

*Fulfilling
the Promise of the*
**COMMON
CORE**
STATE STANDARDS

*Moving from
Adoption to
Implementation
to Sustainability*



1703 North Beauregard St. • Alexandria, VA 22311-1714 USA
Phone: 1-800-933-2723 or 1-703-578-9600 • Fax: 1-703-575-5400
Website: www.ascd.org • E-mail: commoncore@ascd.org

Gene R. Carter, *Executive Director*; Judy Seltz, *Deputy Executive Director, Chief Constituent Services Officer*; Ed Milliken, *Managing Director, Professional Development and Conferences*; David Griffith, *Director, Public Policy*; Efrain Mercado, *Lead Strategist, Common Core State Standards*; Sherida Britt, *Project Director, Tools for Teachers*; Gary Bloom, *Managing Director, Creative Services*; Mary Beth Nielsen, *Manager, Editorial Services*; Alicia Goodman, *Senior Associate Editor*; Reece Quinones, *Manager, Design Services*; Georgia Park, *Senior Graphic Designer*; Mike Kalyan, *Manager, Production Services*; Kyle Steichen, *Production Specialist*

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About ASCD

ASCD is the global leader in developing and delivering innovative programs, products, and services that empower educators to support the success of each learner. Comprising 140,000 members—superintendents, principals, teachers, professors, and advocates from more than 143 countries—the ASCD community also includes 55 affiliate organizations. The nonprofit's diverse, nonpartisan membership is its greatest strength, projecting a powerful, unified voice to decision makers around the world. To learn more about how ASCD supports educators as they learn, teach, and lead, visit www.ascd.org.

About the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

This Work Is Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

This report was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as part of a three-year grant to provide both teachers and school leaders with specific information about the Common Core State Standards and to develop and deliver technical assistance for purposes of successful implementation of the standards at the state, district, school, and classroom levels.

For more information about ASCD's Common Core State Standards resources, visit www.ascd.org/commoncore.

Fulfilling the Promise of the

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

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A Word from ASCD's Executive Director

A little more than two years ago, ASCD became an endorsing partner of the Common Core State Standards Initiative. Since the standards were released in June 2010, the Common Core State Standards have gone from adoption to implementation in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and other U.S. territories.



As we have listened to educators, we have been heartened by their efforts and hard work in facing the challenges of changing to meet the Common Core State Standards. Across the nation, schools and communities are rethinking what students need to be able to do to thrive in the 21st century.

As ASCD engages with educators through our conferences, webinars, affiliates, and other venues, we have found a thirst for knowledge and information about the Common Core State Standards. Teachers and school leaders are eager to be part of a transformational movement that prepares students for college, careers, and citizenship.

Many states and districts have made impressive strides toward changing instructional practice to teach to the new standards. As we progress toward full implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the administration of the next generation of assessments aligned to these new standards, we recognize the critical need for opportunities for robust professional learning.

We asked educators to tell us what they need for success, and they told us. This report outlines our findings from four state summits and offers key recommendations for action. We look forward to continuing to work to support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and ensure that each student graduates from school college, career, and citizenship ready.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gene R. Carter".

Gene R. Carter
Executive Director and CEO

Executive Summary

Global interconnectedness and competitiveness define today's environment, and this new age has challenged the economic vitality of the United States to a degree unseen since the industrial age. K–12 education drives the preparedness of the future workforce, and a common set of high, internationally benchmarked college- and career-readiness standards makes more sense than ever before.

First launched in April 2009, the Common Core State Standards Initiative was conceived to identify and develop college- and career-readiness standards that address what students are expected to know and be able to do when they have graduated from high school.

The initiative introduced the final version of the standards in June 2010, and by September 2012, 46 states, the District of Columbia, and other U.S. territories had adopted the Common Core State Standards. States also organized themselves to design and develop next-generation assessments to measure student learning aligned with the Common Core standards, with the target of the assessments being administered by the 2014–15 school year.

To support teachers in the classroom and advance the understanding and implementation of the Common Core State Standards, ASCD is providing a multifaceted program of information and professional learning. The work, with funding from a three-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, includes

- Hosting statewide summits in four states.
- Developing an online, digital application for professional development that uses math and literacy resources aligned to the Common Core State Standards.
- Providing technical assistance to support standards implementation.

The statewide summits presented a powerful opportunity to determine educators' level of understanding about the new standards and their professional development needs and to provide information. Across the nation, many educators' perspectives were similar:

- Educators' knowledge and awareness of the Common Core State Standards were growing rapidly, but not necessarily in terms of the deeper level of mastery that students need to meet the standards.
- Many educators were focused on the new common assessments and the accompanying technology issues associated with their deployment.
- There was widespread initiative fatigue in the field.
- The vast majority of educators want each child, in each school, in each community to be college and career ready, but there was a lack of understanding about the shift to higher standards.

Based on the data gathered at the statewide summits and field work, ASCD recommends the following priorities to move Common Core implementation forward:

- Make sure educators deeply understand the standards and the key instructional shifts they require.
- Vet instructional resources for quality and alignment with the standards.
- Transform principals into instructional leaders.
- Listen to educators about their professional learning needs.
- Maximize opportunities for collaboration and capacity building through professional learning.
- Engage higher-education partners.
- Understand and plan for the coming common assessments.
- Adopt technology with the priority being to meet teaching and learning needs but that will also work with the new assessments.
- Align initiatives into comprehensive reforms.

As ASCD continues to support implementation of the Common Core State Standards, the focus of the organization's professional development and resources has evolved from raising awareness and understanding of the Common Core standards to implementation and sustainability of them—through its digital professional development solutions, partnerships with state education agencies and ASCD affiliates to develop and provide technical assistance resources, and advocacy with policymakers.

The 2012–13 school year is a pivotal time for implementing the Common Core State Standards, as a critical mass of teachers begin to integrate the standards in their classrooms. This provides an unprecedented opportunity for professional learning and collaboration, because the initiative is new to everyone.

The districts and schools that engage in professional learning in the 2012–13 school year will be best positioned to identify the professional development needs of their educators moving forward and will have time to provide more training before the new assessments are available in the 2014–15 school year.

As educators across the nation navigate toward full and efficacious implementation of the Common Core State Standards, the initiative gets closer to fulfilling its promise of every child across this nation graduating from high school college, career, and citizenship ready.

The Launch of the Common Core State Standards Initiative

“We are living in a world without borders. To meet the realities of the 21st century global economy and maintain America’s competitive edge into the future, we need students who are prepared to compete not only with their American peers, but with students from all across the globe for the jobs of tomorrow.”

—Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education, p. 1

Technological progress and the rapid development of many third world countries have flattened the world, advancing global interconnectedness and global competitiveness—and challenging the United States’ continued economic vitality. K–12 education plays a vital role in developing the nation’s future workforce, and a common set of high, internationally benchmarked college- and career-readiness standards makes more sense than ever before.

Although the goal of all 50 states having a single set of education standards remains elusive, adoption of the Common Core State Standards by a majority of states is a turning point in education for helping each child, in each school, in each community achieve college, career, and citizenship readiness.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative, first launched in April 2009, was led by the nation’s governors and state education superintendents through the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and created with the goal of developing college- and career-readiness standards. These internationally benchmarked K–12 academic standards for mathematics and English language arts and literacy establish what students are expected to have learned when they graduate from high school and enter postsecondary education or the workplace.

The concept of enacting common standards has waxed and waned throughout the past three decades, but the education environment in which the Common Core State Standards Initiative was conceived, the timing of the initiative, and the process by which the standards were developed all set the stage for widespread adoption.

With the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2002, schools were challenged to improve achievement for students as a whole as well as subgroups, such as socioeconomically disadvantaged students, racially and ethnically diverse students, English language learners, and students with disabilities. NCLB’s student proficiency targets and strict accountability for meeting those requirements were a step forward in closing the achievement gap; however they led to gamesmanship across the nation.

To avoid large numbers of schools being identified as “in need of improvement,” some states redefined *proficiency*, which lowered the academic bar and propagated disparities and unevenness of school and district performance across states. This led to wide discrepancies among states in the number of schools identified as in need of improvement.

Even though schools, districts, and states looked successful in terms of NCLB’s adequate yearly progress calculations, students were not achieving at higher levels on college-readiness assessments, such as the ACT (2008), and there were significant differences between student achievement numbers and scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Students who enter college without the requisite knowledge and skills are forced to take remedial courses, and even in states that had content standards for math and English language arts that were considered excellent, such as California and Massachusetts, the remediation rates for incoming college students were high (Hyslop & Tucker, 2012).

A substantial effort to combat these remediation issues was Achieve’s American Diploma Project. The project, which launched in 2005, aimed “to improve postsecondary preparation by aligning high school standards, graduation requirements and assessment and accountability systems with the demands of college and careers” (Achieve, 2012). The American Diploma Project network included 35 states that constituted 85 percent of all U.S. public school students.

Although this effort and ones like it did not result in widespread success in raising student achievement, the makeup of voluntary state collaborations and uniform policies did highlight the willingness of states to collaborate and adopt similar standards.

Unlike previous attempts at common standards movements, there was support for the Common Core State Standards from a broad coalition of influential groups and states. The National Governors Association, CCSSO, and Achieve released a report in 2008, *Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education*, that underscored the call for policy reforms for college and career readiness, outlining five steps toward building globally competitive education systems and providing a blueprint states could follow. The first action the report recommended was to “upgrade state standards by adopting a common core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts for grades K–12 to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be globally competitive” (National Governors Association, CCSSO, & Achieve, p. 24).

For the Common Core State Standards Initiative to truly take hold, states needed to embrace and take a leadership role in the standards’ development and subsequent adoption. The higher, clearer, and more focused expectations of the new common standards were the selling point for states, and most states’ mathematics and English language arts and literacy standards were deemed to be lower than the new standards, as reported by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute (Carmichael, Martino, Porter-Magee, & Wilson, 2010).

Within two months of the Common Core State Standards Initiative being announced, all but two states had pledged to participate in developing the standards, even though a commitment to help develop the standards did not obligate them to adopt the final product.

