

**From:** Common Standards [CommonStandards@ccsso.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 10, 2010 9:17 AM  
**To:** commonstandards  
**Subject:** 03.10.10 Draft K-12 Common Core State Standards Available for Comment

Evidence of broad-based release of draft & invitation to comment on CCSS from CCSO March 2010



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 10, 2010

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## **DRAFT K-12 COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT**

*NGA Center, CCSSO Release First Official Public Draft*

**WASHINGTON**—The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) today released the first official public draft of the K-12 standards as part of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, a process being led by governors and chief state school officers in 51 states, territories, and the District of Columbia. These draft standards, developed together with teachers, school administrators and experts, seek to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce.

The NGA Center and CCSSO have received feedback from national organizations representing, but not limited to teachers, postsecondary education (including community colleges), civil rights groups, English language learners, and students with disabilities. The NGA Center and CCSSO encourage those interested in the standards to provide further feedback by Friday, April 2, 2010, at [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).

“We are pleased to release the K-12 standards today and to begin reviewing comments from the public,” said **Dane Linn**, director of the NGA Center’s Education Division. “These standards build upon the goals articulated in the college- and career-readiness standards released last year and will ensure our students are prepared to compete and succeed in a global economy. We look forward to working with educators, leaders and state board members in the states as they consider adopting these standards that will guide their educational programs.”

**From:** Jen Scott Curwood [jenscottcurwood@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 10, 2010 11:57 AM  
**To:** literacy@lists.wisc.edu; glsstudents@lists.wisc.edu; dsicg@lists.wisc.edu  
**Subject:** K-12 Common Core Standards

The Common Core Standards are now online and open to public comment.

And (with thanks to Damiana Gibbons for pointing me to it) here's a New York Times article on the topic:

March 10, 2010

Panel Releases Proposal to Set U.S. Standards for Educati

By SAM DILLON

Evidence of  
mainstream  
Media coverage of  
period of open  
feedback on  
standards

Evidence of  
engagement of  
English higher ed  
community (all higher  
ed listservs) in  
responding to public  
draft.

Culminating a year's work, a panel of educators convened by the nation's governors and state school superintendents released a set of proposed common academic standards on Wednesday. The standards, posted on the panel's web site, lay out the panel's vision of what American public school students should learn in math and English, year by year, from kindergarten to high school graduation.

Forty-eight states cooperated in producing the proposed standards, which amount to a new road map for American public education. If a majority of states were to adopt them over the next few months, which experts said was a growing possibility, the new standards would replace the nation's motley current checkerboard of locally written standards, which vary greatly in content and sophistication. And adoption of the new standards would set off a vast new effort to rewrite textbooks and standardized tests.

"I'd say this is one of the most important events of the last several years in American education," said Chester Finn, Jr., a former assistant secretary of education who has been an advocate for national standards for nearly two decades. "Now we have the possibility that, for the first time, states could come together around new standards and high school graduation requirements that are ambitious and coherent. This is a big deal."

The proposed standards lay out a blueprint of the concepts and skills students should learn year by year as they make their way through the public schools. In English, for instance, they say that fifth graders should be able to explain major differences between drama and prose stories, and refer to elements of drama like casts of characters, dialogue, and stage directions when writing or speaking about specific works of dramatic literature, among other skills.

In seventh grade math, as another example, instructional time should focus on developing students' understanding of proportional relationships, of operations with rational numbers and solving linear equations, of two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence; and of how to draw inferences about populations based on samples, the proposed standards say.

The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers set the common-standards initiative in motion early last year, convening panels of English and math experts from the College Board, A.C.T., and from Achieve, Inc., a group that has been working with states for years to upgrade their high school graduation standards.

Alaska and Texas are the only states not participating in the standards-writing effort. In keeping his state out of the movement, Gov. Rick Perry argued that only Texans should decide what children there learn.

The Obama Administration quickly endorsed the effort. Under the Department of Education's Race to the Top initiative, in which states are competing for a share of \$4 billion in school improvement money, states can earn 40 points of the possible 500 for participating in the common effort and adopting the new standards.

Over the coming weeks, the public and education experts are invited to review and comment on the proposed standards before final versions are published later this spring.

But some states are already preparing to adopt them. Kentucky last month became the first state to do so formally, and officials in Illinois, Florida and several other states have begun internal discussions to lay the groundwork for adoption, said Dane Linn, the education division director at the National Governors' Association.

The standards adoption process varies greatly in complexity from state to state. In some, the state schools superintendent has considerable power to move forward in as little as three months. But other states, including California, have extremely complicated standards adoption procedures, involving the state board of education and other groups that could prolong the process for a year or more, Mr. Linn said.

Educators and officials involved in the writing process pointed to what they considered to be strengths in the proposed standards that could make them beneficial for teachers. One is that they are concise.

"Many states have too many expectations in their academic standards that force teachers to cover too much in a superficial way," said Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers. "We said, 'Let's keep these very understandable and at a number that is manageable. Let's not put on teachers more requirements than they can deliver.'"

Another improvement over current state benchmarks is that the proposed standards are what educators call vertically aligned, meaning that what students are expected to learn in early years builds a foundation for what they are to learn in the next grade.

"Students are asked to do progressively more challenging things, and although that may sound obvious, it's a real breakthrough," said Michael Cohen, a former Clinton Administration Education Department official who is president of Achieve.

Several major education organizations immediately endorsed the draft standards. The Council of the Great City Schools, which represents the nation's largest urban public school systems, said in a statement that it "considers the draft to be high quality grade-by-grade standards that the nation can be proud of."

The proposed standards outline concepts to be learned, but do not lay down a specific curriculum.

In English, for instance, they do not prescribe individual works of literature, but instead offer a list of texts "illustrating the quality, complexity and range" of student reading that would be appropriate for various grades. The middle school list includes "Little Women" and "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," as well as works of nonfiction like "Letter on Thomas Jefferson" by John Adams. The 11th grade nonfiction list includes Henry David Thoreau's "Walden" and President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Since the late 1980s, many educators and policymakers have considered the current system of state standards as a weak link in American education. Because the standards vary so widely, standardized tests keyed to them are not comparable from state to state, nor to national tests. As a result, for example, 87 percent of Tennessee students achieved scores rated as proficient or above in math on state tests in 2005, while only 21 percent scored in the proficient range on the federal math test.

Earlier attempts to draft voluntary national standards during the first Bush and Clinton Administrations foundered after conservatives attacked them as federal meddling in classroom teaching. Because of that tumultuous history, leaders of the latest effort have defended its state-led nature and independence, despite frequent endorsements of it by the Obama Administration.

Also, they enlisted considerable help from education groups, including the two national teachers unions, the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and others.

Writers who participated said they sought to build on the best of what is already in some states' standards, while clarifying and simplifying.

"We tried to clean house a bit, keeping only what is most important and most critical," said Susan Pimentel, a New Hampshire-based consultant who helped write the proposed English standards.

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