



An Overview of the Adoption of the 2010 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

A Guide for Policy Leaders in Education

June 2014

72%

of mathematics and/or ELA teachers in Massachusetts believe the integration of the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics into the MA Frameworks will have a “**positive**” or “**very positive**” impact

National online survey of 20,000 K-12 teachers (414 MA teachers) by Scholastic found:

- 77% of mathematics and/or ELA teachers said the standards will have a “positive” or “very positive” impact (72% in MA)
- 22% said the impact would be “neither positive or negative” or “don't know enough to say” (27% in MA)
- 1% said the impact would be “negative” (1% in MA)

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The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) adopted new learning standards in English language arts and mathematics in 2010 that are designed to better prepare all students for success after high school.

Back in 2007 and 2008, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education was engaged in a process with local educators to upgrade the state's existing English language arts and mathematics standards, which had been in place since the early 2000s. It is standard practice for states to update academic standards periodically to ensure students and teachers have access to new content knowledge, new approaches to teaching and learning, and new technologies. When the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association launched a multi-state standards development project in 2009 called the Common Core State Standards initiative, the two efforts merged.

Massachusetts educators and curriculum experts played a significant role in the development of the Common Core State Standards by reviewing and submitting comments on drafts of the new standards throughout the development process. This feedback ensured that the expectations met or exceeded the state's already strong standards. The new learning standards adopted by BESE in 2010, which incorporated the Common Core and added Massachusetts-specific standards, reflected the input and recommendations of our educators.

The 2010 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in English language arts and mathematics define the expectations for what all students are expected to know and be able to do at each grade. The standards do not mandate what or how teachers should teach. Rather, the standards are meant to complement a well-developed, content-rich, locally-developed curriculum. While the standards focus on what is most essential, they do not describe all that teachers can or should teach. A great deal is left to the discretion of teachers and curriculum developers. The aim of the standards is to articulate the fundamentals, not to set out an exhaustive list or a set of restrictions that limits what can be taught.

This guide intends to provide policy leaders with a quick reference tool to better understand the adoption and implementation of the 2010 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in English language arts and mathematics, and to assist in responding to inquiries about the Common Core at the State House and in local communities.

What are Standards, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

State and District Educational Strategy for Student Success



How the 2010 Massachusetts Frameworks Benefit Students and Educators

The 2010 Frameworks are college and career readiness standards. Currently, 35 percent of Massachusetts public high school graduates who enroll in public higher education in the Commonwealth are placed in remedial courses, which puts them at great risk of not earning a college degree or even a certificate. The new standards provide clearer signals to preK-12 students about their readiness for success at the next level and for success after high school.

The ELA Frameworks	The Mathematics Frameworks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ask students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read complex, grade-level literary and informational texts and develop a wide vocabulary ○ Speak and write in many different ways: e.g., arguments, explanations and narratives ○ Support their ideas with evidence from authoritative sources ○ Conduct research, integrate, synthesize and analyze ○ Develop vocabulary and command over the conventions of standard English ■ Promote the application of literacy in history, social studies, science and technical subjects ■ Build year to year to ready students for college and careers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Balance attention to mathematical fluency and practices. Students are expected to memorize math facts and to explain in writing how they solve math problems. The following are examples of math practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making sense of problems and sticking with them until solved ○ Explaining their math thinking and using correct math language ○ Representing problems in different ways and using appropriate tools to solve the problems (pictures, equations, graphs, etc.) ○ Solving more realistic and extended real world problems and learning how to build mathematical models ■ Focus on fewer topics each year so students have time to learn mathematics concepts and problem solving deeply – the approach taken in systems with the world’s highest math outcomes

1

Massachusetts educators played a significant role in the development of the Common Core State Standards.

Massachusetts curriculum experts and educators reviewed and submitted revisions to drafts of the new standards throughout the development process to ensure that the expectations met or exceeded our state's already strong standards.

2

The Common Core State Standards are not a state-mandated curriculum – they are a blueprint for what students should know and be able to do.