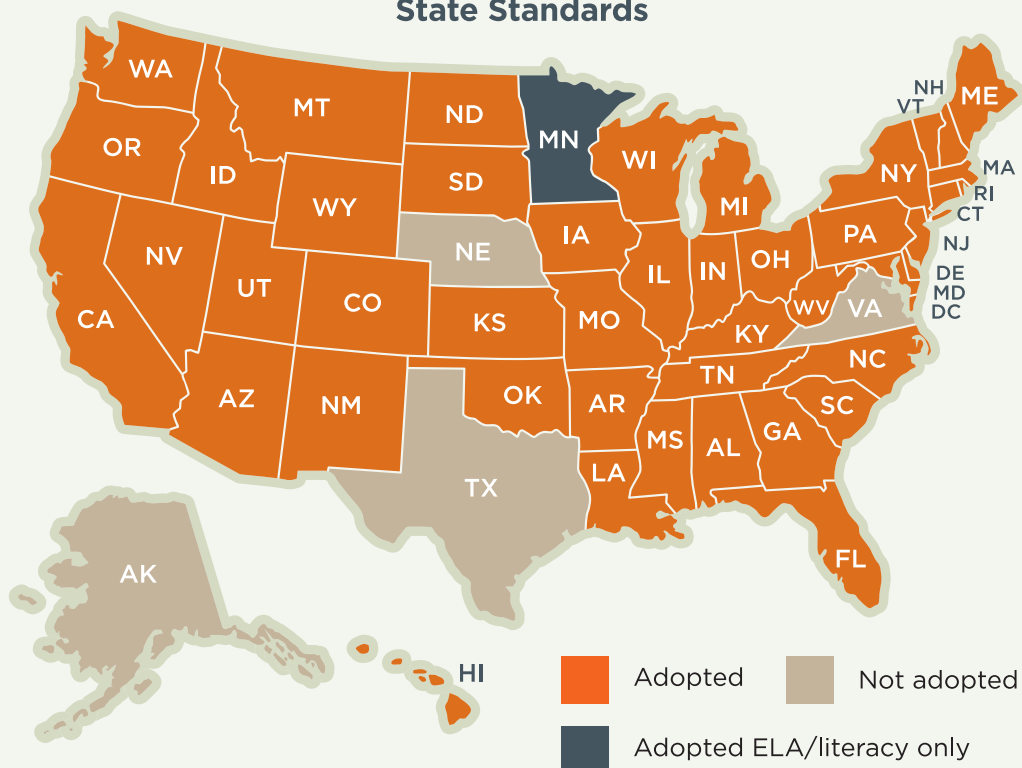
With states onboard to provide input, CCSSO and National Governors Association set about creating a process for developing the standards that ensured transparency, integrity, and rigor. They formed separate groups that created a checks-and-balances system; set up multiple public comment periods; and established an advisory group that included experts from Achieve, ACT, the College Board, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the State Higher Education Executive Officers.

After draft versions of the Common Core State Standards were posted for public discussion and review in September 2009 and again in March 2010, the final standards were released on June 2, 2010.

Moving from Development to Adoption

Once the standards were finalized, states had to determine whether to adopt them. In making the decision, each state had to consider how recently it had adopted its current standards, the level of rigor of the new standards in comparison to their current standards, and their comfort level with having standards that were the same as those for other states. They also had to factor in the current landscape of education policies and practices in terms of standards'

States That Have Adopted the Common Core State Standards



adoption; teacher effectiveness; other college- and career-readiness initiatives within the state; and whether the standards provided more focus and clarity to teachers, parents, and students.

Common Core advocates have emphasized that the initiative was state-led and the standards developed without participation from the federal government. This is true, but U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan provided incentives for states to adopt college- and career-readiness standards, such as the common core, through the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top initiative.

The Race to the Top initiative gave states the chance to compete for a share of \$4 billion in reform funds, offering the possibility to infuse tens of millions—if not hundreds of millions—of dollars into their K–12 education systems over four years.

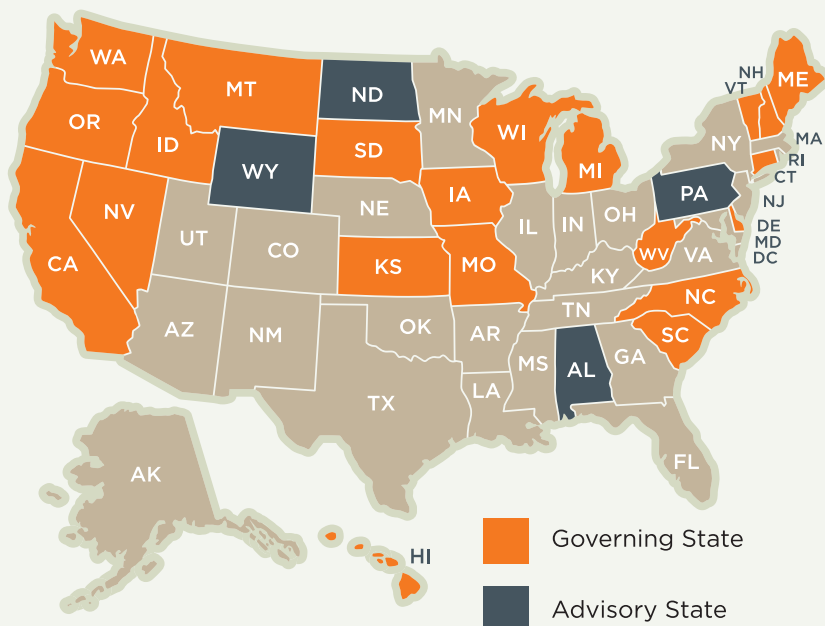
Although states were not required to adopt the Common Core State Standards to compete for Race to the Top dollars, they were at an advantage if they did so. The initiative's scoring system awarded additional point to states for promising to adopt those standards by August 2, 2010.

Many of the states—41 in total—that applied for Race to the Top funds promised in their applications to adopt the Common Core State Standards. The state of Kentucky became the first to adopt the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and English language arts and literacy, albeit conditionally, in February 2010.

By September 2012, 46 states, the District of Columbia, and other U.S. territories had adopted the Common Core State Standards. Alaska, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia are the only states that did not adopt the Common Core State Standards, and Minnesota adopted only the English language arts and literacy standards.

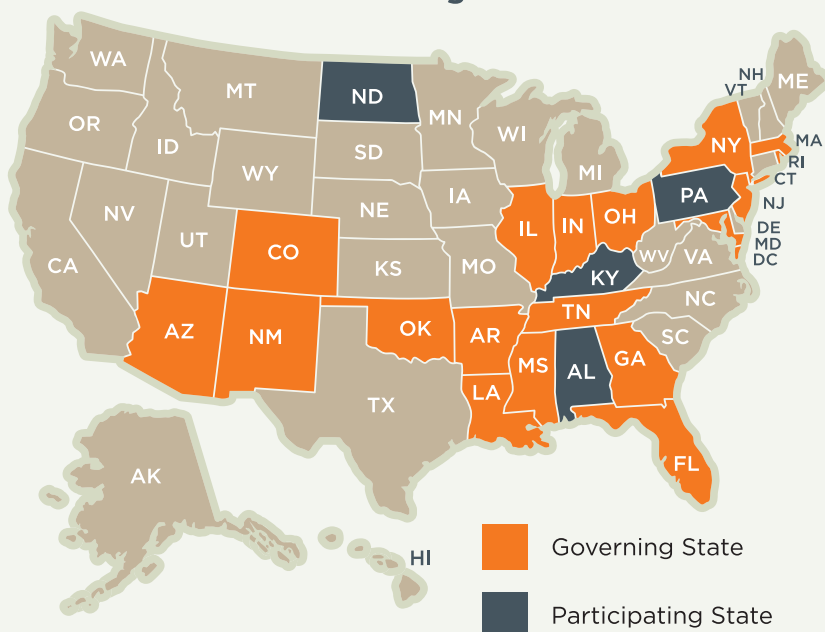
**FORTY-SIX STATES
AND THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA ADOPTED
THE COMMON CORE
STATE STANDARDS.**

States in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium



Source: From *Member States*, by Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium,
<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/about/member-states/>

States in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers



Source: From *PARCC States*, by Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers,
<http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-states/>

Assessments Bring Standards into Action

While states across the nation were adopting the Common Core State Standards, many of them were also organizing themselves to help design and develop next-generation assessments to measure student learning aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded a total of \$330 million to two state consortia—the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), which received \$160 million, and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), which received \$170 million—to develop the next generation of assessments aligned to the standards. Their target was for the assessments to be operational by the 2014–15 school year.

Although SBAC and PARCC are the two main, comprehensive consortia for mathematics and English language arts and literacy, other consortia are also focusing on alternative assessments and English language assessments aligned to the Common Core standards.

Comprehensive Consortia

- PARCC (www.parcconline.org)
- SBAC (www.smarterbalanced.org)

Alternate Assessment Consortia

- Dynamic Learning Maps (www.dynamiclearningmaps.org)
- National Center and State Collaborative (www.ncscpartners.org)

English Language Proficiency Assessment Consortium

- The Assessment Services Supporting English Learners Through Technology Systems (<http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/assets.html>)
- English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (website coming soon)

Each consortium is comprised of member states committed to helping govern their respective consortia, ensure that they meet timelines and delivery of the assessments, and ultimately administer the assessments.

The existing NCLB accountability requirements rely on student test scores on state reading and math assessments, so these next-generation assessments are designed to comply with NCLB requirements and replace current state NCLB tests in the 2014–15 school year, making it the de facto implementation deadline of the Common Core State Standards.

The Ramifications of Rapid Adoption

Although the rapid adoption of the standards showed states' support for students becoming college and career ready, it also created a number of challenges in implementing the new standards.

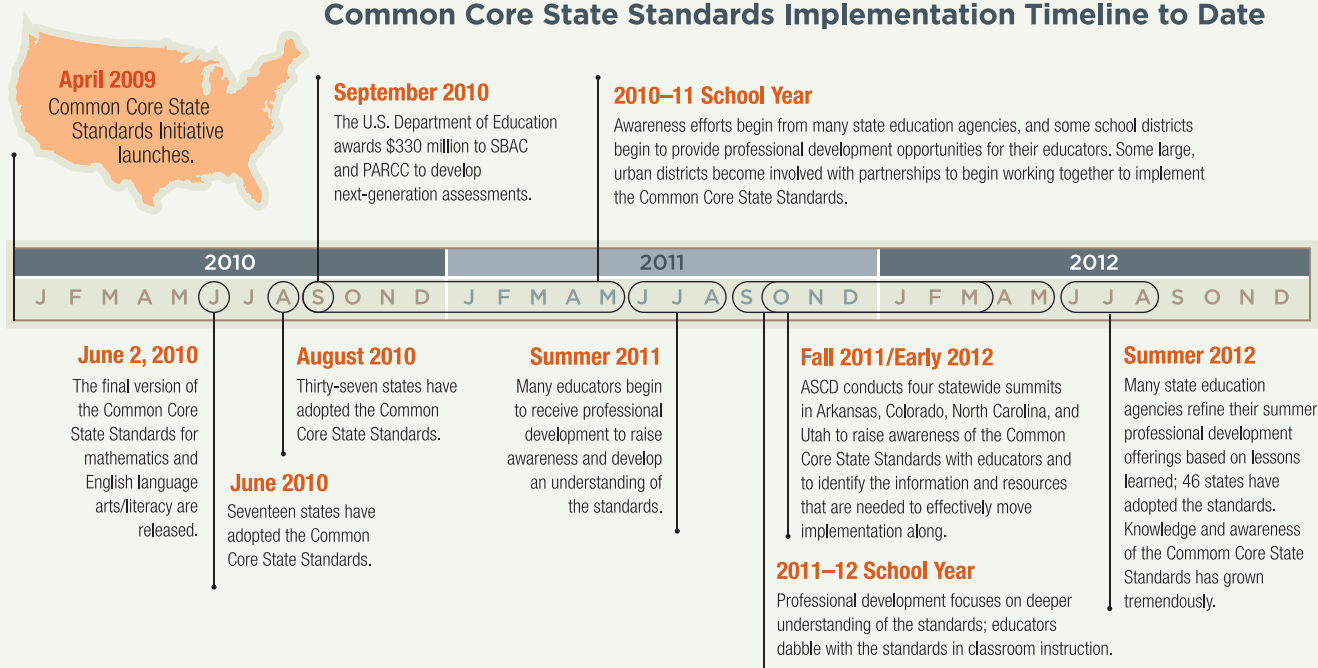
Many states do not have policies that will enable them to quickly shift to the Common Core State Standards, and they may also be committed to other initiatives and reforms that present additional challenges to moving to the Common Core standards.

