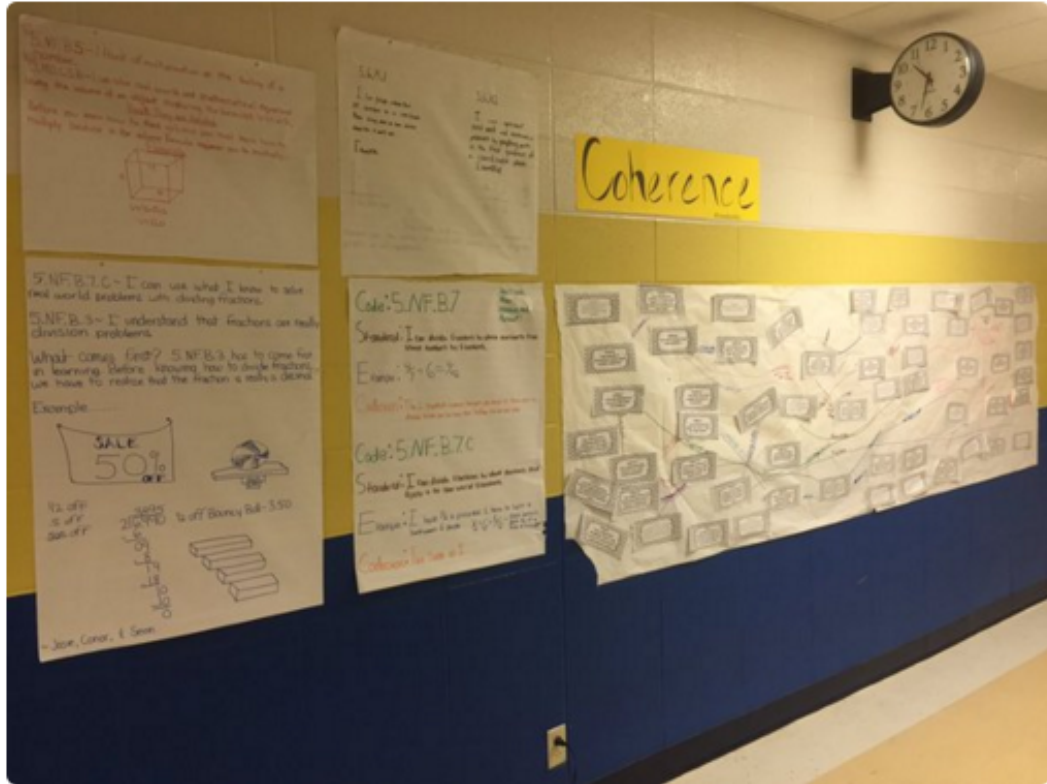
Mrs. Schimizzi @Mrs_Schimizzi · 15 Dec 2015

Want to help your student w/ fluency, accuracy & expression? AchievetheCore website has tools to assess and improve! Thanks [#coreadvocates](#)



Samantha Sams @m0nkeyb3ll · 17 Dec 2015

My 5th grade rocks! [#coherence](#) [#coreadvocates](#)



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