



From Ideas to Reality: A Recap of the Common Core State Standards in 2010-11

States are moving rapidly to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). They are creating or expanding leadership teams to guide and monitor the work, deepening educator understanding of the standards and adjusting instructional practice, engaging the higher education community to ensure a seamless transition to postsecondary institutions, leveraging new and existing communications channels to engage stakeholders, and transitioning their state assessment systems. This document features state practices and models and provides a high-level snapshot of the work underway in states to implement the CCSS. *This document is not intended to be exhaustive, and Achieve will continue to expand the list of resources going forward.*

Leadership and Governance of CCSS Implementation

Many states have created CCSS **implementation teams** that include teachers; school, district, and state leaders; and content-area specialists. In these states every school or district is represented and the team expectations and deliverables are clearly defined. Too, there are processes in place to monitor the transition and an emphasis on concrete, measureable evidence of progress. In most cases there are multi-year commitments requested of the team members to ensure continuity across the implementation years and to build internal capacity and institutional knowledge.

- **North Carolina's** 148 districts and charter schools have identified 9 to 12-member teams of elementary and secondary English Language Arts, math, science, and social studies representatives. Districts are encouraged to consider adding representatives the arts, healthful living, ESL, world languages, professional development and curriculum coordinators, instructional technology, exceptional children, career and technical education staff, and lead teachers. The teams will serve as their district's professional development leaders and will lead the development of a specific professional development implementation plan prior to 2012-13. For more information on the teams' deliverables: www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/acre/resources/facilitator-guide.pdf

Some states have **leveraged existing state or regional leadership** structures and channels to support their CCSS implementation work.

- For the past 12 years, **Louisiana** has convened a Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence. This 36-member board includes twelve higher education representatives, twelve K-12 representatives, and twelve state/parent/business/community members. The Commission's 2012-13 charge is to make CCSS and PARCC assessment recommendations to the Governor, Board of Regents, and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Some states have worked to broaden the base of supporters of the CCSS implementation effort by establishing **cross-sector teams** to shepherd the work.

- **Oregon** has created a nine-member CCSS Steering Committee comprised of Oregon Department of Education and instructional, administrative, and postsecondary partners. This group coordinates the 35-member Stewardship Team appointed by the State Superintendent. The Stewardship team is led by K-12 teachers and principals, curriculum leads, higher education representatives (teacher educator and math educators), district-level staff, state and local school boards, PTA members, state math organization, and business representatives. The Stewardship Team members serve on one of four work groups: www.ode.state.or.us/wma/teachlearn/commoncore/oregon-ccssi-stewardship-team-membership.doc

States have started to release detailed **implementation timelines**. These typically include plans to phase in the standards and new assessments by grade and include the state's role in supporting implementation and

transition work. The most comprehensive timelines also include expectations for districts and schools, and emphasize shared ownership of the work and opportunities to leverage state and local strengths. In many states, there are more moving pieces than ever before happening concurrently (e.g. changes to standards, professional development, formative and summative assessments, accountability systems, etc.), making it essential to coordinate this work and look across the areas of work and funding to consider how they interact.

Development of Crosswalks and Instructional Resources

Over the last year, many states have publicly posted **K-12 crosswalks** comparing their state-developed standards and the CCSS in ELA and math. Some states have chosen to conduct two match/gap analyses – thus increasing the reliability of the matches and ratings – using SEA/district/school staff and an external group for a second review (or “second opinion”). A quality comparison between current state standards and the CCSS is a critical first step towards understanding what will be necessary for states to fully implement the CCSS; policy leaders, administrators and educators must use the data on what standards are common, new, or have changed, to determine the impact of the CCSS on the state’s curriculum, instruction, assessment, tools and teacher professional development.

- The **Arizona** Department of Education created math crosswalks and a resource that links the CCSS standards to the Mathematical Practices by grade level, with associated explanations and examples. The Mathematical Practices are linked to grade-specific explanations and examples at the end of each document. The crosswalk documents include a list of performance objectives from earlier standards that have been “removed or moved” as well as grade-by-grade summaries: www.ade.az.gov/standards/math/2010MathStandards/
- **Washington’s** standards analysis was twofold, including an external alignment analysis and an internal alignment conducted by Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) educators. The detailed crosswalk includes the level of alignment for each of the CCSS and the WA standards (“full match”, “partial match”, or “weak match”), as well as the grade-level timing of each standard and comments on the matches. Both versions have been posted: www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/Transition.aspx

A number of states have released **sample curriculum maps and frameworks** to assist teachers in their understanding of the CCSS and define how the content and performance expectations of the CCSS can be translated into what students must know and be able to do to demonstrate mastery. States have included instructional strategies and resources, guidance on differentiating learning for subgroups of students, and samples of student work indicative of mastery of CCSS as part of this resource. The PARCC and SBAC state consortia have also released draft content frameworks designed to support states’ transition to the CCSS.