For example, to apply for Race to the Top funds, many states enacted educator effectiveness policies that tie at least a portion of a teacher's yearly evaluations to students' test scores on state assessments. These educator effectiveness laws and policies are based on the current state assessments, which are aligned to current state standards. At the same time, the states are trying to implement the Common Core standards.

Educators are unclear about where to focus their instructional efforts, and many school leaders are overwhelmed by trying to lead multiple, major reform efforts and uncertain about where to direct professional development. Furthermore, the simultaneous reforms have exceeded the capacity of most state and local education agencies, compromising educators' ability to best implement any reform.

ASCD Executive Director Gene R. Carter summarized the situation in the field: "Rapid adoption of the Common Core standards has outstripped both professional and public

Common Core State Standards Implementation Timeline to Date



understanding of the standards and their potential for changing the learning and teaching paradigm. It is essential that district and school leaders have the opportunity to learn about the standards and raise questions that will help guide their transition, implementation, and communication strategies.”

Without in-depth knowledge of the Common Core standards, many educators have charged ahead thinking in terms of standards implementation cycles of the past.

A common consequence is a crosswalk approach, in which educators compare the Common Core standards side by side with the state’s current math and English language arts and literacy standards, looking for similar or matching verbiage so that they can deem those standards as already taught. However, the crosswalk approach fails to adequately capture the level of content mastery, rigor, and depth of change necessary to meet the expectations of college and career readiness in the Common Core standards.

To best facilitate Common Core standards implementation and determine what resources and professional development educators need to make them a reality, it is imperative to identify and promote educators’ awareness and understanding of the Common Core State Standards.

Promoting Educators’ Awareness and Understanding of the Standards

Organizations such as the Council for Great City Schools, Student Achievement Partners, National Governors Association, and CCSSO have mobilized to raise awareness and understanding of the standards across the nation.

ASCD undertook a multifaceted program of information-gathering and professional learning. Funded by a three-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, ASCD set forth a three-pronged strategy for supporting teachers in the classroom and advancing the understanding and implementation of the Common Core State Standards at the state, district, school, and classroom levels.

ASCD’s approach included

- Hosting statewide summits to gauge and raise awareness of the standards in selected states: Arkansas, Colorado, North Carolina, and Utah.
- Developing the EduCore™ tool, an online, digital application for professional development that uses math and literacy resources aligned to the Common Core State Standards to help facilitate implementation.
- Leveraging ASCD’s expertise in developing and delivering professional development to provide technical assistance to support Common Core State Standards implementation.

The four Common Core State Standards Summits were the backbone of ASCD's efforts, serving to identify educators' level of understanding about the standards and their professional development needs.

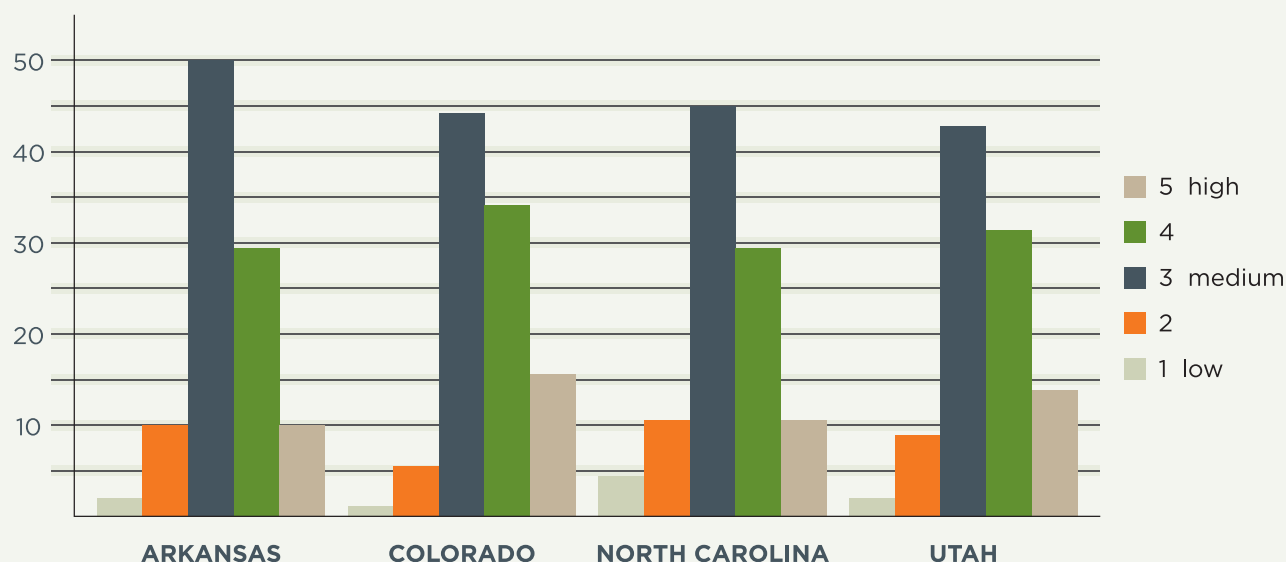
The data gathered at the summits will inform the development of technical assistance and professional development activities that ASCD will deploy in the remaining two years of its Common Core State Standards project.

Statewide Summits: Gauging Educators' Knowledge, Listening to Educators' Needs

Arkansas, Colorado, North Carolina, and Utah, the four states where ASCD held the Common Core State Standards Summits, represent a cross-section of characteristics that will inform standards implementation nationally, such as their affiliation with the assessment consortia, demographic diversity, geographic diversity, their receipt of Race to the Top funds, and their implementation timelines. The characteristics of these particular states helped ASCD identify needs, challenges, and perspectives that can be extrapolated nationally.

Although all four states adopted the Common Core State Standards within a four-month period in 2010, each is implementing the standards at a different pace. North Carolina will have the Common Core State Standards fully implemented in the 2012–13 school year, Arkansas and Colorado by the 2013–14 school year, and Utah by the 2014–15 school year. As a result, ASCD's Common Core State Standards Summits, which were held in fall 2011 and early 2012, occurred during different points along the implementation continuum.

Educators' Knowledge About the Common Core State Standards



To help ensure that the summits' programs and outcomes were appropriate and powerful for each state, ASCD engaged its state affiliates and the state education agency staff in each location to identify state-specific concerns and needs.

Although each state faces a different set of circumstances and is at a different stage in implementation, educators' top-level concerns were similar across states:

- Educators' knowledge and awareness of the Common Core State Standards were growing exponentially, but not necessarily in the context of the deeper learning necessary to achieve the standards.
- Many educators were focused on the new common assessments and the technology issues associated with their deployment.
- There was widespread initiative fatigue in the field because of efforts to implement the Common Core State Standards, new educator effectiveness initiatives, and other initiatives like Race to the Top.
- The vast majority of educators want each child, in each school, in each community to be college and career ready, but there was lack of understanding about the changes necessary to truly shift instruction to these higher standards.

As a result of these observations, ASCD defined the goals of the state summits as

- Ensuring that educators understand the key instructional shifts for the Common Core State Standards, in both mathematics and English language arts and literacy.
- Comprehensively reviewing each state's implementation plan and helping educators align the different state initiatives.
- Providing an update on each state's respective assessment consortium.
- Obtaining educators' feedback on ASCD's EduCore™ tool to ensure that it meets the needs of educators in the field.
- Determining educators' challenges, barriers, and needs for implementing the Common Core State Standards with fidelity to help ensure that each student, in each school, in each community will become college and career ready.

To help meet these goals, ASCD developed an agenda template that it could tailor to the unique needs of each state. Each state summit included the following components:

- An opening address from each state's chief state school officer.
- An overview of the development and adoption of the Common Core State Standards from CCSSO.
- A plenary session on the key instructional shifts, conducted by Sandra Alberti from Student Achievement Partners.
- An overview of the state's implementation plan and timeline.
- Breakout sessions divided by professional roles to solicit feedback about needs, concerns, and perspectives on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards from multiple viewpoints.
- An overview of the respective state's assessment consortium.

At each state summit, ASCD gathered multiple data points from attendees. These data included anecdotal evidence from the field work in the states prior to the summits, attendees' responses from pre-summit surveys, trends attendees expressed during the summit plenary and breakout sessions, and responses to the post-summit evaluation surveys.

What We Heard from the Field

The attendees at ASCD's four Common Core State Standards Summits represented a diverse array of education levels and arenas, spanning K–12 and higher education and ranging from superintendents to literacy specialists and from assistant principals to classroom teachers. Because of the makeup of the attendees and the diversity of the summit states, the conclusions drawn from the data are applicable to all states participating in the Common Core State Standards Initiative and across all levels of education.

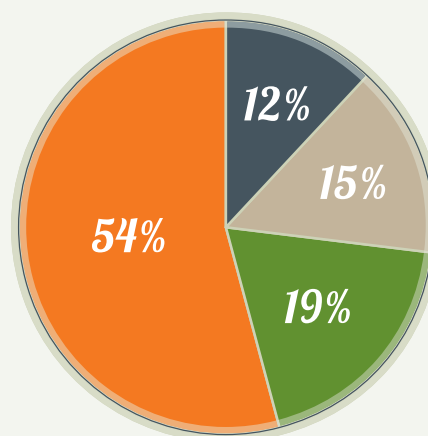
During the summits, ASCD identified trends that attendees shared during the plenary and breakout sessions. The breakout sessions grouped participants by role, which helped shed light on data points they identified in their pre-summit surveys and created an environment in which educators could explain their needs in more detail.

For example, summit participants in Arkansas outlined “technological capacity” as a major concern, but the summit information gathering revealed the nuances of the concern, which varied from bandwidth, to hardware, to student proficiency with technology.

Summit attendees also reported on whether they had received training about the Common Core State Standards and of what kind. These trainings ranged from in-depth professional development to basic information sharing.

The next section delves into the education environment in each state and specific state data and feedback from ASCD's Common Core State Standards Summits in Arkansas, Colorado, North Carolina, and Utah.

ASCD Common Core State Standards Summit Attendees by Role



Teacher School Administrator
Other* District Administrator

*Includes such education contributors as community members, business representatives, school board members, and higher-education representatives.

