



Taking Action: Common Core State Standards Implementation Updates

States, districts and schools continue to push forward to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with fidelity and develop the necessary professional development; instructional guidance and supporting materials; and transition existing assessment systems to best position their teachers, leaders, and students for success. Collaborations between states and between K-12 and higher education systems continue to emerge, as well as efforts to more clearly define the state/district/school roles in the implementation effort. This document features state and district examples and provides a snapshot of the some of the work underway to transition to the CCSS and related assessments, but *is not intended to be exhaustive, and Achieve will continue to expand the list of resources in the future. Additional state-specific highlights can be found in the Education First/Achieve Rubric and Self-Assessment Tool published in March 2012.*

State Professional Development Plans

The state's role in providing professional development (PD), monitoring the effectiveness of PD and certifying the quality of PD varies considerably. States are thinking strategically about how to align PD to the CCSS, how to monitor the expected outcomes and feedback, and how to ensure PD is of high quality.

- The **Arkansas** *Guide for Professional Development Planning for Implementation of the CCSS* includes a four-phase plan that begins with building awareness of the CCSS among educators; going deeper into the standards to identify, understand, and implement significant instructional shifts implicit in the CCSS; developing/adopting curriculum and accessing the full range of assessment strategies; and evaluating progress and making strategic plan adjustments to ensure all students succeed. Each phase includes specific recommendations for PD, references/resources for educators, reflection/progress monitoring and parental/community engagement. View the plan here: <http://tinyurl.com/7826a3u>.
- The **Georgia** Department of Education and Georgia Public Broadcasting have teamed up to produce grade-level Common Core Georgia Performance Standards Professional Learning video sessions in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. History/social studies, science, and technical subject sessions are forthcoming. Viewer feedback is requested through an anonymous survey to monitor and improve the quality of the state-led professional development. In response to school requests that teacher participation be verified, there is also a built-in participation form that culminates in a participation certificate. Stream the videos here: <http://tinyurl.com/7c2ulax>.
- The **New Mexico** Public Education Department (NMPED), together with NMPED's TeachNM and Educator Quality Bureau, will develop a structure and process to formally vet professional development service providers at the state level. NMPED will develop and collect a standardized evaluation form from all PD providers and require that all providers participate in an orientation session. NMPED has also identified a clear set of expectations for providers, including evaluating the effectiveness of PD offerings and assessing their impact: <http://tinyurl.com/6vcbvjk>.

Instructional Guidance and Supporting Materials

Work is underway in states and districts to ensure the content taught in their classrooms is rigorous and engaging for students and aligned to the CCSS. Understanding how to evaluate and develop instructional units and tasks is one way educators can address this challenge. Providing tools for teachers to monitor students' progress towards achieving the CCSS content and performance expectations – and communicating this information to parents – is another approach.



- The Tri-State Collaborative (comprised of education leaders from **Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island** and facilitated by Achieve) has developed rubrics and review processes for educators to use in evaluating the quality of lessons and units intended to address the CCSS for mathematics and ELA/literacy. The rubrics include criteria for quality along four dimensions: alignment to the rigors of the CCSS, key areas of focus in the CCSS, instructional supports and assessment. The rubrics and accompanying resources can be downloaded under the “Tools” tab here: <http://www.achieve.org/achieving-common-core>.
- The **New York City** Department of Education has created a Common Core Library that houses CCSS-aligned tasks embedded within units of study for K-12 literacy and mathematics: <http://tinyurl.com/5w8l4pd>. These units include rubrics, annotated student work, instructional supports and supports for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities. A virtual training video accompanies the modules. Too, interactive annotated student work has been added for a number of the resources where users can compare varying levels of student work. The district has also specified the “Instructional Expectations for the 2011-12 school year” to guide schools’ implementation of the new standards and has linked professional development to these expectations. See <http://tinyurl.com/7nus2kk>.
- The **Hawaii** Department of Education is in the process of transitioning the early elementary years to a standards-based report card that includes the CCSS. The use of the new standards-based report card features the relevant CCSS mathematics domains and the ELA strands per the guidance of a new Board of Education policy that calls for reporting students’ achievement based on the Hawaii Content Performance Standards. View a sample report card: <http://tinyurl.com/7o6s8ru>.

Transitioning to New Assessment Systems

States are taking a variety of approaches to transitioning their state assessment systems between now and 2014-15. Given the different stakes attached to current state summative assessments (e.g., graduation, teacher evaluation, accountability), one single transition path will not be appropriate for all states. What is most important is that states notify districts, schools, and communities of planned changes, which includes preparing for changes in how the assessments will be administered.

- The **Indiana** Office of Student Assessment has created *Assessment Guidance and Common Core Additions* for 2011-12 in grades 2-8 for Math grades 3-8 in ELA. The documents detail which standards are assessed by the state assessment and which are more appropriate for assessment in the classroom. Also included are the 2011-12 instructional priorities with regard to the CCSS to ensure students do not experience a gap in learning as the state transitions to the CCSS. See <http://tinyurl.com/6qbatnp>.
- The **North Carolina** Department of Public Instruction has developed an *Online Assessments Best Practices Guide: Support for LEAs and Charter Schools in the Transition to Online Summative Assessments*. The guide includes best practices for administrators, teachers, testing personnel and technology personnel. Case studies from schools and districts around planning for online assessments and issues of scheduling, financial planning, and technical requirements are also addressed. See <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/acre/assessment/guide/>.