- The **Indiana** Department of Education has made a wide range of instructional resources available to help their educators understand the CCSS and what the transition to the new standards will require. In addition to the state-developed curriculum maps, instructional transition guidance documents and implementation timelines, the Department’s Common Core page also includes a series of short videos from state leaders explaining the new standards, among them videos that explore the connection between the new ELA/Literacy standards and other disciplines, such as science, history/social studies, agriculture, health science, and fine arts: www.doe.in.gov/commoncore/
- The **Ohio** Department of Education has released draft K-12 Model Curricula for mathematics and English Language Arts. The grade-level breakdowns of the standards include content elaborations, expectations for learning, instructional strategies and resources, common misconceptions of students around specific skills and concepts, and how teachers can differentiate instruction. The Ohio Department of Education led the model curricula development, but worked closely with teams of teachers to collect instructional strategies and resources aligned to the Common Core State Standards and to build understanding and broad-based support along the way.



- The **Tennessee** Department of Education created a digital resource center, the Tennessee Curriculum Center, to aid educators in their transition to the CCSS. In addition to the crosswalked standards, the Center links mini learning progressions, curricular and digital materials, teacher and student enrichment resources, and assessment guidance to individual standards. See www.tncurriculumcenter.org/common_core

States and districts are beginning to develop ways to ensure the content taught in their classrooms is both rigorous and engaging for students. Understanding how to **evaluate and develop instructional tasks** is one way educators and education leaders can address this challenge.

- Achieve, in partnership with the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc), is piloting a process to evaluate and develop instructional tasks aligned to the CCSS in math that demonstrate how Career and Technical Education (CTE) content can be leveraged throughout high school mathematics. The classroom-based tasks will be reviewed and developed by teachers *for* teachers and will identify key opportunities for math teachers to use real-world examples and exercises in their classrooms as they transition to the CCSS. **Illinois** was the first state to participate in the pilot and is now exploring how they can replicate the work across the state.

Higher Education Engagement and Alignment to the CCSS

In years past, Achieve has worked with many states to engage their higher education and business communities in the standards-writing process and to verify that the knowledge and skills defined in K-12 are aligned with the expectations of college and the workplace. States should take the same care to engage their higher education and business communities in building an understanding of and support for the CCSS. Some states are taking a two-pronged approach to **directly engaging higher education faculty** around the CCSS, working first to build a full understanding of the new K-12 standards followed by focused engagement.

- **Kentucky's** Council on Postsecondary Education is leading the professional development for postsecondary faculty on the CCSS and related assessments. To date, more than 2,000 faculty have participated in online modules, face-to-face workshops, and webinars created to outline the impact of the CCSS on general education, developmental education, and college of education faculty, postsecondary coursework and curriculum, and classroom learning. More information can be found at the following site: www.kycorestandards.org

A number of states have developed policies that prescribe activities and actions in a student's senior year to ensure college readiness, including **bridge courses** to remediate math/English deficiencies.

- In response to Senate Bill 1 (2009), the **Kentucky** Department of Education has developed "transitional courses" in Math and Reading. A collaborative effort among the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), teams of secondary and postsecondary educators assisted area school districts and high schools in designing and implementing the courses. These may be offered as a full semester course, but could also be offered as an intervention for students before or after school. See www.education.ky.gov/kde/instructional+resources/secondary+and+virtual+learning/transitional+courses.htm
- The **Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)** is working with six states (**FL, KY, MD, TX, VA, and WV**) through the Strengthening Statewide College/Career Readiness Initiative (SSCRI) to develop Senior-Year Transitional Courses for College and Career Readiness: www.sreb.org/page/1508/transitional_course_information.html



A few states have begun the work of integrating the Common Core State Standards into **pre-service and in-service teaching**, whether through legislative action, P-20 collaborations, or directives from senior leadership in the state.

- As part of Senate Bill 1, **Kentucky's** higher education institutions have created professional development plans focused on integrating the CCSS **into teacher preparation course instruction**: www.kycorestandards.org/institutions.aspx
- In August 2010, the **Indiana** Department of Education announced plans to develop new teacher standards aligned to the CCSS. The Rules for Educator Preparation and Accountability (REPA) were enacted in 2010 and revised Indiana's educator licensing structure to emphasize content knowledge as well as appropriate developmental and pedagogy standards and will be used by teacher preparation programs to document alignment for teacher licensure. The new standards were designed to meet REPA as well as the CCSS.

Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

CCSS **awareness-building sessions** – for educators and the public alike – have been a heavy focus of the 2010-11 school year and summer 2011. Importantly, these general meetings have resulted in states' posting summaries and related materials posted online, especially when there are caps on the numbers of presentations or attendance at the sessions.

- To build general awareness, the **Maryland** Department of Education conducted four regional presentations about the standards and their new curriculum with all interested stakeholders. In addition, Maryland hosted a number of 3-day summer Educator Effectiveness Academies in the Summer of 2011 for 1,450 schools. Each school was invited to send a team consisting of three teachers (reading English/Language Arts staff member, a mathematics staff member, and a staff member representing STEM content in the school) and one principal. Read more about the Academies here: <http://mdk12.org/instruction/academies/index.html>

Particularly important for the early stages of building awareness and support for the CCSS and assessments are transparent, robust, easy-to-navigate **websites** that employ a mix of video content specific to the standards, transition guidance documents and implementation timelines, FAQs, and cross-links with exemplar state resources. Many states even tailor their websites to specific audiences (parents, teachers, principals, community leaders). State education agencies are leveraging new external partners along with existing networks to communicate about the Common Core and related assessments. Importantly, states should not assume that because content has been posted that the information is reaching intended audiences. Leading states **monitor website usage and measure the impact of their communication efforts** through the inclusion of quantifiable metrics and measure success through metrics.

- The **Utah** State Office of Education has partnered with the Utah Education Network and Higher Ed Utah/Utah System of Higher Education to develop a robust website that provides a home for their CCSS crosswalks, a sample letter to parents about the CCSS, suggested student course progressions, the assessment transition schedule, videos from the CCSS writers explaining the ELA and Math standards, and sample student work and performance tasks. See www.uen.org/commoncore/
- **Rhode Island** has developed and disseminated a Communications and Engagement Plan (www.ride.ri.gov/commissioner/RaceToTheTop/docs/RI%20RTTT%20Communications%20Plan.pdf) that details key messages, audience-specific intended outcomes, and specific modes of communication. Importantly, they have identified "leading indicators of success" – quantifiable measures to help monitor progress towards meeting their targets.

- The **New York** State Education Department has created a new website, [EngageNY](#), as a clearinghouse of CCSS-related resources related to NY’s RTTT reforms, including the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The site aims to serve as a resource center for information on New York’s regional and school-level Network Teams tasked with liaising between the state and local schools, and also includes video descriptions of the standards, curricular exemplars, and guidance on instructional shifts.

Communication is a two-way street. Lead states are leveraging **newsletters, listservs, and wikis** to disseminate information to interested stakeholders as well request users to share their best resources, feedback and to generate content.

- The **Arkansas** and **Vermont** departments of education have created a “Common Core State Standards” wiki to disseminate an assortment of tools and resources related to the implementation of the CCSS in their states. The departments regularly update the wikis with resources presented at state and regional meetings and those created by local leaders.

More than ever before, states’ websites are **linking to exemplar peer state and national organizations’ resources** to highlight and leverage the great work of other CCSS-adopter states and supporters around specific pieces of implementation. The CCSS afford new opportunities for economies of scale.

Transitioning State 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 assessments (graduation, teacher evaluation, accountability), one single transition path will not be appropriate for all states.

- Some states have made **no plans to change their existing state assessments** until 2014-15 when they transition to common assessments. Some states will begin **including only existing items that align to the CCSS** on their state assessments. Some states will begin making changes to their state assessments to **include new CCSS content and performance expectations**. Finally, some states are **adding end-of-course assessments** for higher-level math and ELA content.

Some states have already begun the work of **aligning postsecondary placement tests to the CCSS**.

- The **Florida** Department of Education has begun administering the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT), a placement test available to high school and entering postsecondary students that has been aligned to the CCSS. With PERT established as Florida’s primary postsecondary placement assessment, the focus of the work moving forward will be to administer PERT diagnostic tests in high school to identify specific student weaknesses. Higher education faculty will customize coursework (mini-remedial classes) to address specific student weaknesses. See www.fldoe.org/board/meetings/2011_01_18/workshop.pdf

Conclusion

With each passing month, states and districts are devising new both new approaches as well as building on the experiences of peer states to implement the CCSS. New phases of work are gearing up as others are completed (e.g. publicize standards crosswalks, assemble leadership team). Still other pieces of the implementation work are iterative and ongoing (e.g. communications, monitoring progress, 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).