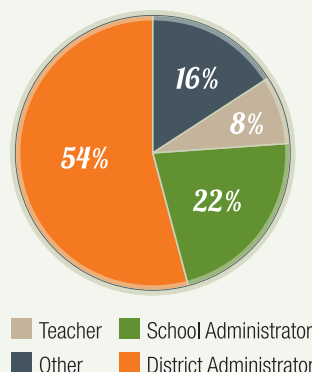
A Closer Look at Arkansas

Arkansas officially adopted the Common Core State Standards in July 2010 and is a governing state for PARCC. Since its adoption of the standards, the Arkansas Department of Education has been working to increase awareness and support successful implementation.

More than 550 educators attended ASCD's Common Core State Standards Summit in Arkansas on October 11, 2011, and the majority of attendees had been trained on at least some aspect of the Common Core standards, because of professional development offered by the Arkansas Department of Education and education service cooperatives and professional organizations, such as Arkansas ASCD and the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators. Groups

ARKANSAS

- Adopted Common Core State Standards in **July 2010**
- Governing member of **PARCC**
- Member of the **CCSSO's Implementing the Common Core Standards State Collaborative**



Key Pre-Summit Survey Results

- The vast majority (**74%**) of **summit participants in Arkansas** had received training on the Common Core State Standards.
- **48% of summit participants in Arkansas** felt that they had the resources and tools necessary to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards.
- On average, **summit participants in Arkansas** rated their knowledge of the standards as a **3.35 on a 5-point scale**.



such as Arkansas ASCD had also provided comprehensive professional development opportunities not only about the actual implementation of the standards but also to advocate for a comprehensive approach to educating the whole child in Arkansas.

Apart from the Common Core initiative, Arkansas had adopted other initiatives to improve college and career readiness: ACT's college-readiness assessments EXPLORE and PLAN for 8th, 10th, and 11th graders; science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) initiatives; and efforts to improve career counseling for students across the state. However, the prospect of partnering with fellow states to develop and implement the Common Core State Standards offered Arkansas the opportunity to advance college and career readiness systemically.

Arkansas is also implementing new teacher effectiveness legislation as a major component of its NCLB waiver. The Teacher Excellence Support System Act 1209 includes the components of promoting professional learning, rating designations based on rubrics, formal and informal observations, intensive support, and professional development that matches the learning plan (Arkansas Department of Education, 2012). Educators will receive training, and schools will work on building capacity for the system to begin in the 2013–14 school year. The advent of this new requirement in addition to the Common Core State Standards is placing an inordinate amount of stress on many local education agencies to implement both initiatives at the same time.

State leaders are invested in Common Core implementation, and Governor Mike Beebe spoke to Common Core summit attendees about the rising quality of Arkansas education. For the state to achieve its goals, Arkansas Commissioner of Education Tom Kimbrell emphasized that the Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and Arkansas Department of Career Education need to work together.

Assistant Commissioner of Education Laura Bednar shared with summit attendees Arkansas's Common Core Strategic Plan, which outlines the state education agency's plan to implement the standards and deploy resources to the field to support those efforts.

Arkansas Educators' Perspectives

Technological capacity. A major concern among attendees was their technological capacity as they transition to computer-based assessments in the 2014–15 school year. More specifically, attendees were concerned about

- Schools and districts not having the hardware necessary to accommodate the computer-based assessments.
- Issues of bandwidth in rural areas.
- The current capacity of educators to use technology to facilitate teaching and learning and for assessment.

However, the biggest concern stemmed from the lack of information available on the topic of technology and the assessments.

Human capital. Attendees were concerned about how to enhance the skill sets of current teachers, administrators, and staff as well as how to adequately prepare future educators. Suggested solutions included adjusting teacher education, emphasizing teacher mentors, and establishing strong opportunities for high-quality professional development at all levels.

Lack of knowledge. Multiple discussion groups voiced a concern about the current general lack of content knowledge in math and English language arts and literacy in grades K–5 in the context of the Common Core State Standards. The consensus was that grades 9–12 core content teachers have strong content knowledge but tend to lack the knowledge of overall teaching strategies, and the opposite is true for K–5 classroom teachers.

A Closer Look at North Carolina

North Carolina adopted the Common Core State Standards in June 2010 and is a governing state in SBAC. Approximately 400 educators attended ASCD's Common Core State Standards Summit in North Carolina on November 8, 2011, and there were a notable number of educators from outside the curriculum and instruction areas, such as representatives of pupil services, counselors, and the department of juvenile correction.

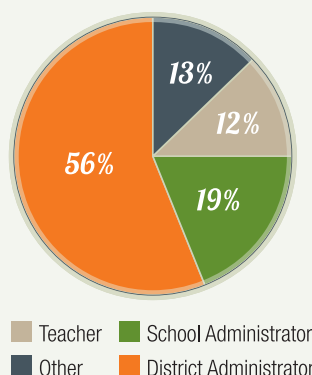
The state is uniquely positioned to implement the Common Core standards because it was 1 of only 12 states to receive Race to the Top funding, bringing nearly \$400 million to the state's public school system over the next four years. As it relates to the Common Core

initiative, the main priorities for North Carolina's Race to the Top funding during the 2012–13 school year are to increase student achievement, graduation rates, college readiness, and college enrollment (Public Schools of North Carolina, n.d.).

North Carolina is one of only a few states rolling out assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards in the 2012–13 school year, which will help the state transition to the SBAC assessments in 2014–15 and set the stage early for raising expectations. North Carolina is also concentrating on the “career” portion of college and career readiness, according to North Carolina State Superintendent of Public Schools June Atkinson, who spoke at the Common Core State Standards Summit.

NORTH CAROLINA

- Adopted Common Core State Standards in **June 2010**
- Governing member of **SBAC**
- Race to the Top funds of more than **\$400 million**
- Member of the **CCSSO's Implementing the Common Core Standards State Collaborative**



Key Pre-Summit Survey Results

- The vast majority (**77.5%**) of **summit participants in North Carolina** had received training on the Common Core State Standards.
- **54%** of **summit participants in North Carolina** felt that they had the resources and tools necessary to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards.
- On average, **summit participants in North Carolina** rated their knowledge of the standards as a **3.31 on a 5-point scale**.



In the 2014–15 school year, North Carolina will be assessing students with the SBAC assessments, and Angela Quick from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction outlined the components of those assessments as follows:

- **Formative assessment:** North Carolina's Formative Assessment Learning Community's Online Network
- **Interim assessment:** Benchmark assessments (state or SBAC in 2014)
- **Summative assessment:** End-of-year (state or SBAC in 2014)

Rebecca Garland, chief academic officer for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, explained during the summit that the state is also implementing other college-readiness assessments, such as ACT's EXPLORE and PLAN assessments. The combination of these assessments with the Common Core-aligned assessments will generate data about students' college and career readiness much earlier than most other states.

The state's Regional Education Service Alliances and professional organizations have played a vital role in helping implement the Common Core standards. And the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction will continue to provide aggressive and comprehensive professional development opportunities for educators in the state, Garland said at the summit. ASCD's affiliate in the state will also continue to provide professional development as the reform initiatives are implemented, said Rodney Shotwell, superintendent of Rockingham County Schools and president of North Carolina ASCD at the time of the summit.

The state has been involved in a number of partnerships and is currently working with the Shared Learning Collaborative from the Gates Foundation, CCSSO's Implementing the Common Core Standards state collaborative, ASCD's Common Core project, and many other initiatives. These partnerships have provided an abundance of opportunities for the state to be seen as a Common Core leader, but they have also spread the education department's staff thin.

Before the Common Core State Standards were developed, North Carolina had enacted educator effectiveness initiatives, which have served as a natural foundation for the new standards and have given the state a sense of stability during the transition period.

North Carolina Educators' Perspectives

Equal concern about each set of standards. Although ASCD's initial fieldwork found that educators were greatly concerned about the math standards, the pre-summit survey of the summit attendees showed that they had a similar level of concern about both sets of standards, with slightly more concern about English language arts and literacy.

Technological capacity. Educators were concerned with school districts' technological capacity to assess students with the new computer adaptive assessments being developed for 2014–15, although these aspects do not seem to be paralyzing their efforts.

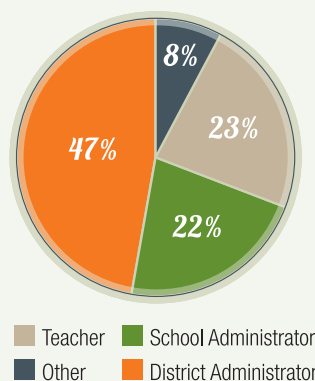
Summative assessments. The summative assessments from SBAC were of great interest to educators in the state. Summit attendees expressed the need to better understand the design of the assessment but were also interested in its delivery and development. It is also significant with North Carolina's move to Common Core-aligned tests starting in 2012–13.

A Closer Look at Utah

Utah adopted the Common Core State Standards in June 2010. It is no longer a member of any assessment consortium, however, having recently withdrawn from SBAC because of concerns about a conflict with recently enacted legislation (HB 15) that required the state

UTAH

- Adopted Common Core State Standards in **June 2010**
- Member of the **CCSSO's Implementing the Common Core Standards State Collaborative**



Key Pre-Summit Survey Results

- The vast majority (**78%**) of **summit participants in Utah** had received training on the Common Core State Standards.
- **58%** of **summit participants in Utah** felt that they had the resources and tools necessary to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards.
- On average, **summit participants in Utah** rated their knowledge of the standards as a **3.47 on a 5-point scale**. ★★★★★

to develop a request for proposals for new statewide adaptive testing. Utah will continue to implement the Common Core standards and request proposals for new assessments for math and English language arts and literacy as outlined by the legislation.

The Utah State Office of Education and local districts have been providing professional development about the Common Core standards, but fewer professional organizations are doing so than in other states. Still, the majority of the more than 275 educators who attended ASCD's Common Core State Standards Summit in Utah on December 15, 2011, had been trained on at least some aspect of the Common Core standards.

The work of the State Board of Education, the Utah State Office of Education, and all school districts in the state are driven by Utah's education mission and vision statement, "Promises to Keep." The mission includes goals that align with the Common Core State Standards Initiative, such as "establishing curriculum with high standards and relevance for all Utah children" and "requiring effective assessment to inform high-quality instruction and accountability" (Utah State Board of Education, 2009).

By pointing out to attendees at Utah's Common Core State Standards Summit the mission's similarities with the Common Core State Standards, State Commissioner of Education Larry Shumway was able to put the national movement into local terms. Shumway reaffirmed that the state's work to date will better position the students of Utah as they move forward with the Common Core State Standards.

During the 2011–12 school year, Utah is implementing the entire K–12 English language arts and literacy standards but only the grades 6 and 9 math standards. This is partly because Utah is one of the only states that will be implementing the integrated math model in grades 9–12. Utah is implementing the math standards in grades K–5, 7, 8, and 10 in the 2012–13 school year and in grade 11 in the 2013–14 school year.

In the integrated model, the topics taught in grades 9–12 are approached from a holistic viewpoint. Each grade level encompasses multiple math subjects, as opposed to breaking out subjects (e.g., Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2) by grade level.

Utah Educators' Perspectives

Assessments. Utah educators were concerned about how students with special needs will be assessed, how to prepare students and teachers for the coming assessments in the 2014–15 school year, and how to use the data from the Common Core assessments to inform instruction.