The standards define what all students are expected to know and be able to do, not how teachers should teach. While the standards focus on what is most essential, they do not describe all that can or should be taught. A great deal is left to the discretion of teachers and curriculum developers. In Massachusetts, local school districts make curricular decisions and choose which textbooks or programs to purchase and use.

3

Massachusetts educators have been incorporating the new learning standards into their curricula and classrooms over the past three years.

The state has helped educators implement the standards by developing online resources and tools such as curriculum maps, curriculum units, and lesson plans. As was the case for previous updates of the Commonwealth's standards, the Common Core State Standards require new curriculum, new instructional methods, new materials, and extensive professional development.

4

Massachusetts students will continue to study literature.

Literature is a major part of the English language arts standards and Massachusetts augmented these further by adding its own list of recommended authors from the Commonwealth's prior ELA standards. The extensive list includes writers such as Mark Twain, Herman Melville and Langston Hughes.

5

Math in even the early years is designed to prepare students for algebra.

Students will focus on fewer math topics each year so that they have time to master each and build toward algebra. Students will be asked to memorize math facts and to explain in writing how they solve math problems. The standards include what students will need to know to take algebra 1 in the eighth or ninth grade and a more rigorous sequence of math courses in high school.

History of Content and Learning Standards in Massachusetts

On June 18, 1993, the Massachusetts Education Reform Act was signed into law. This historic legislation created the framework for unprecedented improvements in student learning, teachers professionalism, school management, and equity of funding. Chapter 69, Section 1D specifically states:

The board (of elementary and secondary education) shall establish a set of statewide educational goals for all public elementary and secondary schools in the commonwealth. The board shall direct the commissioner to institute a process to develop academic standards for the core subjects of mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, English, foreign languages and the arts. The standards shall cover grades kindergarten through twelve and shall clearly set forth the skills, competencies and knowledge expected to be possessed by all students at the conclusion of individual grades or clusters of grades. The standards shall be formulated so as to set high expectations of student performance and to provide clear and specific examples that embody and reflect these high expectations, and shall be constructed with due regard to the work and recommendations of national organizations, to the best of similar efforts in other states, and to the level of skills, competencies and knowledge possessed by typical students in the most educationally advanced nations. The skills, competencies and knowledge set forth in the standards shall be expressed in terms which lend themselves to objective measurement, define the performance outcomes expected of both students directly entering the workforce and of students pursuing higher education, and facilitate comparisons with students of other states and other nations.

The first Curriculum Frameworks were adopted by the Board in:

- 1996 for Mathematics (Math), Science & Technology Engineering, Arts, and Comprehensive Health
- 1997 for English Language Arts (ELA) and History/Social Science
- 1999 for Foreign Languages
- 2003 for English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes
- 2006 for Vocational Technical
- 2008 for Kindergarten Learning Experiences

The standards for math were significantly updated in 2000 and ELA in 2001 based upon lessons learned since implementation of the original frameworks and updated research. While a combination of federal Goals 2000 grants and state appropriation provided some support, upgrades to local curricula and associated professional development were led and supported by local school districts.

By 2008, lessons learned (particularly emerging data and research related to shortcomings in the transition from high school to college and work) once again served as the catalyst for upgrades to

History of Content and Learning Standards in Massachusetts

the ELA and Math standards. Commissioner Chester convened teams of Massachusetts teachers, administrators, higher education faculty and ESE staff members to begin drafting revisions to the ELA and Math Frameworks. In 2009, the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) started their bi-partisan effort to write a set of Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The work of our two state committees was deliberately coordinated with the NGAs and CCSSOs effort. The coordinated timeline was as follows:

