

Common Core State Standards: Addressing the Hot Topics



Development of the Standards:

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were developed as a state-led initiative.

- The Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and National Governor's Association (NGA) led the initiative to provide consistency among states for mobile students (especially military families) and for a more consistent definition on college and career readiness. It is not part of No Child Left Behind and adoption of standards by the states is in no way mandatory.
- The CCSS were developed and voluntarily adopted by forty-five states, including the District of Columbia, four territories and the Department of Defense.
- The Florida State Board of Education adopted the CCSS in July 2010.
- By focusing on the essential knowledge and skills for success in life, the CCSS address two major issues in the U.S.:
 - Growing number of college students in need of remedial courses
 - Growing skills gap in our workforce.

The CCSS were developed by educators and education experts from across the nation.

- Florida educators were involved in the writing of the CCSS.
- The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) reviewed and provided feedback prior to the release of the final set of standards.
- FDOE developed a state committee to review and recommend supplemental standards to meet Florida's specific math and English/Language Arts requirements. The committee found no benefit to include additional standards and felt the newly adopted CCSS were already robust.
- The CCSS were built on international benchmarks and enable our students to compete with peers on both national and international levels.
- By adopting the CCSS, Florida's mobile students, such as those in our military families, receive more consistent learning as they move from town to town or state to state.

Academic standards and curriculum/instruction are not identical.

- Academic standards are the "what" – the knowledge and skills – students are required to learn at each grade level. Curriculum and instruction are the "how" – the materials and delivery methods – students are taught.
- The CCSS do not require that educators teach with specific materials or methods.
 - Some materials, including novels, have been recommended as potential instructional materials in the standards exemplars. The only required ELA topics exclusively pertain to American literature.
 - Math requirements include mastery of foundational skills – such as fractions, decimals, multiplication – but also push for more application of math concepts and procedures for real-world practices.

Common Core State Standards: Addressing the Hot Topics



Student Data and Privacy:

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), individually identifiable student information cannot be released without prior written consent from a parent or legal guardian.

- The only disclosure exceptions pertain to health and safety emergencies, school transfers, referral to state and local authorities for compliance, or release to research organizations.
- Schools are required to notify parents annually of their rights under FERPA, but notification methods are left up to local leaders.
- Nothing related to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards will result in any changes to sharing private student information and data.

As part of broader education reform efforts, states have adopted data systems that allow educators and parents to measure the progress of student achievement and growth from year to year.

- These data systems are not a result of CCSS, but rather a more than decade long effort to ensure students are learning a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time and that taxpayers are seeing a return on their investment in education.
- The federal government has contributed funding for state data systems going back to 2006, as part of bringing accountability to schools, and states have been funding their own data systems for much longer.
- The CCSS will not erode students' privacy rights or allow the federal government to inappropriately "track" students, as some pundits have declared.

Student Assessments under the CCSS:

Under the CCSS, the mathematics and ELA portions of the FCAT will be replaced by a new assessment that aligns with the CCSS.

- There are two state consortiums developing assessments aligned with the CCSS – Smarter Balance (SBAC) and the Partnership for Assessment for Readiness of College and Career (PARCC).
- Florida belongs to the PARCC consortia. Florida serves as the fiscal agent for and is a governing state of PARCC, which gives Florida an enormous responsibility and role in developing the assessments of CCSS.
- There is consensus that PARCC better aligns with the accountability standards and direction of Florida's education system. These assessments will be technology driven and require a greater level of thinking to be successful.
- As the assessments continue to develop, FDOE and districts are working to ensure schools have the technology to assess and instruct students under the CCSS as well as understand the changes in assessment time and structure.
- FDOE is committed to PARCC, but will determine in by fall of 2013 which assessment will best meet Florida's needs. District and post-secondary leadership have been involved in the discussions pertaining to the CCSS assessment and End-Of-Course assessments (EOCs.)