Technological capacity. Educators were concerned about their current capacity to facilitate teaching and learning with technology, as well as assessing students with the next-generation assessments.

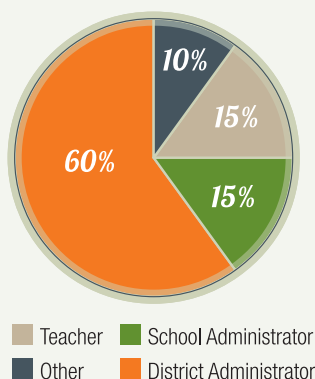
Preparedness. Utah educators were concerned about the funding, time for, and availability of high-quality professional development, especially for K–5 English language arts and literacy and K–5 mathematics. Educators in the state were also concerned about the pedagogical knowledge of K–5 teachers to effectively deliver content at the rigorous level required by the Common Core standards.

A Closer Look at Colorado

Colorado adopted the Common Core State Standards in September 2010 and is a governing member of the PARCC consortium. More than 470 educators attended ASCD's Common Core State Standards Summit in Colorado on March 6, 2012, and approximately half of the attendees—a significantly lower percentage than in other partner states—had been trained on at least some aspect of the Colorado Academic Standards as a whole, which include the Common Core standards in math and English language arts and literacy as a component.

COLORADO

- Adopted Common Core State Standards in **September 2010**
- Governing state for **PARCC**
- Member of the **CCSSO's Implementing the Common Core Standards State Collaborative**



Key Pre-Summit Survey Results

- The majority (**51%**) of **summit participants in Colorado** had received training on the Colorado Academic Standards and Colorado Language English Proficiency Standards.
- **48%** of **summit participants in Colorado** felt that they had the resources and tools necessary to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards (Colorado Academic Standards).
- On average, **summit participants in Colorado** rated their knowledge of the standards as a **3.58 on a 5-point scale**.



For more than a decade, the state has advocated for policy to support college and career readiness, and many other states modeled their reforms on Colorado's efforts. In validation of its work, according to Colorado Commissioner for Education Robert Hammond, the state was granted an NCLB waiver in 2012 that will be in place through the 2013–14 school year.

When Colorado adopted the Common Core State Standards, it was already in the midst of numerous other state education reforms. Many of the ongoing reforms were spurred by the 2008 passage of Senate Bill 212, also known as “Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids.”

The bill was aimed at improving “Colorado's public education through alignment of preschool through postsecondary expectations” and outlined five major steps:

1. Create descriptions for “school readiness,” “21st century skills,” and “postsecondary and workforce readiness.”
2. Expand and refine the model content standards from preschool through high school.
3. Realign assessments with those standards.
4. Local school boards assure that local standards meet or exceed state standards.
5. Recognize that earning a diploma based on mastering the new standards means a student is college ready. (Colorado Department of Education, 2008, p. 1)

Another important piece of legislation in Colorado is Senate Bill 191, the “Educator Effectiveness” bill. The enacted legislation introduces new requirements for evaluating teachers and

principals that are based on the academic growth of students. Being piloted in the 2012–13 school year and scheduled to be implemented statewide the following year, the new evaluation system will be finalized in the 2014–15 school year (Colorado Department of Education, 2012).

The state merged the reform efforts it already had under way with the Common Core State Standards Initiative, and so it is one of the few states implementing standards in content areas beyond math and English language arts and literacy.

Starting with the 2011–12 school year, as a part of the Colorado Academic Standards, the state is working to implement standards in the following subject areas:

- Mathematics (CCSS–Math)
- Science
- Reading, Writing, and Communicating (CCSS–ELA/Literacy)
- Social Studies
- Music
- Visual Arts
- Theater
- Dance
- Comprehensive Health and Physical Education
- World Languages

Diana Sirko, deputy commissioner for the Colorado Department of Education, explained at the Common Core State Standards Summit that the Common Core standards in math and English language arts and literacy reinforce the focus on postsecondary and workforce readiness in the eight other content areas.

Because the state is implementing standards in 10 subjects, Colorado is considering developing its own state-specific assessments, beyond the scope of mathematics and English language arts and literacy from the PARCC consortium.

The Colorado Legacy Foundation is working throughout the state to improve educator effectiveness and create healthy schools. With the support of the Colorado Department of Education, it is working with 13 school districts “to pilot a more integrated model of teaching and learning” (Colorado Legacy Foundation, n.d.). Nina Lopez, from the foundation, explained to summit attendees that the districts are supposed to be laboratories and models for implementing the different educator effectiveness components.

For Colorado to accomplish its wide-ranging goals, the state’s education organizations and educators will have to work together. In line with this, the Colorado Department of Education is refocusing on truly becoming a partner with educators in teaching students, instead of being only an oversight entity, explained Hammond at the summit.

To help inform the content development of its 2012 summer symposia, the department asked Common Core State Standards Summit attendees to fill out an interactive poll.

Colorado Educators' Perspectives

Alignment of policy expectations. Colorado educators were concerned about the cost and fidelity of implementing standards in 10 content areas. Such an expansive implementation is straining professional development budgets, which had already been cut. The recent passage of Senate Bill 191 has added another initiative to the list of reforms that are competing for funding and time.

Role of instructional leaders. School leaders were excited to adapt their role to include instructional leadership. As identified in the breakout sessions, many educators in Colorado see this transition as necessary and believe that their leaders are beginning to evolve into that capacity.

Summative assessment. During the Colorado summit, a major concern among educators was the lack of clarity about the direction of summative assessment, because at that time, Colorado was a participating member in both PARCC and SBAC. Since the summit, Colorado has exclusively joined PARCC as a governing state, which should help clarify the future of assessments in the state.

Factors That Will Affect Standards Implementation

By themselves, the Common Core State Standards will not significantly affect student learning. They need to be part of a comprehensive approach to raising expectations and increasing rigor throughout the K–12 system, and classroom teachers are the most important group in turning the Common Core State Standards from mere words into high-quality instruction.

As implementation of the Common Core State Standards continues across the nation, a number of factors could help or hinder this work.

Budget Issues at All Levels

The budget challenges that states, districts, and schools are facing have been extraordinary as revenues have plummeted and the country continues to economically struggle from the worst recession since the Great Depression.

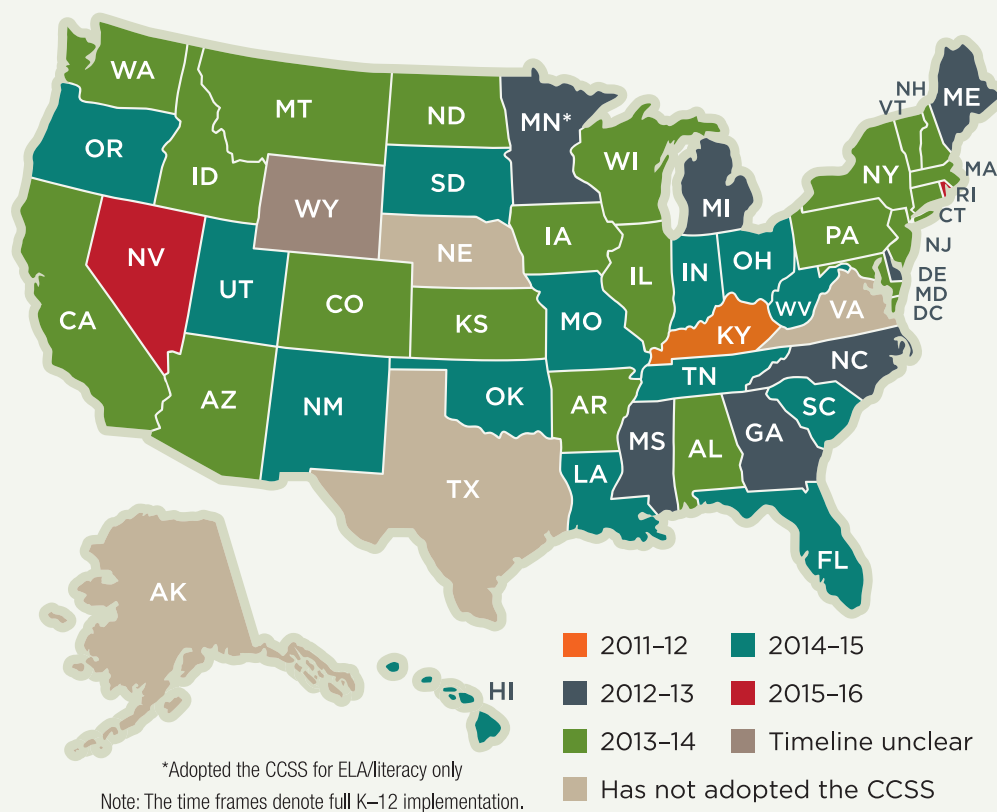
With the priority for funds being to maintain basic instructional services and student support, other areas indispensable to helping meet the higher expectations of the Common Core State Standards have been cut. These range from budgets for professional development to aligned instructional materials to technology enhancements. Some deep cuts have eliminated common planning time for grade-level and content-area teachers—at a time when collaboration is going to be essential to the success of shifting instruction and integrating the standards across the core content areas.

According to a report released by the Fordham Institute, the cost of implementing the Common Core State Standards could vary dramatically, depending on the state's approach:

- **“Business as Usual.”** This ‘traditional’ (and priciest) approach to standards implementation involves buying hard-copy textbooks, administering annual student assessments on paper, and delivering in-person professional development to all teachers” (Murphy & Regenstein, 2012). This approach is estimated to cost \$12.1 billion for the nation.
- **“Bare Bones.”** This lowest-cost alternative employs open-source instructional materials, annual computer-administered assessments, and online professional development via webinars and modules” (Murphy & Regenstein, 2012). This approach is estimated to cost \$3 billion for the nation.
- **“Balanced Implementation.”** This is a blend of approaches, some of them apt to be effective as well as relatively cost-efficient” (Murphy & Regenstein, 2012). This approach is estimated to cost \$5.1 billion for the nation.

The ability of states, districts, and schools to provide the necessary supports and resources to classroom teachers will be critical to truly shifting instruction. However, because of the financial constraints, creativity and flexibility are going to be significant currency.

States' Common Core State Standards Implementation Timelines



Source: From *The Common Core State Standards: Development, Adoption, and Implementation*, by Council of Chief State School Officers, http://ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/The_Common_Core_State_Standards_Initiative.html.

Perceptions of the Common Core

Some have perceived the Common Core State Standards Initiative as federal in nature and, therefore, an example of the government overstepping its bounds and intruding on state and local control of education. This perception has been driven in some areas by misinformation and the nation's charged political environment.

Although the standards are national in scope, they are not “national standards.” Each state—whether by state board of education approval, legislation, or some other means—voluntarily chose to adopt them. Federal Race to the Top funding did play an important role in encouraging states to adopt the standards, but that did not deprive any state of its choice to adopt or not adopt the standards.

The state of Utah, in particular, struggled with the perception of federal intrusion. Eventually, Utah's state board of education voted to withdraw from SBAC because the state didn't want to be tied to a system without having a request for proposal process. Even though the state has not retracted its adoption of the Common Core State Standards, the withdrawal from the assessment consortium could signal more turmoil in the future.