- In spring 2009, the Governor and Commissioner Chester signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) that committed the Commonwealth's support to the development of K-12 internationally benchmarked, rigorous Common Core Standards in English language arts and mathematics aligned to college and career expectations.
- In February 2010, CCSSO and NGA released public drafts of the K-12 Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics and solicited public comment. Department staff and the Curriculum Framework Review Panels for Math and ELA compared the Common Core Standards with our 2000/2001 and determined that they were not only consistent with our own emerging revisions, but were stronger in several regards.
- Massachusetts played a key role in the development of these standards. A member of the Board, Sandra Stotsky, served on the Validation Committee for the English Language Arts standards; six of our staff members were invited by CCSSO and NGA to serve on the Common Core State Standards Development Teams; and 14 Massachusetts scholars and educators contributed their expertise to reviewing successive drafts in order to shape Massachusetts' written comments to CCSSO and NGA, including Harvard University professor Catherine Snow. The deep involvement of Massachusetts in this effort is important for two reasons. First, our existing standards were considered the best in the nation and we wanted the Common Core Standards to be every bit as challenging. Second, adoption and statewide dissemination of the Common Core Standards was a key component of our Race to the Top application.
- The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education discussed the draft Common Core Standards in March of 2010 and voted to release them for public comment in May 2010.
- Commissioner Chester appointed independent ELA and math expert panels composed of PreK-12 educators and representatives from higher education and the business community to review the Common Core Standards and report back to the Board whether they found that

History of Content and Learning Standards in Massachusetts

they were: (a) equivalent to, (b) more rigorous than, or (c) less rigorous than our draft revised Massachusetts standards for ELA and mathematics. In addition to the panels, the Commissioner secured experts from outside of Massachusetts to compare the Common Core Standards to the Massachusetts draft revised standards and report their findings to him and the Board.

- At the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education meeting in July 2010 the finding of the expert panels were heard. The findings were as follows:
 - **By the Massachusetts Educator Panels:** The English language arts panel (with one member dissenting) concluded that the Common Core was a better choice of standards than the Massachusetts draft. The mathematics panel concluded that both sets of standards were excellent options for Massachusetts. Both panels cited the greater depth and increased specificity of the Common Core standards as beneficial. Both panels identified areas of the Common Core Standards that, if adopted, could be strengthened by adding standards that were contained in the Massachusetts drafts, but not in the Common Core.
 - **Report on the Results of the ESE Public Survey on the Common Core Standards:** 1329 teachers, principals, superintendents, higher education faculty, advisory councils and professional organizations visited the site, and 178 completed surveys. The majority of respondents rated both the Massachusetts and the Common Core standards as "good" to "excellent" in terms of their content, rigor, clarity, vertical alignment, relevance to college and career readiness, and measurability.
 - **WestEd was commissioned by the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE)** to conduct an independent analysis of the revised Commonwealth of Massachusetts state standards and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to address the following key question: *To what extent do the revised Commonwealth of Massachusetts state standards correspond with the CCSS in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics?*

From a qualitative examination of the standards, both sets were deemed to have merit. The CCSS were credited with tending to include a slightly higher percentage of standards that reflect higher levels of cognitive demand (i.e. Strategic Thinking in mathematics; Strategic Thinking and Extended Thinking in ELA). A full copy of

History of Content and Learning Standards in Massachusetts

the report can be found at http://www.mbae.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Report_MA-CCS-Analysis_071910_Final.rev_.pdf

- **Achieve's Report Comparing the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and Leading State Standards (California and Massachusetts):** The major findings of this report was that the three sets of standards cover similar bodies of knowledge but the Common Core State Standards were more rigorous, coherent, and focused than the California and the Massachusetts standards.
- At a special Board meeting on July 21, 2010, the board voted to adopt the Common Core Standards. In September 2010, the department staff, in collaboration with the members of the original Framework Revision Committees, made additions to the CCSS. These additions are unique to our state. This final version was adopted by the board in December 2010 and published and widely disseminated in March 2011.
- Since the adoption of these Standards, they have been on our website and publicized statewide. Professional development sessions were conducted through the Department's District and School Assistance Centers and in other venues. Massachusetts school districts have updated their ELA and math curricula, have conducted professional development, and teachers have been focusing instruction on these upgraded standards for ELA and math for the past 3 years.
- Currently, over 60 Model Curriculum Units, in ELA and mathematics, are available on the ESE website for teachers to use in their classrooms; at least 40 additional model units will be posted in the near future. These instructional units show how the changes in the standards can be reflected in instruction. These units were developed by hundreds of teachers across the Commonwealth, in collaboration with the Department.