Summative assessments are not the only assessments changing in light of new academic standards. Transition planning is critical for the formative assessments typically determined at the local level.

- **Rhode Island** has created an assessment mapping tool to help local education agencies (LEAs) inventory the types of assessment currently administered, grades/range, description of assessment (e.g., the content strand, domain, areas covered within assessment), purpose and use of data,



scoring procedure/turnaround time for providing feedback to students, implementation schedule, allowable accommodations/modifications, and number of schools using the assessment/total number of schools in LEA serving these grades. See the Assessment Map Tool:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/CAS.aspx>.

Higher Education Engagement

Successful implementation of the CCSS will be characterized by efforts that involve and rely on the expertise of both K–12 and higher education leaders and reinforce their shared goal of increasing the number of students entering postsecondary education better prepared for success and for attaining market-valued certifications, associate and bachelor’s degrees.

- The **Ohio** Department of Education, in partnership with the Ohio Board of Regents, has developed the *High School – Higher Education Alignment Initiative*. Fourteen partnerships of high school, higher education, and career-technical and supporting institutions will work to align curriculum in ELA and math to reduce postsecondary remediation rates, align teacher preparation programs, and exchange data between high schools and postsecondary institutions to promote greater student success. Lessons learned and best practices will be disseminated and resources developed to serve as a reference point for K-12 and postsecondary educators; to communicate skill sets required for college coursework; and to provide guidance on the content and rigor of a typical first year, credit-bearing course and reinforce consistency and continuity at the college level. Learn more about the partnership here: <http://tinyurl.com/8a6noj8>.

Coordinating and Communicating State and District Roles and Responsibilities

With so many concurrent streams of work underway at the state level, communicating who is responsible for what – and when – is paramount. This is especially true when the state, district, or school is stepping into a new or different role. Many states have established new avenues to seek the input of districts and leverage school leaders to help inform their transition to the CCSS and have created resources and tools to aid districts’ management of the work they are responsible for executing.

- The collaboratively-developed **Arkansas** CCSS Implementation plan includes attention to communications; curriculum; assessment; instructional leadership; professional development; policy; and, critically, *aligning the system* to ensure consistency of vision, mission, and message across the state in light of the many pieces of work moving simultaneously. Classroom, school district, regional/partner and state roles are defined for each strategic action area, along with desired outcomes: <http://ideas.aetn.org/commoncore/strategic-plan>.
- **Colorado** has created a *Standards Implementation Toolkit* organized into the four phases of their implementation: awareness and dissemination, transition, implementation, and transformation. Each phase includes topics, steps, and resources to guide and support LEAs in their transition to the CCSS. The site also features a transition timeline that includes what districts should be doing, what educators’ instructional focus should be, what the role of the Colorado Department of Education will be, and guidance on assessment transition: <http://tinyurl.com/44p66fz>.
- **Massachusetts** has developed a suite of helpful materials to aid districts’ and schools’ planning and implementation of the CCSS. The *Goals and Performance Measures Workbook* defines the state’s goals for improving outcomes around reducing achievement gaps and increasing college readiness and enrollment, and presents district-specific baseline data and trajectories for each goal. District leaders can monitor their progress and make mid-course corrections as needed to meet short and long-term goals. Technical assistance webinars were provided and ongoing assistance is available for how to use the workbook: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/rttt/district.html>.



- The **New Mexico** Common Core State Standards Implementation Plan includes key implementation steps for work plans in the areas of curriculum and Instruction, professional development, and internal leadership. Responsibilities for the work are assigned to the state, districts, higher education, third parties, or a hybrid: <http://tinyurl.com/6vcbvjk>.
- The **Rhode Island** Department of Education has defined a set of CCSS LEA Transition Benchmarks for the next three years to aid schools' transition planning: <http://tinyurl.com/7wthekb>. The Department has taken the step of identifying "Actions" to guide LEAs' understanding of whether they are on track to meet the annual benchmarks: <http://tinyurl.com/7na6vd8>.
- In February 2012, **Tennessee** leaders announced the formation of the Common Core Leadership Council, which will serve as a channel for districts to provide input to the state on a range of CCSS implementation and transition issues, including assessments, professional development, pilot programs, and identifying and training exemplary classroom leaders to lead Summer 2012 CCSS implementation training. The Council's membership, comprised of district and school leaders, is posted here: <http://news.tn.gov/node/8421>.

Conclusion

With each passing month, states and districts are devising both new approaches as well as building on the experiences of peer states and districts to implement the CCSS. New phases of work are gearing up as others are completed (e.g. publicize standards crosswalks, assemble leadership teams). Still other pieces of the implementation work are iterative and ongoing (e.g. communications, monitoring progress, problem solving, etc.). This document is intended to grow over time; if your state or district would like to share developments in any of the above categories or others, **please email your ideas to Marie O'Hara** (mohara@achieve.org). To view the September 2011 iteration of the work underway to implement the CCSS, visit the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/8828lwj>.