In some states, questions of ownership stemmed from the timing of the standards' adoption, which coincided with the turnover of key personnel, such as the governor, state board of education members, and legislative leaders. As a result, some decision makers made commitments that their successors were responsible for carrying out.

This was the scenario in Alabama, where in November 2010, during the term of Governor Bob Riley, the state board of education voted 7 to 2 to adopt the Common Core State Standards. When the new governor, Robert Bentley, took office in 2011, the topic of the standards was resurrected for review and discussion, mobilizing pro- and anti-Common Core advocates. In the end, Alabama's state board of education voted 6 to 3 to keep the Common Core standards in place.

Others have tried to make the Common Core State Standards Initiative a partisan issue, even though states with Republican governors and states with Democratic governors helped develop and have adopted the standards.

Although there has always been vigorous debate about education reforms and initiatives, many feel that the debates about the Common Core State Standards are symptomatic of the current polarization of partisan politics at both the state and national levels.

The high-profile nature of the initiative both nationally and at the state level will continue to attract attention.

Change in the Role of Higher Education

The primary goal of the common core is to help ensure that students are prepared to enter post-secondary education, and higher-education institutions have already played a central role in the Common Core State Standards by working with the assessment consortia to help define what

college ready means. The two comprehensive assessment consortia, PARCC and SBAC, have involved higher education in their initial discussions and will need to continue to do so.

From the perspective of higher-education institutions, the continuation of Common Core implementation will change how they deploy resources for incoming students, because theoretically students will need less remedial support, and how they reach out to prospective students. As standards implementation progresses, higher-education institutions will need to examine their admission policies, placement tests, interactions with K–12 systems, teacher preparation in their schools of education, and their role in adult education.

A presentation by Jacqueline King, of SBAC and formerly of the American Council on Education, at the Common Core State Standards Summit in Colorado outlined issues that higher-education institutions need to consider as the Common Core State Standards are implemented:

- Aligning key school-to-college policies.
- Developing assessments and aligning with placement policies.
- Developing K–12 curriculum and aligning to higher education.
- Preparing new and existing teachers.
- Re-examining adult education.
- Avenues for collaboration.

(King, 2010)

Higher education's ability to adjust and align with these priorities will be the difference between a systemic change and the step backward that would result from keeping the status quo, according to King.

As teachers, schools, districts, and states continue to implement and improve their work with the Common Core State Standards, higher-education institutions will need to modify their teacher preparation programs to account for the changes in the education environment.

Change in the Role of State Education Agencies

Within the past decade, many state education agencies (SEAs) have refocused their efforts on providing technical assistance and support to schools and districts, expanding their role beyond being solely a compliance entity. SEAs have built their capacity and rebuilt relationships with schools and districts, which have enabled them to provide crucial support with the move to the Common Core State Standards, especially early awareness efforts.

To disseminate information, SEAs have relied on e-mail blasts as a cost-effective strategy for communicating quickly and efficiently. However, e-mails become a less complete and less reliable method of relaying information when directed at recipients at levels lower than superintendents. SEAs are working to identify and remedy gaps in their communication strategies.

To help educators implement the Common Core State Standards, many SEAs have offered professional development across states, starting in summer 2011 or earlier, and outlined an implementation timeline. The timeline could prove particularly important because, during the initial years of implementation, entire cohorts could miss certain areas of content due to topics shuffling among grade levels.

Many SEAs are also taking advantage of the Implementing the Common Core Standards state collaborative, facilitated by CCSSO, as a forum for learning. This group meets three times a year and allows participating states to collaborate and share best practices.

Refocusing on Supporting Classroom Teachers

In the beginning of states' Common Core standards implementation, educators were fixated on the pending assessments and what they would look like, as shown in the surveys they took before the Common Core State Standards Summits.

However as states, districts, and teachers have moved further into implementation, data gathered from the summits and post-summit evaluations showed that their deepened understanding of the Common Core standards has redirected their concern to the most important focus moving forward: ensuring that classroom teachers have the time, tools, and support to make the standards come alive in the classroom. How schools and districts deploy their current resources to facilitate implementation is paramount.

Educators' knowledge and understanding of the Common Core State Standards has grown exponentially since the summer of 2011, but more work is needed to continue the momentum of this promising start.

As implementation of the Common Core State Standards proceeds, SEAs are increasing their capacity to support districts with information and guidance. Moving forward, professional development should provide more depth and help educators effectively ingrain the instructional shifts in their classroom practice.

Anticipated Effect of the Common Core Standards

Students will be better prepared for college and career	54%
Greater collaboration between schools and states	46%
Teachers can more easily share resources	40%
Fewer standards but deeper learning for students	59%
Greater focus on literacy across disciplines (science, social studies, and technical subjects)	63%

ASCD asked its members and ASCD Annual Conference attendees, "What do you think will be the impact of the Common Core State Standards?"
Data were collected between March 24 and June 6, 2012.

Plans to Ensure Alignment of Instructional Practices to the Common Core

Ongoing, job-embedded professional development	68%
Classroom observations	48%
Model lessons and instruction	39%
Identifying student work exemplifying instructional shifts	28%
Identifying curricular tools supporting the instructional shifts	44%
Not sure	17%

ASCD asked its members and ASCD Annual Conference attendees, "What is your school or district doing or planning on doing to ensure that instructional practices are aligned to the higher expectations of the Common Core State Standards?"
Data were collected between March 24 and June 6, 2012.

Concerns Identified by Educators

Based on the findings of the Common Core State Standards Summits, educators still have a number of concerns about implementing the Common Core Standards and the related assessments. Educators voiced the following needs.

Areas Educators Are Most Concerned About	Arkansas	North Carolina	Utah	Colorado
K–5 Math (Common Core)	25%	36%	29%	15%
6–12 Math (Common Core)	30%	32%	28%	24%
K–5 ELA/literacy (Common Core)	17%	38%	33%	26%
6–12 ELA/literacy (Common Core)	23%	35%	28%	27%
Summative Assessments from PARCC (Arkansas), Summative Assessments from SBAC (North Carolina, Utah), New Summative Assessments (Colorado)	42%	33%	41%	42%
Through Course Assessments for PARCC (Arkansas), Through Course Assessments for SBAC (North Carolina, Utah), New Interim Assessments (Colorado)	30%	8%	12%	24%
Technological Capacity to Teach and Assess Students	52%	21%	35%	13%
Availability of Professional Development Offerings	23%	38%	23%	14%

Note: These data were gathered at the Common Core State Standards Summit in each state. Since that time, Utah has left SBAC and Colorado has become a governing state in PARCC.

Aligning Immediate Implementation to the Instructional Shifts

Educators need

- Easy-to-use criteria to select resources and more efficiently use funds.
- Trusted resources and guidance about the process of choosing curricular tools and how to choose from curricular tools they already have to teach to the Common Core State Standards.
- Access to easy-to-use model lessons for their own lesson plan development.

Aligning Reform Efforts and Policy

Educators need

- Information about how the accountability systems for schools will change with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.
- A clearer understanding of how and when new educator effectiveness policies will affect them as they implement these new, rigorous standards.
- Support to understand the various education initiatives and tie them together in a coherent way.

Principals' and School Leaders' Roles as Instructional Leaders

Educators need

- To build the capacity of principals, assistant principals, and district-level directors to serve as instructional leaders, providing guidance to school-based instructional specialists and teachers.
- Effective professional development to build capacity among school leaders.
- Strategies to maximize and leverage their human capital, from both their current and incoming workforce.

Professional Development

Educators need

- Effective professional development to build the capacity of educators.
- Time to plan to implement the new standards.
- Guidance about the efficient use of funds and time for professional development.
- Resources and guidance about best practices for ongoing, job-embedded professional development to build educators' understanding of the standards' structure, content knowledge, and ability to employ strategies reflecting the new instructional shifts.
- Resources to differentiate support for educators' varying levels of knowledge about the Common Core State Standards.
- Guidance and support to help enhance professional learning through teacher communication and collaboration, such as professional learning communities.
- Professional development and resources about how to engage the community and garner its support.

Assessments

Educators need

- Knowledge about the various kinds of assessments related to the Common Core State Standards and how to use the data from assessments to inform instruction.
- Access to authentic assessment items that have been designed to measure the Common Core standards and not just repurposed from a different item bank.
- Information about the summative assessments and their technology requirements.
- Guidance and support about how to best prepare school systems for the assessments in 2014–15 (e.g., when the assessments will be available, sample items, clarity on what will be assessed, and training on creating assessments that accurately test students' competency with the new standards).

Technology

Educators need

- To build knowledge and skill sets for working with and using technology as an instructional tool in the classroom.
- Guidance about how to pay for and support technology for the purpose of teaching and learning at the school level.

Moving Implementation Forward

To successfully implement the Common Core State Standards, states, districts, and schools should concentrate on the following essential recommendations, which are based on the data from pre-summit field work, the pre-summit survey, summit notes, role-alike breakout session notes, summit evaluation surveys, and subsequent data gathering by ASCD.

To realize the most immediate results, classroom teachers, school leaders, district-level administrators, and others who are involved with K–12 education should work toward fulfilling these recommendations as soon as possible.

Many of the recommendations will take time to put in place, but focusing on the actionable items within each will help ensure that students start to feel their effect as soon as the 2012–13 school year.

Make Sure Educators Deeply Understand the Standards and the Key Instructional Shifts They Require

Just as students need to aim for the right target, instructional changes need to be directed at the right objectives.

First, educators must deeply understand the Common Core State Standards, and all staff who affect teaching and learning—not only math and English language arts teachers or classroom teachers—need to be familiar with the instructional shifts they require.

The instructional shifts for mathematics and English language arts and literacy are foremost among the changes wrought by the Common Core initiative. The new emphasis on nonfiction content, text complexity, and literacy skill building across all subjects for English language arts and literacy and the more detailed, greater conceptual focus, and grade progression coherence in math require teachers to significantly revise their strategies and collaborate.

Although educators' knowledge and awareness of the Common Core standards has grown by leaps and bounds, not everyone has recognized the true shifts in instruction that will be necessary to elevate students to these high expectations.

One barrier to teachers embracing these shifts is that they have been through cycles of standards adoption and implementation before. Even though these new standards are more rigorous and aligned to higher expectations, the mentality that “standards are standards” persists. Many educators understand this point theoretically but are struggling to internalize it.

Key Instructional Shifts for ELA/Literacy

- Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts.
- Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence.
- Regular practice with complex texts (and its vocabulary).

Key Instructional Shifts for Mathematics

- **Focus:** Focus strongly where the standards focus.
- **Coherence:** Think across grades, and link to major topics.
- **Rigor:** Require fluency, application, and deep understanding.

(Student Achievement Partners, n.d.)

Not enough time has been dedicated to allowing educators to collaborate and engage one another in conversations to fully comprehend the standards and begin to outline the deeper level of knowledge and application that students will need to show to achieve mastery. The issue has been compounded by the dearth of instructional resources that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

As authentic performance tasks are developed that align to the common core, they will help educators grasp the shift in expectations for students and, therefore, be able to more appropriately adjust their instructional practices.