Additional Resources

Are Our Students Ready for College?—Boston Globe, March 27 2014

Common Core Validation Committee Co-Chair Lays Out Research Behind Higher Standards in New Paper—CCSSO press release, June 17, 2014

The Common Core State Standards Initiative Validation Committee, June 2010

Common Core State Standards: A Thoughtful Deliberative Process by World Class Professionals—U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, March 31, 2014

By “Common,” We Mean Equity—Huffington Post, April 22, 2014

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THE PODIUM

In this section
Opinion

Are our students ready for college?

By Mitchell Chester and Richard Freeland | MARCH 27, 2014

Massachusetts’s chief economic asset in the global economy is its unparalleled brain trust — the preparation and production of a highly educated citizenry and workforce. As a national leader in education, the Commonwealth has seen its elementary and secondary students rise to the occasion time and again with increased rates of proficiency on state and national exams.

But beneath the surface of this strong student performance, a more nuanced picture emerges. Nearly 36 percent of Massachusetts’s public high school graduates who enroll at one of the state’s public colleges or universities — including 65 percent of all community college students — place into one or more noncredit-bearing, remedial courses. Achievement gaps between students of color and white students are higher than the national average, as are the gaps between the college enrollment rates of students of color and white students. In a state where 72 percent of the jobs will require college degrees or training by 2020, the fact that so many students are deemed unprepared for college should set off alarms.

Educators need new assessment tools that guide them in instituting earlier and more effective interventions to support struggling students. Over the past decade, we have learned a lot about learning progressions and expectations for what students need to be prepared for college and careers. More recently, teams of K-12 educators and college faculty have worked together to create the state’s first joint definition of what it means to be truly ready for life after high school. With this foundation laid, it’s time to improve our testing program to reflect this new, shared standard for college and career readiness. MCAS, the state’s highly regarded assessment program, has served the Commonwealth well, but remains largely unchanged since its inception in 1998. But it was never intended to assess college and career readiness, only student proficiency at the K-12 level.

Beginning this month, Massachusetts students in grades 3-11 are embarking on a two-year “test drive” of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, a new computer-based assessment system that will help educators better gauge whether a student is ready for life after high school. A computer-based test will allow us to improve the ways that students can

demonstrate academic knowledge and critical thinking, along with their application to real world situations. Computers will allow students to complete performance-based tasks that better measure the range of skills that colleges and employers say are necessary for students to acquire.

PARCC’s development is aligned with the Common Core State Standards in English language arts, literacy, and mathematics. Adopted in 2010, the standards are comprehensive, and academically demanding. We now need a new test capable of measuring student progress against these standards. PARCC has the potential to meet this goal.

Will PARCC replace MCAS? Massachusetts has adopted a deliberate approach to determining whether PARCC can serve the Commonwealth’s goal of ensuring that all students have the academic preparation necessary to succeed after high school. A two-year “test drive” period will provide the state with time to work with school districts on securing funding to incorporate digital learning technologies, including the ability to administer online assessments. The results will inform our final decision in 2015 on whether to permanently replace MCAS with PARCC.

PARCC provides a solid bridge from K-12 to higher education. It offers a much clearer understanding of whether a student is ready for college, and could also reduce the need for costly remedial programs. Massachusetts’s public colleges and universities are prepared to use student performance on PARCC as an indicator of students’ readiness for entry-level college courses, provided that the new standards meet expectations with regard to rigor and effectiveness. We believe that the work to upgrade teaching and learning and develop a 21st century assessment system aligned to our college and career ready standards is essential – to the aspirations of individual students and to the state which relies on the brainpower we produce.

Mitchell Chester is the Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, and serves as National Chair of the PARCC Governing Board. Richard Freeland is the Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education, and serves as the co-chair of the PARCC Advisory Committee on College Readiness.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2014

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Common Core Validation Committee Co-Chair Lays Out Research Behind Higher Standards in New Paper

Washington, D.C. (June 17, 2014) — A majority of states across the country have worked together to develop and adopt the Common Core State Standards, and are working to implement these new, higher academic standards in mathematics and English language arts in classrooms. Many states are already seeing positive results from implementation. Yet, four years after the standards were first published, questions still exist about how these standards were developed and why.

