

Common Core State Standards Initiative

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) in partnership with Achieve, Inc., ACT, and the College Board have initiated a state-led process of developing and adopting a common core of state standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative).

With the goal of **FEWER, CLEARER, and HIGHER**, these standards will be research and evidence-based, internationally benchmarked, aligned with college and work expectations and include rigorous content and skills. The NGA Center and CCSSO are coordinating the process to develop these standards and have created an expert validation committee to provide an independent review of the common core state standards, as well as the grade-by-grade standards.

Progress to Date and Next Steps

- 51 states and territories have joined the Common Core State Standards Initiative. Texas and Alaska are the only states that have not signed on.
- Draft college and career readiness standards (outcomes/expectations) were released on 9/21/2009 on www.corestandard.org. Feedback is being accepted until 10/21/2009.
- Validation committees will begin work once all feedback is received. Validation process will be completed by mid-November. Primarily post-secondary experts.
 - Review the process used to develop the college- and career-readiness standards and recommend improvements in that process. These recommendations will be used to inform the K-12 development process.
 - Validate the sufficiency of the evidence supporting each college- and career-readiness standard. Each member is asked to determine whether each standard has sufficient evidence to warrant its inclusion.
 - Add any standard that is not now included in the common core state standards that they feel should be included and provide the following evidence to support its inclusion: 1) evidence that the standard is essential to college and career success; and 2) evidence that the standard is internationally comparable.
- NASBE and SHEEHO have been invited to join the advisory group.
- K-12 standards to be developed by February 2010. More classroom teachers to be involved at this stage.
- State adoptions – the Memo of Understanding that states signed stipulates that the state will “adopt” 85% of the Common Core State Standards. State adoption requirements and timelines still need to be clarified and formalized.

Commentary

Initial reviews of draft standards are fairly positive.

Next step is much more challenging - crafting the back-mapped K-12 standards that all parties agree on.

Standards aren't enough – for need curriculum, assessments, professional development.

Common standards, common assessments, common performance, common ratings

Connections to Other Education Reform Efforts

Race to the Top

Developing and Adopting Common Standard (1 of 4 assurances)

Current effort to create conditions for four reform areas: requires states to document the extent to which the state has participated in a consortium of states that is working towards jointly developing and adopting, by June 2010, a common set of K-12 standards and the extent to which this consortium includes a significant number of states.

Plan for future efforts in the four reform categories: the extent to which the state, in collaborations with its LEAs, has a high-quality plan for supporting statewide transition to internationally benchmarked K-12 standards and high-quality assessments tied to these standards. State and LEA activities might include: aligning high school exit criteria and college entrance assessments; developing new curricular frameworks and materials, formative assessments, professional development materials.

\$350 Million for New Assessments

Of the \$4.35 billion allocated for RttT, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has set aside \$350 million for states to develop new assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards. A group of 8-10 states (Ohio is one of them) are discussing how they can collaborate to develop a "test bank" for end-of-course assessments.

ESEA Reauthorization and NCLB

The U.S. Department of Education has begun to gather input on ESEA reauthorization. Early comments from Secretary Duncan echo several of the Race to the Top assurances including setting higher standards and expectations, extended learning time, using data to track student and teacher effectiveness, and assessment to better measure individual student progress.

H.B. 1

Two provision of H.B. 1 are at odds with the timeline for the Common Core State Standards Initiative and thus Race to the Top. H.B. 1 requires that DOE complete a review of the state academic contacts standards by June, 2010 and develop model curricula based on standards by March 31, 2011. H.B. 1 also changes the state's assessment program to include a national assessment in English/language arts, math and science; end-of-course assessments, and a senior year project. How these requirements fit with possible ESEA/NCLB changes and RttT is unclear at this time.