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# The CAREERS

## Special Edition



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A fifth-grade teacher presents an English language arts lesson. Schools across the country, including Portland, have begun implementing Common Core standards for academics which come with more difficult testing for students. (AP photo)

## Common Core Rollout

### Schools implementing new standards, tests

BY DONOVAN M. SMITH  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Improved academic standards and higher achieving students are primary goals behind

a new learning system that has been adopted in Oregon, Washington, and 43 other states. Called Common Core State Standards, the uniformity of the curriculum means that no matter your zip code, if you're a pupil in the public school system, you will have the same expectations for learning, period.

Portland Public Schools is rolling out Common Core for all grades. It includes making changes in curriculum to "ensure college

and career readiness at the end of high school."

The transition comes as schools in Oregon work to boost their graduation rates. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the state had the fourth worst high school graduation rate in the nation with just 68 percent of pupil earning their diplomas in 2011. That same report, released this year, shows Oregon as having the worst gradua-

tion rate for whites and the third worst for black students in the country.

A uniform curriculum has both critics and supporters on all sides of the political spectrum. The Oregon G.O.P. took an official stand against the state's adoption of Common Core, calling it big government and "one size fits all." But the National Urban League, representing students of color and other disadvantaged populations across the country, says the standards are needed for students to succeed and compete in the global economy.

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