To assist states in answering these questions, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) worked with David T. Conley, Co-Chair of the Validation Committee for the Common Core State Standards Initiative, to publish *The Common Core State Standards: Insight into Their Development and Purpose*.

In the paper, Conley details the voluntary, state-led process that state education chiefs and governors created to develop the Common Core State Standards as well as the research that educators reviewed while writing the standards. He also analyzes several common myths that have popped up in states across the country and dispels them with facts from the standards.

"I encourage everyone who is interested in the Common Core State Standards to read through this paper and inform themselves regarding the development and validity of the standards as a framework for preparing students to lead fulfilling lives as productive citizens in an increasingly complex economy and society," said Conley.

"Through this paper, David T. Conley provides a historic and accurate account of the development of the Common Core State Standards. I know this will serve as a great reference and resource to teachers, parents, and education leaders across our states," said Chris Minnich, Executive Director of CCSSO.

Click [here](#) to download the paper in full.

###

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative Validation Committee

Co-Chairs

David Conley—Professor and Director of the Center for Educational Policy Research, Educational Methodology, Policy, and Leadership at the University of Oregon's College of Education.

Brian Gong—Executive Director of the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment.

Members

Bryan Albrecht—President of Gateway Technical College, Kenosha, Wis.

Arthur Applebee—Distinguished Professor of Education and Director of the Center on English Learning & Achievement at the University at Albany—State University of New York.

Sarah Baird—Mathematics Specialist/Teacher, Kyrene Elementary School District, Tempe, Ariz

Kristin Buckstad Hamilton—Nationally Board Certified Teacher, Battlefield Senior High School, National Education Association

Jere Confrey—Senior Research Fellow and Joseph D. Moore Distinguished Professor at The William & Ida Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, North Carolina State University's College of Education.

Linda Darling-Hammond—Charles Ducommun Professor of Education and Co-Director of the School Redesign Network at Stanford University's School of Education.

Alfinio Flores—Hollowell Professor of Mathematics Education in the Department of Mathematical Sciences and School of Education at the University of Delaware's College of Education & Public Policy.

Kenji Hakuta—Lee L. Jacks Professor of Education at Stanford University's School of Education.

Feng-Jui Hsieh—Associate Professor in the Mathematics Department at the National Taiwan Normal University.

Mary Ann Jordan—Teacher, New York City Dept. of Education, American Federation of Teachers

Jeremy Kilpatrick—Regents Professor of Mathematics Education at the University of Georgia.

Dr. Jill Martin—Principal, Pine Creek High School

R. James Milgram—Emeritus Professor at Stanford University's Department of Mathematics.

David Pearson—Professor and Dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University of California—Berkeley.

Steve Pophal—Principal, D.C. Everest Junior High

Stanley Rabinowitz—Director, Assessment & Standards Development Services at WestEd in San Francisco.

Lauren Resnick—Professor and Director of the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburgh.

Andreas Schleicher—Head of the Indicators and Analysis Division with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Directorate for Education.

William Schmidt—University Distinguished Professor and Co-Director of Michigan State University's Education Policy Center.

Catherine Snow—Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Christopher Steinhauser—Superintendent of Schools, Long Beach Unified School District, California.

Sandra Stotsky—Endowed Chair in Teacher Quality at the University of Arkansas's Department of Education Reform and Chair of the Sadlier Mathematics Advisory Board.

Dorothy Strickland—Distinguished Research Fellow at the National Institute for Early Education Research and the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Chair in Education at Rutgers University.

Martha Thurlow—Director, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Norman L. Webb—Senior Research Scientist with the Wisconsin Center for Education Research and the National Institute for Science Education, both based at the University of Wisconsin—Madison's School of Education.

Dylan William—Director, Learning and Teaching Research Center at the Educational Testing Service.



COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:

A THOUGHTFUL DELIBERATIVE PROCESS BY WORLD CLASS PROFESSIONALS

One of the greatest accomplishments of the Common Core State Standards was the coming together of many of the most accomplished teachers, mathematicians, English language arts/literacy professionals, and state education representatives from 48 states. The group's dialogue crossed state and district lines and focused on a simple question: What is truly required for a student to be prepared to succeed at college-level work and for the demands of 21st century careers?

The Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association convened local and state leaders to pull together leading content experts, teachers, and researchers who devoted much of their life's work to the development of great academic goals and materials for students. Many of these experts played key roles in the development of their own state's standards. However, never before was there an opportunity to collaborate across state lines and build on the existing standards from states with historically high standards, such as Massachusetts and California.

A thorough review of the highest state standards, the best research on student learning, and the firsthand experience of teachers was used to create a first draft that was then put through a rigorous feedback process. Work teams, feedback teams, and a validation committee were created in both mathematics and English language arts to ensure a consensus-driven process in which no single opinion or personality could influence the collective wisdom of the group. In fact, the teams opened up the drafts twice for public comment and received more than 10,000 pieces of input from teachers, parents, and content experts nationwide.

Below is a detailed summary of the vast ecosystem of credentialed experts that were put in place to write the standards, provide feedback, verify the rigor, and come to a consensus of essential standards by grade level, which has been described by the National Council of Mathematics Teachers as, "[A]n unprecedented opportunity for systemic improvement in mathematics education in the United States," and by the National Council of Teachers of English Past President Carol Jago as, "[An] amazing opportunity to do the work that we came to this job to do. It's setting the goal of college and career readiness for every child in America."

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

April 2009

The development of the standards began when an informal group of states decided to collaboratively update their learning standards. Gradually, more states voluntarily joined the project overseen by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). After two years of discussion, the CCSSO and the National Governors Association formed the Common Core State Standards Initiative and invited any states interested in collaboration to join together in the creation of higher, clearer expectations for what students should know by each grade level in English language arts/literacy and mathematics.

June 2009

Governors and state education chiefs from 46 states commit to participating in a state-led process to develop common English language arts and mathematics standards. Two more governors and state education chiefs later join the effort, during the development process.

English language arts and mathematics work and feedback groups are assembled, made up of representatives from backgrounds in academia, local and state education administration, classroom teaching, and other experts with experience in K–12 academic standards. The development teams worked together, with input from teacher and parent groups, nationally and in the states, to develop drafts of graduation standards and grade-by-grade standards to be released to the public.

The Evidence Base –

The Common Core State Standards build on the best of previous state standards plus a large body of evidence from domestic reports, comparisons, and recommendations in addition to international comparisons.

The development teams consulted **ACT National Curriculum Surveys** to inform the new standards. In these surveys more than 55,000 middle school/junior high school, secondary, and postsecondary teachers for both English language arts and

mathematics identified what skills and knowledge are critical for college success. In addition, the standards of the highest performing states helped guide the drafting of the new standards. The Fordham Institute’s independent review of previous state standards and how they compare to the new Common Core State Standards can be seen [here](#). It is critical to understand that states whose previous standards were closest to the Common

Two research mathematicians on the mathematics development team are members of the exclusive National Academy of Sciences.

Core State Standards also had the highest scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Educational research and international comparisons drove the drafting of the standards in both English language arts and mathematics. A detailed report of how international benchmarking was used to create the standards can be read [here](#). In addition, an important study conducted by Michigan State University provides tangible examples of the influence of successful international education systems on the development of the standards. This peer-reviewed research found that the Common Core State Standards for math bore the closest resemblance to those of the highest achieving countries. In [Appendix A of the ELA and Literacy Standards](#) there is a 35-page detailed articulation of the evidence and research which informed the creation of the new standards.

