



COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

MYTH VS. FACT

In today's world, all students must be prepared to be successful in college and the workforce. Indiana adopted the Common Core State Standards (Common Core) to help make this a reality. As the state transitions to the new standards, this document states the facts about what the Common Core will mean for Hoosier students and families.

Myth 1: Common Core is an effort of the federal government to nationalize education and force states to teach all students the same way.

Fact: Common Core is a state-led initiative by governors, state superintendents, and non-profit agencies to modernize education standards. It is research-based and molded with more than 10,000 comments from the public. The Indiana State Board of Education, to which the General Assembly has given the task of adopting standards, voluntarily adopted the Common Core in 2010. Indiana received no incentives from the federal government for taking this action.^{1 2 3}

Myth 2: Indiana's standards were judged superior to Common Core, "even by Common Core supporters."

Fact: While Indiana's standards are high compared to many other states, children are still leaving school unprepared for what lies ahead. In addition to the students who do not graduate from high school or choose not to attend college, one-third of Indiana students who do attend college require remediation in math or English.

The Fordham Institute, one of the organizations often cited praising Indiana's standards even said some of the Common Core shifts "would benefit Indiana's already-strong standards," and the Common Core State Standards are quality standards for the nation.⁵

Myth 3: States may NOT adjust the new Common Core State Standards to meet their state-level needs.

Fact: Common Core allows states to add standards on top of the Common Core. This is known as the "15% Rule", due to the amount of standards that can be added. Additionally, Indiana law allows Home Rule, which means school corporations can adopt standards above the state minimum.⁶

Myth 4: Common Core standards represent a national curriculum and implementing 100% of Common Core means that the standards tell teachers precisely *how* they must teach.

Fact: Standards, by definition, are not a curriculum. Common Core defines the “what” rather than the “how” of teaching. Common Core is a set of standards that outline what students should know at a particular grade level in order to be on track to mastering skills and content to be prepared for college and beyond. Curriculum – the map, schedule, and method for teaching standards – will be a decision left up to school corporations and teachers to construct.^{7,8}

Myth 5: Referring to the Common Core as “national standards” is the most accurate way to describe them.

Fact: Neither Congress nor the U.S. Department of Education was involved in the development of Common Core, nor have they mandated Common Core adoption. Not all states have chosen to participate. In fact, the Common Core are nationally aligned *state* standards because they were developed in collaboration between state and education leaders across the country.⁹

Myth 6: Hoosier taxpayers will end up paying more for technology and curriculum updates under Common Core than they would have had to under the Indiana Standards.

Fact: Indiana currently spends \$93.9 million annually on standards-related costs. And estimates on the cost of Common Core implementation have varied greatly. At least one estimate said a Common Core transition can save Indiana \$23 million.¹⁰ Additionally, Indiana is in a better place than most states because the state allowed districts to make technology investments with textbook funds starting in 2009.¹¹ This means most – if not all – of Common Core implementation costs can be covered by existing spending.

Myth 7: “Under the Common Core State Standards, students may graduate from high school reading at a 7th grade level.”

Fact: The fact is that currently there are too many students graduating high school reading at a 7th grade level and even lower. This is a major reason why the Common Core were established in the first place.¹² Common Core standards push students to read at even higher levels *earlier* in their school careers. For example, the current standard for a 9th grade reading level will become the new standard for a 7th grade reading level under full implementation of the Common Core.

Myth 8: “Under the Common Core, ‘college readiness’ means preparation for a selective two-year college, not a university.”

Fact: An education rooted in the Common Core standards would actually prepare students to enter a university setting having spent the last 12 years building up to the complexity of

material they will encounter at higher levels of education. Nowhere in the Common Core initiative or research do the authors define “college readiness” as readiness for a “two-year college” instead of a university.¹³

Myth 9: Indiana only chose to adopt Common Core because they wanted federal Race to the Top (RTTT) stimulus funds or were incentivized by the opportunity to receive a No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waiver.

Fact: Indiana did not adopt Common Core when it applied for the first round of RTTT funds, and the state did not apply for the second round. Indiana adopted the Common Core on its own terms in August 2010.¹⁴ Indiana also adopted the new standards one year before the NCLB waiver was even an option for states.¹⁵

Myth 10: 70% of the texts read in ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS classes must be information-text in 12th grade, which prevents students from learning culture through high quality literature.

Fact: Common Core standards call for 70% of *all texts* (not 70% of English Language Arts texts) read in 12th grade to be nonfiction, which includes content area texts, such as science and history.¹⁶ This was done to support literacy instruction in other content areas and underscore the role that all teachers must play in literacy efforts.¹⁷ This will help ensure students are graduating high school adequately prepared to read rigorous college and career-level material, a majority of which are informational texts.¹⁸

Myth 11: The Common Core will be adopted in place of ALL Indiana Academic Standards in all subject areas.

Fact: The Common Core standards provide new standards for English Language Arts and math only, not social studies, science and technical subjects. Nor will these other subjects be evaluated on the new PARCC assessment test. Current Indiana Academic Standards will be used for these subjects.¹⁹

Reference Notes

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