Introduction to Common Core and NC Essential Standards

Common Core Overview

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<tr>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
<th>Limited Experience</th>
<th>Expert</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate your understanding of the Common Core State Standards Initiative</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rate your familiarity of the purpose of the Common Core Standards (CCS)</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>Rate your current perceived level of successfully implementing the CCS at your school</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>List any professional development you have attended on the Common Core State and NC Essential Standards</td>
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<td>What is the timeline for implementation and assessment of the Common Core State and NC Essential Standards?</td>
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<td>The CCSSI intends to prescribe what teachers across the nation teach (agree or disagree? provide your rationale)</td>
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<td>What do you perceive as the pros and cons of the CCSSI and its implementation as it applies to your teaching?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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What do you need to further your understanding and successful implementation of the CCSSI?  

Quick Reference for Common Core State and NC Essential Standards
All information collected electronically from [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org) and [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

On June 2, 2010, North Carolina adopted the Common Core State Standards in K-12 Mathematics and English Language Arts released by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. In addition, North Carolina’s Standard Course of Study has been completely overhauled, and new standards for Science, Social Studies, World Languages, Arts education, English as a Second Language, Healthful Living, Career and Technical education, Information and Technology skills, Early Learning, Guidance, and Extended Content (formerly Occupational Study) are to be implemented and assessed in classrooms beginning in 2012-13 school year. The current NCSCOS will be in effect and training of representatives from each LEA and subsequent district-level professional development will take place in the 2011-12 school year.
**What is the Common Core State Standards Initiative?**
The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort to establish a shared set of clear educational standards for English language arts and mathematics that states can voluntarily adopt. The standards have been informed by the best available evidence and the highest state standards across the country and globe and designed by a diverse group of teachers, experts, parents, and school administrators, so they reflect both our aspirations for our children and the realities of the classroom. These standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to go to college or enter the workforce and that parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The standards are benchmarked to international standards to guarantee that our students are competitive in the emerging global marketplace.

**Why is the Common Core State Standards Initiative important?**
We want to make sure that every child across the country is given the tools they need to succeed. High standards that are consistent across states provide teachers, parents, and students with a set of clear expectations that everyone can work toward together. This will ensure that we maintain America’s competitive edge, so that all of our students are well prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to compete with not only their peers here at home, but with students from around the world. These standards are a common sense first step toward ensuring our children are getting the best possible education no matter where they live. Of course, standards cannot single-handedly improve the quality of our nation’s education system, but they do give educators shared goals and expectations for their students. For example, the common core state standards will enable participating states to work together to:

- Make expectations for students clear to parents, teachers, and the general public;
- Encourage the development of textbooks, digital media, and other teaching materials aligned to the standards;
- Develop and implement comprehensive assessment systems to measure student performance against the common core state standards that will replace the existing testing systems that too often are inconsistent, burdensome and confusing; and
- Evaluate policy changes needed to help students and educators meet the standards.

**Who is leading the Common Core State Standards Initiative?**
Parents, teachers, school administrators and experts from across the country together with state leaders, through their membership in the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) are leading the effort to develop a common core of state standards. In addition, CCSSO and the NGA Center have provided public comment periods for everyone to submit feedback on the draft standards documents. Those comments have been incorporated into the final standards.

**Does having common standards lead to “dumbing down” the standards across the board?**
Not at all. The Common Core State Standards have been built from the best and highest state standards in the country. They are evidence-based, aligned with college and work expectations, include rigorous content and skills, and are informed by other top performing countries. They were developed in consultation with teachers and parents from across the country so they are also realistic and practical for the classroom. Far from looking for the “lowest common denominator,” these standards are designed to ensure that all students, regardless of where they live, are learning what they need to know to graduate from high school ready for college or a career.

**Will more standards mean more tests?**
No. For states that choose to adopt these common standards, having one set of standards will make it easier for states to pool information and resources to develop a shared set of high-quality tests to better evaluate student progress. The goal is not to have more tests, but to have smarter and better tests that help students, parents, and teachers.

**Are these national standards?**
The federal government was NOT involved in the development of the standards. This has been a state-led and driven initiative from the beginning. States will voluntarily adopt the standards based on the timelines and context in their state.

**Why are the Common Core State Standards for just English-language arts and math?**
English-language arts and math were the first subjects chosen for the common core state standards because these two subjects are skills, upon which students build skill sets in other subject areas. They are also the subjects most frequently assessed for accountability purposes. Of course, other subject areas are critical to young people’s education and their success in college and careers. Once the English-language arts and math standards are developed, CCSSO and NGA Center, on behalf of the states, may develop common core in additional subject areas.
**What will these common core state standards mean for students?**
The standards will provide more clarity about and consistency in what is expected of student learning across the country. Until now, every state has had its own set of academic standards, meaning public education students at the same grade level in different states have been expected to achieve at different levels. This initiative will allow states to share information effectively and help provide all students with an equal opportunity for an education that will prepare them to go to college or enter the workforce, regardless of where they live. Common standards will not prevent different levels of achievement among students. Rather, they will ensure more consistent exposure to materials and learning experiences through curriculum, instruction, and teacher preparation among other supports for student learning. In a global economy, students must be prepared to compete with not only their American peers in the next state, but with students from around the world. These standards will help prepare students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and careers.

**How will these standards impact teachers?**
The standards will provide important goals for teachers to ensure they are preparing students for success in college and the workforce. They will help teachers develop and implement effective strategies for their students by providing benchmarks for skills and knowledge that their students should have by the end of the year. The common core state standards will help colleges and professional development programs better prepare teachers; provide the opportunity for teachers to be involved in the development of assessments linked to these top-quality standards; allow states to develop and provide better assessments that more accurately measure whether or not students have learned what was taught; and guide educators toward curricula and teaching strategies that will give students a deep understanding of the subject and the skills they need to apply their knowledge.

**Myths about Implementation:**

**Myth:** The Standards tell teachers what to teach.  
**Fact:** The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who are in them. That’s why these standards will establish what students need to learn, but they will not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students reach the standards.

**Myth:** The Standards will be implemented through No Child Left Behind (NCLB) - signifying that the federal government will be leading them.  
**Fact:** The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort that is not part of No Child Left Behind and adoption of the Standards is in no way mandatory. States began the work to create clear, consistent standards before the Recovery Act or the Elementary and Secondary Education Act blueprint was released because this work is being driven by the needs of the states, not the federal government. The NGA Center and CCSSO are offering support by developing a State Policymaker Guide to Implementation, facilitating opportunities for collaboration among organizations working on implementation, planning the future governance structure of the standards, and convening the publishing community to ensure that high quality materials aligned with the standards are created.

**Myth:** These Standards amount to a national curriculum for our schools.  
**Fact:** The Standards are not a curriculum. They are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others will decide how the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.