The development teams included distinguished members such as:

*Hung-Hsi Wu,
Professor of Mathematics,
Emeritus Department of
Mathematics,
University of California -
Berkeley*

*William McCallum,
Lead, Mathematics
Head, Department of
Mathematics, The University of
Arizona
Senior Consultant, Achieve*

*Marilyn Jager Adams,
Research Professor,
Department of Cognitive and
Linguistic Sciences,
Brown University*

*Carol D. Lee,
Professor of Learning Sciences
& African American Studies
Northwestern University
President, American
Educational Research
Association*

The Standards Development Teams –

English Language Arts Development Team* –

- 18 education or content experts
- 17 English professors or education professors specialized in the teaching of English and literacy
- 16 state department of education staff members
- 7 current classroom teachers
- 5 local school district staff members

Mathematics Development Team* –

- 32 research mathematicians or education professors specialized in the teaching of mathematics
- 23 state department of education staff members
- 9 local school district staff members
- 9 education or content experts
- 7 current classroom teachers

Key stakeholders assembled groups to provide feedback to the development teams –

- **Teachers:** American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Council of Teachers of English
- **Parents:** National Parent Teacher Association
- **States:** State teams, including teachers and parents, organized by governors and state education chiefs

September 2009

A draft of the college- and career-ready standards was released for public comment for one month. Feedback was received from individuals and groups representing more than 1,000 people. In addition, three dozen groups or individuals sent direct feedback. Those who submitted comments identified themselves in the following categories (multiple selections were permitted):

- 53 percent as educators and another category
- 29 percent as content experts
- 28 percent as teachers
- 22 percent as parents and another category
- 14 percent as professors
- 10 percent as local school district staff
- 8 percent as students and another category
- 5 percent as state education agency/state department of education staff
- 3 percent as parents only
- 1 percent as students

Teacher and parent groups, such as the PTA and the National Education Association, played an integral role providing specific and constructive feedback to drafts.

These comments were taken into consideration for revising the next draft.

At this time, six governors and chief state school officers from the involved states selected members for a validation committee. This committee was charged with certifying that the standards were research- and evidence-based, aligned with college and career expectations, and respected unique state contexts and the authority of each state to govern its public education system. The validation committee consisted of individuals with experience in the development, implementation, or study of state, national, or international standards; a demonstrated record of expertise in English language arts or mathematics; or a unique expertise such as special education, English language learners, or assessments.

- Validation Committee* –
 - 18 academics
 - 5 education or content experts
 - 3 classroom teachers
 - 3 local school district staff

December 2009

The validation committee met for the first time. The committee reviewed the draft and submitted feedback.

The validation committee included distinguished members such as:

Catherine Snow, Ph.D., Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Jeremy Kilpatrick, Ph.D., Regents Professor of Mathematics Education, University of Georgia

Jere Confrey, Ph.D., Senior Research Fellow and Joseph D. Moore Distinguished Professor at the William and Ida Friday Institute for Education Innovation, North Carolina State University College of Education

March 2010

A draft of the grade-by-grade Common Core State Standards was released for public comment. Feedback was received from every state and territory in the United States representing more than 10,000 individuals online. Those who submitted comments online identified themselves as:

- 92 percent representing individuals rather than groups or organizations
- 48 percent as K–12 teachers
- 20 percent as parents
- 6 percent as school administrators
- 5 percent as professors or academic researchers
- 2 percent as students
- 2 percent as other

Three-fourths of the feedback respondents gave the draft high marks.

April 2010

Incorporating feedback from 10,000 individuals, a new draft was submitted to the validation committee. The validation committee met and provided suggestions.

May 2010

A final embargoed copy of the standards were presented to the validation committee and they were asked to certify that the standards were research- and evidence-based standards, aligned

with college and career expectations, and respected unique state contexts and the authority of each state to govern its public education system.

- Validation Committee Signatories
 - 24 signed
 - 5 did not sign (4 academics, 1 expert)

June 2010 through Present Day – The final standards were released to the public. To adopt the new standards, states and territories used their own local processes specific to each location. Forty-five states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity reviewed and adopted the Common Core State Standards to replace former standards. In Minnesota, the standards were adopted in English language arts.

*Individuals' occupations are classified as their positions during the Common Core State Standards creation and validation process.



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Marianne Williamson

Bob Saget
Dylan Ratigan

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By 'Common,' We Mean Equity

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By Michelle Morrissey, Guest Blogger

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When I first started teaching history as a [New York City Teaching Fellow](#) more than ten years ago, I walked in ready to give my high school students the same kind of education I had received at an elite private school in the Boston suburbs, rooted in reading, talking and writing about history.