The potential effect of the instructional shifts has been highlighted by Sarah Brown Wessling, the 2010 National Teacher of the Year, in a series of video clips on the Teaching Channel (www.teachingchannel.org). Wessling, an AP English teacher, implemented the Common

Core standards in her classroom at Johnston (Iowa) Senior High School, and the videos are a vibrant demonstration of the standards in action.

See a video of Sarah Brown Wessling bringing the Common Core State Standards to life in a literary discussion at www.teachingchannel.org/videos/ap-english-lesson-plan.

During a literary discussion, students display close reading of complex texts. The pinwheel discussion mirrors an orchestra, with Wessling acting as the

conductor and all of her students contributing their portion of the performance by participating and discussing the text. In the video, Wessling stresses how the texts in the classroom should build on one another.

Free resources like these Teaching Channel videos can provide models to teachers across the nation. School leaders should also identify teacher leaders, like Wessling, to share the message and model the instructional shifts to help move all teachers forward.

School leaders need to ensure that all core content-area teachers know and understand the Common Core State Standards and the key instructional shifts required within them. A thorough understanding of the instructional shifts forms a strong foundation for delivering instruction aligned to the higher expectations of the Common Core standards. The sooner educators are aware of and understand the shifts, the more smoothly implementation will progress.

Vet Instructional Resources for Quality and Alignment with the Standards

Frequent comments from educators across the nation are “How do I know if these instructional materials are any good?” and “But the vendor said that they are Common Core-aligned.” The reality is that there is a difference between materials that are Common Core-aligned and materials that are authentically developed for the Common Core State Standards.

This distinction has become a significant issue in the realm of textbooks. The fact that many textbooks were deemed “Common Core–aligned” before the final standards were even released points to vendors’ rushed efforts.

Resources such as the publishers’ criteria for instructional materials can be helpful in determining if a textbook was developed for the Common Core State Standards.

Instructional resources designed for the Common Core standards are starting to be developed, and many of those resources will be free. Also, for the first time, states and districts will be able to collaborate and share their materials. If educators are aware of and understand the key instructional shifts of the new standards, they can develop local resources that they can then share nationally. The ability to share and use resources such as lesson plans, sample assignments, tasks, and so forth will free up educators to spend their time delivering instruction instead of creating resources.

To take most advantage of the professional learning opportunities that the common standards make possible, states, school districts, and schools should capitalize on the resources from other states. New York, for example, is currently developing Common Core resources that will be usable in any state.

The advent of Open Educational Resources—digital materials that have open licenses sanctioning them to be reused for teaching, learning, research, and more—has been an important development to freely sharing resources.

Whether the instructional materials are textbooks or open-source digital resources, each district and school should vet them for quality. District and school leaders should identify a committee of teacher leaders who know and understand the instructional shifts and are familiar with the publisher’s criteria for English language arts and literacy and K–8 mathematics. This will reduce the risk of selecting low-quality resources for use in classrooms.

These committees will also help build the capacity of the teacher leaders who are members and, in turn, help the leaders better support their colleagues at the school site.

The intersection of educators’ deep understanding of the standards and instructional shifts with their ability to better identify high-quality instructional materials and resources will be instrumental in ensuring faithful implementation of the new standards.

Publisher’s criteria for the Common Core standards in K–8 mathematics and K–2 and 3–12 English language arts and literacy are available at www.corestandards.org/resources.

Rubrics for assessing the quality of instructional materials have been developed by Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products. Learn more at <http://achieve.org/EQUIP>.

New York is providing resources at www.EngageNY.org and North Carolina at www.ncpublicschools.org/acre.

Transform Principals into Instructional Leaders

Until now, principals have been the overlooked constituency as states have sought to gain acceptance of the standards from rank-and-file classroom teachers while simultaneously working with district-level leaders to create systemic supports and reforms aligned to the standards.

However, principals and related administrators hold the power to leverage the Common Core State Standards in schools: they are the linchpins in either delivering or facilitating the delivery of resources and supports to classroom teachers. One of the most pressing needs is to provide powerful resources and professional development to school building leaders.

The stakes have never been higher for principals as they deal with the transition to the Common Core State Standards and the push in many states for principal evaluation. A recent research report published by the Wallace Foundation (2012) identified five main functions that effective principals perform well:

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students.
- Creating a climate hospitable to education.
- Cultivating leadership in others.
- Improving instruction.
- Managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement. (p. 2)

The Common Core State Standards will be integrated in the classroom more quickly and with greater efficacy if principals truly embrace their role as instructional leaders. As instructional leaders, principals must

- Know and understand the shifts associated with the Common Core State Standards.
- Be fully versed in how to support their teachers as they enact those changes.
- Better align initiatives such as teacher evaluation and Common Core implementation seamlessly for their staffs.

Principals need to ensure that a culture of learning is in place so that classroom teachers can effectively collaborate with their colleagues to learn and adjust their instruction to these higher standards. To prioritize these efforts, principals should reserve time during faculty meetings to address updates on Common Core implementation from the district and state and to provide a forum for teachers to highlight best practices and lessons learned. They will

also need to advocate for common planning time and make sure that teachers use the time effectively.

An ASCD webinar, “The Principal’s Role in Bringing the CCSS to Routine Use: Essential Levers for Change,” speaks to the transformation of the principal’s role with the move to the Common Core standards. You can watch the webinar at www.ascd.org/ccss-principal-webinar.

Principals also need to share and collaborate with their peers at other sites to make certain that the district’s efforts are guided by what is happening in the classroom.

Another new responsibility for principals is serving as an information clearinghouse, scrutinizing information for its applicability to implementing the standards and ensuring that it is communicated to staff. To staff, parents, and students too, school leaders have essential obligations to communicate the coming changes to state assessments—for example, the computer-based administration and performance component.

Enacting these recommendations will provide classroom teachers on their campuses with the support necessary to accomplish the school's goals of ensuring that each child leaves college and career ready.

Listen to Educators About Their Professional Learning Needs

When developing and implementing workforce improvement and human capital initiatives, district administrators need to consider educators' feedback. Too often professional development is determined without input from the people who will be receiving it, resulting in missed opportunities for the training to have a lasting influence on their work.

Just as teachers learn from their students whether they are delivering high-quality instruction, state, district, and school leaders need to appeal to educators to determine what professional development meets them where they are and with what they need. Classroom teachers will have the best perspective on what they need to implement the standards in their classrooms.

The Colorado Department of Education has used online polling to determine which topics educators are most interested in either learning more about or receiving professional development on. The department then used that data to build its 2012 summer symposia series, which it offered across the state.

School and district leaders can provide differentiated professional development in a variety of ways to meet the needs of their staff. Contracting with consultants to provide professional development is a traditional approach, but educators should avoid one-size-fits-all training.

In these lean budget times, schools can also take advantage of the wide range of free professional development resources, such as ASCD's webinar series. The free webinars support Common Core implementation during the 2012–13 school year, providing actionable strategies and tactics for integrating the standards into classroom activities.

Other free options include monitoring Twitter handles of national education organizations (e.g., @ASCD, @CCSSO, @Achieve, @achievethecore, @Hunt_Institute) and education news outlets, such as www.edweek.org.

Watch any of ASCD's webinars about the Common Core State Standards at www.ascd.org/commoncorewebinars.

The MARS group has developed math lessons geared toward teachers that can help build their capacity, and the Hunt Institute shares on its website, www.huntinstitute.org, videos that it developed with CCSSO that outline the Common Core State Standards in details. Student Achievement Partners' website, www.achievethecore.org, also provides a free venue for educators to learn and pursue specific knowledge that will benefit every individual educator.

In recent years, professional development has been one of the first places school systems have looked to cut costs. But the number of education initiatives under way and the demanding nature of implementing the Common Core State Standards make the present the worst possible time to cut back on professional development.

Maximize Opportunities for Collaboration and Capacity Building Through Professional Learning

Giving educators opportunities to learn from one another and leveraging that time together is going to be a driving factor in the quality of Common Core standards implementation.

Considering the budget limitations of many school systems, using collaborative time effectively will be instrumental. Whether in a professional learning community or during a faculty meeting, discussion should center on improving student learning. That can take the form of sharing model lessons or discussing struggles teachers had with a certain topic.

Taking advantage of the lessons learned by colleagues will help educators learn and develop capacity, as well as avoid pitfalls. This potential grows exponentially when teachers can share curriculum maps, lesson plans, instructional practices, and ideas across school, district, and state lines.

To date, a number of initiatives have been designed to help educators share resources and lessons learned that could potentially help maximize professional learning. For example, at the state level, CCSSO's Implementing the Common Core State Standards meetings gather state education agencies to learn from and collaborate with their colleagues, improving and enhancing the services that they provide practitioners.

Collaboration with colleagues is "a great way to share, bounce ideas, and get feedback from other professionals," as a teacher at the Common Core State Standards Summit in North Carolina said about the role-alike breakout sessions, where educators had the chance to discuss their understanding of the standards, curricular tools, instructional shifts, assessment, technology, community support, and professional development.

Tapping into and using internal expertise will not only save money; it will also establish teacher leaders who can benefit the individual school as well as the district, state, and potentially the nation. Maximizing this human capital will be an essential responsibility of school and district leaders.

Engage Higher-Education Partners

Higher education will play an ever-increasing role in the implementation and overall success of the Common Core State Standards Initiative. Higher-education institutions have already worked with the assessment consortia to define college readiness and performance-level indicators on the new assessments, and they will need to adjust their curriculum and offerings to ensure that incoming teachers receive training that will be relevant to the classroom.

To train the future workforce of educators to teach to the rigorous level demanded by the Common Core State Standards, teacher preparation programs need to be improved and aligned with the Common Core standards. In turn, higher-education institutions should see students entering better prepared and significant cost savings due to lower remediation rates.

As the Common Core initiative moves forward, the communication between K–12 systems and their higher-education partners needs to be open and continuous. SEAs and school districts will need to engage with local higher-education institutions and major feeder programs of their teacher workforce to make sure that they are meeting the school systems' needs.

By the same token, K–12 systems need to work with higher-education institutions that a large portion of their students attend and assess where their graduates are having success or struggling, and then adjust their instruction at the district and school levels accordingly.

To identify effective practices and state models of the intersection of K–12 and higher-education systems, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, CCSSO, and the State Higher Education Executive Officers formed the College Readiness Partnership.

Working with leaders from Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Oregon, Tennessee, and Wisconsin, the partnership was designed to

- Identify how the Common Core State Standards should be implemented in each participating state to actually improve college and career readiness for all students.
- Define how leaders and faculty across K–12 and higher education need to work together to improve both teaching and learning.
- Delineate the specific steps that higher education and states must take together to make college and career readiness expectations more transparent, to align curricula, to assess student performance more effectively, and to improve teacher preparation and professional development. (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010)

For more information about engaging higher-education partners, see the webinar from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, CCSSO, and the State Higher Education Executive Offices, “The Common Core Standards: Engaging Higher Education,” at www.ccsso.org/Resources/Digital_Resources/Engaging_Higher_Education_Webinar.html.

