

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

BACKGROUND

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is being led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors' Association (NGA) to promote state adoptions of common core standards in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA). Forty-eight states, two territories and the District of Columbia have committed to "developing a common core of state standards in English-language arts and mathematics for grades K-12."¹ Although commonly referred to as "national" standards, the federal government is not leading the effort, and states will adopt the standards voluntarily.

The initiative has been underway for several years. Recently, the standards-writing process has been expedited because adoption of the standards was included in the competition for the Race to the Top (RTTT) Fund authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Specifically, applicants like Washington, who are applying in the second round of the RTTT process, will earn points based on whether they have *adopted* a common set of K-12 standards by August 2, 2010.

States must adopt 100 percent of the common core standards. The common core standards may represent 85 percent of the state's total standards, as states may add 15 percent more to customize the "package" of state standards. (Note: States cannot adopt only 85 percent of the common core standards.)

In Washington, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) has authority to adopt standards. At this writing, legislation² is still being considered that would authorize Superintendent Dorn to adopt common core standards *provisionally* by August 2, 2010.³ By January 11, 2011, Superintendent Dorn would need to provide additional information to the education committees, including comparisons of Washington and common core standards, an estimated timeline and costs. Should common core standards be adopted, implementation would take several years.

The State Board of Education (SBE) may elect to comment on the adoption of the common core standards, but has no direct authority for the adoption.

At the recent National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Western Region meeting, 11 states and one territory (Guam) heard presentations and discussed the likely impacts and challenges of the common core initiative. Board members, Steve Dal Porto and Sheila Fox, attended the meeting and will report on their experience at the SBE meeting (See NASBE summary in Attachment A). SBE staff member, Kathe Taylor, and OSPI staff member, Jessica Vavrus, also attended.

¹ <http://www.corestandards.org/>

² ESSB 6996

³ Provisional adoption by August 2, 2010—as opposed to adoption—may cost the state points on the RTTT application.

Washington has had several opportunities to review drafts of, and provide feedback on, initial drafts of the common core standards. The draft K-12 standards were released March 10, 2010 for public comment. Feedback is due by April 2, 2010⁴. OSPI staff member Jessica Vavrus will review Washington's process for reviewing and considering adoption of the standards at the SBE meeting.

Rationale for adoption. Some of the reasons to consider adoption include:

- Could allow Washington to maintain high and supported standards while increasing equity and fairness for students who move from state to state.
- May produce higher, clearer, fewer standards with a focus on career and college readiness.
- May allow for an economy of resources through aligned systems, shared assessments and professional development (Washington, with only two percent of the population, may benefit from joining with other states to influence the development of textbooks and other resources.)
- Will give Washington the ability to benchmark progress across states and compare internationally.
- Adoption is a key component of the RTTT application.

Concerns about adoption. Some of the reasons states are expressing reservations about adoption are:

- Concerns about the cultural relevance of shared standards.
- Each state's pride and ownership of current state standards.
- Implications about the impact on assessment and cut scores—will all states share a common cut score? How will it be determined?
- Costs of implementation.
- Questions about the impact on student achievement—will new standards make a difference?

EXPECTED ACTION

None. Information only.

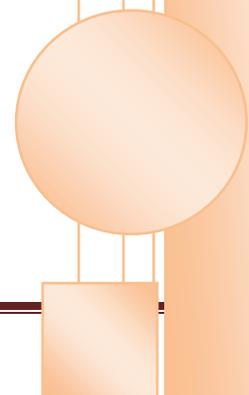
⁴ www.corestandards.org

REPORT OF THE NASBE WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Common Core Standards

Attachment A

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REPORT OF THE NASBE WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Common Core Standards

Eleven states and one territory from the NASBE Western Region participated in a conference focused on the initiative led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors' Association (NGA) to promote state adoptions of common core standards in mathematics and English language arts (ELA). In the majority of states, the state board of education is the entity responsible for the adoption of standards, thus the conference played a critical role in providing board members with an opportunity to clarify the process for developing and adopting common core standards and for raising and discussing issues that boards might encounter once the standards are finalized and the adoption process has been completed.

Speakers for the conference covered a wide range of topics including the process used to develop the standards and the vetting process by content experts. Additional speakers addressed why this topic is pertinent and so galvanizing among and across sectors; the timeline for adoption within states; and the importance of aligning communication, adoption and implementation actions. One of the most useful aspects of the conference was the work session among participants exploring and discussing challenges, resources that will be required for a transparent and straightforward adoption and implementation process, remaining questions and additional support that NASBE could provide as states move forward. A synopsis of those issues follow:

Anticipated Challenges

- Push back from various interest groups
- Teacher development
- Setting cut scores
- Impact on states' current adoption processes and standards
- Impact on current assessments
- Standards fatigue
- How best to communicate and roll out
- Establishing a meaningful vetting process to address the concerns with partners to include the fiscal impact of adopting new standards outside of the normal cycle
- General process alignment with current standards adoption practices and other policies

Required Resources for the Adoption of Common Core Standards

- Money

- Staff time and availability for review a review of the standards
- Time for public engagement
- Funds for professional development and release time for teachers
- Funds for policy alignment and assessments development
- Funds for curriculum resources
- Overall Expertise
- Sufficient teachers

How NASBE Can Support States in the Adoption and Implementation of Common Core

- Share information across states
- Provide guidance on how to move forward
- Conduct a common core standards session at the NASBE Annual Conference
- Promote the role and importance of state boards of education in the adoption process
- Assist with communication strategies including multi-media access for all constituencies
- Provide speaking points on key common core issues
- Advocate for the concerns of the stakeholders
- Host more regional meetings

What Further Information on the Common Core Standards Process is Needed

- Career and college ready – what do we really want for all high school seniors; including non-college bound and how will they be affected by the common core
- How will common core standards be used with special needs students
- How will states approach the alignment of instructional materials and how it will evolve
- How will states calculate the cost of new common core standards
- What will the impact of common core standards be on Career and Technical Education
- How will the differences in state timelines affect the process
- How will the process address the lack of common definitions across states for the elements of standards; for example, not all states use the term English Language Arts
- What is the criteria for measuring the additional 15% above the common core
- What happens if a state doesn't adopt the common core if they have been selected to receive RTT funds
- How will the federal role expand in this arena
- How will international benchmarking be used
- What are the procedures for modifying the standards in the future
- What instructional materials will be developed for the common core standards

Additional Questions on the Common Core

- How will the common core standards affect other disciplines
- How to provide support and resources to make the common core meaningful
- How will schools be better because of common core standards

- What does higher, clearer, fewer really mean and how will this be interpreted by parents
- What impact, if any, will the November elections have on the common core movement
- Is 15% above the common core sufficient for math and science
- How it will common core standards affect other federal programs
- How will the standards affect states' policy review cycles

Anticipated Adoption Timeframe

- Utah – immediately –if resources are available
- Colorado – August if alignment with the current standards is possible
- Washington – 6 months (provisional), a standards cross walk is required by the legislature for the 2011 sessions
- Wyoming TBD
- Montana – 6 months to a year and a half
- Guam – in the process of adopting standards; must determine if the common core can be integrated into what is happening
- Alaska – not likely in immediate future, but will examine the alignment issues
- Idaho - TBD
- California -2010-11; it will be an overall 4 year process
- Hawaii – this year, once the standards are released
- Oregon – end of 2010

A copy of the conference agenda is attached.