But the dominant set of beliefs about education at the time was that students had different “learning styles,” and we needed to create lessons that would address those learning styles in order for students to learn. Urban students needed “hands-on” learning—which often meant gimmicks like letting them have a shot at the class basketball hoop if they got a question right. A classroom built around complicated, intellectually rigorous discussion was definitely out.

Maybe this seemed like a realistic approach, given the low academic skills many of my students brought to high school—but to me, it felt like a sham. What about life after high school for these students? Would college classrooms have basketball hoops? Would the jobs they'd eventually take allow them to operate in their preferred learning style? High school isn't an end unto itself; if it doesn't prepare students for what lies ahead, then the job remains undone.

When the Common Core State Standards emerged, it was both a shock and a revelation -- for the first time, the dominant model said that my students, who live in low-income neighborhoods and are predominately Hispanic or African American, would have some guarantee of the same kinds of educational experiences that students at high-performing schools across the country have. All students would be asked to do the

hard stuff—and reap the benefits of those high expectations.

To me, this is a fundamentally American value. So I've been equally surprised by the backlash against Common Core.

Let me explain exactly what the Common Core asks of my students. For 11th and 12th grade history classes, there are a total of [ten reading standards](#), grouped into four categories. Those standards require students to read challenging texts, integrate knowledge and ideas from multiple sources, identify key pieces of evidence and examine how words are used in context (in other words, the exact mental practices being employed by anyone reading this blog post). They also ask that my students [write](#) persuasive analytical essays, as well as informational pieces, and to learn to do research. That's it.

What does this mean in practice? When my 11th graders studied the civil rights movement last year, we focused our study on why (and if) the movement was successful. My students read materials from the Civil Rights Unit of the Choices Institute at Brown University, primary source documents and selections from *I've Got the Light of Freedom* by sociologist Charles Payne. They watched videos of Stokely Carmichael speeches and studied data on race and equity today. Through it all, they had seminar discussions about major questions raised by the material. At the end of the unit, they wrote essays arguing in what ways they had come to believe the civil rights movement had succeeded, in which they were required to cite evidence to support their arguments. Reading, thinking, expressing and defending ideas—not scary, or prescriptive, or a bunch of meaningless bubble tests.

Criticism of the standards seems to rely on characterizing the Common Core as some kind of



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conspiracy foisted on the people. Some critics suggest that the Common Core is an “experiment” being conducted on children, as if the standards are a [federal power grab](#), deliberately snuck past an unsuspecting public.

The latest criticism of the Common Core has come from the nation's two largest teachers' unions. Both [Randi Weingarten of the American Federation of Teachers](#) and [Dennis Van Roekel of the National Education Association](#) have decried the “botched implementation” of the new standards. I agree that teachers need more support in making the transition to the Common Core; as an instructional coach in the Boston Public Schools this year, much of my work has focused on helping teachers implement the Common Core, and it's challenging—but that's no reason to pull back on implementation.

Finally, there's this: the complaint that Common Core is *just too hard*. We can't expect students to be able to do this level of work in classrooms across the country—and asking low-income students to do so is seen as [actually stacking the deck against them](#). This argument is fundamentally classist. It's the same old soft bigotry: Poor students just can't handle the work of advanced reading, writing and thinking, so we shouldn't ask them to try. Never mind what that means for their lives.

I would ask, seriously and respectfully, what the critics of the Common Core think students should be doing in my high school history classes, besides grappling with challenging reading and articulating their ideas verbally and in writing? What is it they want their *own* children to be doing in a high school history classroom? What, exactly, is the alternative to the Common Core?

I agree that the Common Core is hard. It sets high academic standards for all of our students. But that's no reason to give up on it. Come visit my classroom. It's taken me a long time to figure out how to do it, but you will see students—largely low-income students of color—reading, talking and writing about history in a way that mirrors the work being done in great schools, public or private, across the country. We cannot back down from the Common Core simply because it's hard. This is the learning that all our children deserve.

Michelle Morrissey has taught in New York City and Boston and is currently a history content specialist in Boston Public Schools. In the fall, she'll return to the classroom at Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School in Boston.