Their goal is to create a policy and process roadmap for Common Core State Standards implementation that, along with the collection of best practices, will support and guide all states in their implementation efforts.

States, districts, and schools will need to stay up-to-date on collaborations such as the College Ready Partnership to benefit from their findings.

Understand and Plan for the Coming Common Assessments

Driven by NCLB's accountability model being based on students' test scores, the working deadline for implementing the Common Core State Standards depends on the launch of the assessment systems from PARCC and SBAC.

Educators from across the nation are concerned about the next generation of assessments and the technology required to deliver them, especially given the current fiscal strain in most school districts. Although the assessment consortia are still determining many of the details

about the assessments and the technology requirements, a number of resources have come out that will help with planning over the coming months.

The Center for K–12 Assessment and Performance Management at ETS has been a great resource for updates on not only the two main assessment consortia but also the alternative assessment consortia. Read the Center for K–12 Assessment & Performance Management's April 2012 report on the status of the assessments at www.k12center.org/rsc/pdf/20847_consortia_guide_sept2012.pdf.

PARCC sample assessment items can be found at www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes.

To date, PARCC's model content frameworks (www.parcconline.org/parcc-model-content-frameworks) and SBAC's resources (www.smarterbalanced.org/k-12-education/common-core-state-standards-tools-resources) have helped educators further their understanding of the assessments, and their release of sample assessment items will be most helpful in visualizing and understanding the new assessment shifts.

Although continuing questions about the assessments and technology may cause educators frustration and anxiety, the start of a new assessment process should be an opportunity to renew the emphasis on teaching, learning, and professional collaboration.

An important factor to keep in mind is that the assessments are being designed to reflect the standards; therefore, the instructional shifts inherent in the standards will be reflected in the assessments. The

assessments will be designed to include tasks with introductory material (e.g., text, graphs, visuals) for students to read or examine. Students will be required to analyze informational text and explain and support their analyses. Although the assessments will be computer-administered, they will be interactive in many ways, rather than straightforward multiple-choice question sets.

Considering these changes, educators should concentrate on the following pieces between now and the launch of the Common Core assessments:

- Help students grasp the full range of knowledge in the curriculum.
- Analyze how the Common Core State Standards affect the content areas, and don't neglect subjects outside English language arts and mathematics. For example, examine how the literacy standards affect textbook comprehension in science, social studies, and technical subjects.
- Plan student learning targets, instructional activities, and formative and summative classroom assessments to support and align with the outcomes outlined in the Common Core State Standards.
- Use all of the assessment types introduced by the assessment consortia—different assessment methods for each learning outcome, both formative and summative—that reflect the Common Core assessment shifts.

To stay informed about assessment developments, educators should subscribe to the newsletters from PARCC and SBAC, as well as those from other groups, such as ASCD's *Core Connection* newsletter (www.ascd.org/coreconnection); keep up with resources from ETS's K–12 Center (www.k12center.org); and track education news reporters whose beat includes Common Core implementation, like Catherine Gewertz from *Education Week*.

All assessment consortia have educator leader cadres for each governing state that will help develop resources for the assessments and should be sharing information about their actions.

With the rollout of the new assessments that measure more rigorous concepts and skills, states, schools, and districts should be prepared to see a dip in performance results and should temper their and the public's expectations to avoid a public outcry about the results. Pass rates for the new assessments, for at least the first few years, have been estimated to be 30–40 percent, in comparison to the 80–90 percent pass rates states have come to expect on their current assessments (NCEA & ACT, 2011a, 2011b).

Whether states selected SBAC, PARCC, or a different assessment system, the approach for effectively implementing the Common Core State Standards should not change dramatically. The goal remains the same for all: ensuring that students leave school college, career, and citizenship ready.

Adopt Technology for Teaching and Learning

The Common Core assessments demand compatible technology to administer, but when discussing technology purchases, the priority should be for them to help facilitate the teaching and learning process, of which assessment is a part. Especially with most schools' and districts' budget issues, significant purchases need to have a comprehensive effect on student learning, not be limited to assessment alone.

Technology purchased with only assessment in mind will not engage students during the teaching and learning process, which may compromise students' ability to interact with technology during the summative assessments themselves. The computer-based, next-generation assessments will be rigorous because of their alignment with the Common Core standards, and they will have question types and functionality that students likely have not been exposed to regularly.

To move from paper-and-pencil, bubble-in assessments to online assessments with drag-and-drop features, constructed response, and the like, students will need to be comfortable with the technology used during the assessments to allow their true knowledge and skills to shine through.

You can find sample SBAC assessment items at www.smarterbalanced.org/sample-items-and-performance-tasks/.

Before making any purchases, school systems need to accurately determine the gaps in their technology infrastruc-

ture. Each SEA has released a survey to determine the current status of technology infrastructure in their state, and school systems can use that data to build a plan to close the gaps between now and the 2014–15 school year.

During the process of pinpointing technology shortfalls, many school districts are identifying issues with bandwidth and accessibility to bandwidth, as opposed to actual hardware. School systems must work to close the technology gaps, but close them with the focus on the teaching and learning process.

You can access the guidelines for technology purchases from PARCC and SBAC at www.parcconline.org/technology.

Align Initiatives into Comprehensive Reforms

No initiative should take precedence over research-based best practices for providing a well-rounded education to students. Competing initiatives have the most potential to disrupt the thoughtful implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

In most states, the transition to the Common Core State Standards has been separate from other new initiatives, such as school accountability and teacher evaluations. The result has been mixed messages to educators.

For example, many states are requiring new teacher evaluation requirements to be on a track parallel with the Common Core State Standards. That means that educators are being asked to implement the Common Core standards while new policies demand that teachers be evaluated on data from their current state assessments, which are not aligned to the common core.

One teacher at a Common Core State Standards Summit illustrated the detriments of the lag time before the evaluations for the new common standards take effect. The classroom teacher and her colleagues were receiving professional development in the summer of 2011 on the new Common Core standards' focus on argumentative writing, with an emphasis on citing evidence from the text. Many of the educators were engaged in the training and excited for the shift in writing, the teacher said. However, during one of the breaks toward the end of the workshop, the trainer received an e-mail announcing that the writing prompt for the 2011–12 standardized assessment would focus on persuasive writing.

These types of misalignments are frustrating for classroom teachers, waste time, and increase the likelihood that districts and schools will split their focus on too many initiatives to enact any well. School and district leaders can help avoid these situations by developing and using teacher leader committees to vet activities and materials.

Implementing reform efforts effectively and efficiently takes time. States, districts, and schools should focus on the fundamental reforms, such as implementing the Common Core State Standards and their subsequent assessments, before enacting new teacher evaluations. Teacher evaluations that are aligned to current standards and assessments will have to be revamped at a later date.

The unusual coincidence of the new evaluation systems to measure educators' instructional effectiveness and brand-new standards will place extraordinary demands on school leaders. To avoid any initial evaluation glitches, school leaders will need to both know the standards and fairly evaluate teachers.

School systems will need to work internally to align policies but, perhaps most important, they will need to reach out their SEA and legislative bodies to help explain why these reform initiatives need to be thoughtfully and thoroughly reviewed. The numerous reforms are distracting schools and classroom teachers from their core mission of graduating students who are ready for college and careers.

Some states, such as Kentucky, have been able to wrap their multiple reform initiatives into a cohesive effort. In Kentucky, a 2009 senate bill put forth several education initiatives, but they were all aligned to the singular vision of helping students achieve college and career readiness. The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, Kentucky Board of Education, and Kentucky Department of Education mandated a unified strategy to

- Reduce college remediation rates of recent high school graduates by at least 50 percent of 2010 rates by 2014.
- Increase the college completion rates of students enrolled in one or more remedial classes by 3 percent annually from 2009 to 2014. (Kentucky Department of Education, 2009)

The common vision aligned initiatives such as the Common Core State Standards and teacher effectiveness under the umbrella of student achievement.

Whether discussing the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, new educator effectiveness legislation, or school improvement efforts, educators need to make sure to work

on these pieces holistically to educate the whole child. When students are healthy, safe, engaged, challenged, and supported, their learning and achievement will improve.

Read more about the Common Core State Standards and educating the whole child at www.ascd.org/wholechildandcommoncore.

What's to Come: ASCD's Project Provides Resources and Guidance

As ASCD continues to support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, the focus of the organization's professional development and resources has evolved from awareness and understanding of the Common Core standards to implementation and sustainability of them.

This focus has allowed ASCD to engage more deeply with the selected partner states, districts, and educators across the nation. The resources ASCD has developed as a part of its technical assistance and professional development efforts—in addition to the lessons ultimately learned from implementing the common core—have been and will continue to be shared with the education world at large.

Helping Educators Transition to the Common Core with EduCore™

ASCD's EduCore™ digital tool (<http://educore.ascd.org>) is a repository of evidence-based strategies, videos, and supporting documents that help educators transition to the Common Core State Standards in both mathematics and English language arts and literacy. Funded by the grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the EduCore tool is free and available to educators across the nation.

To support implementation of the Common Core standards in mathematics, the EduCore tool features resources such as videos, PowerPoint presentations, Common Core math materials, and formative assessment lessons. The formative assessment lesson plans, titled “classroom challenges” and designed for grades 6–12, were developed by the Mathematics Assessment Resource Services. The lessons feature problem-solving and content development formative assessments on many subjects (e.g., solving linear equations with two variables, applying angle theorems).

To support implementation of the Common Core English language arts and literacy standards, the EduCore tool has three templates for argumentation, informational, and narrative

teaching for middle and high school educators in all disciplines. Each template, created by the Literacy Design Collaborative, offers secondary teachers fill-in-the-blank shells that allow educators to insert the texts students must read, writing students must produce, and content students must address.

In addition, content-area teachers can create their own literacy tasks for students with the tool. Related resources include videos that instruct educators on how to create their own templates and Microsoft Word templates teachers can use to develop their own modules.

To continue to refine and enhance EduCore, ASCD is partnering with two districts in Arkansas that will evaluate the product and measure the success of the virtual professional development. Their feedback will help enhance future versions of the tool.

The EduCore tool is available at <http://educore.ascd.org>. Educators who register for the EduCore tool can access additional features, such as the ability to save searches, organize tools, and annotate resources.

Creating Technical Assistance Resources, Promoting Best Practices, and Leading the Charge

As a part of the Common Core project, ASCD is developing and providing technical assistance to achieve the recommendations outlined in this report for the four Common Core partner states. Based on the success of these efforts, ASCD will broaden its work to provide technical assistance to benefit ASCD members and educators across the nation.

So that educators and schools have the supports they need, ASCD will continue its advocacy and policy work to ensure that each student has access to a comprehensive education that

encompasses all core academic subjects, including arts, foreign languages, music, and health and physical education.

You can sign up to receive ASCD's biweekly *Core Connection* e-newsletter at www.ascd.org/coreconnection-signup.

To help keep educators informed about emerging topics related to the Common Core State Standards Initiative, such as the next-generation science standards,

ASCD produces a biweekly e-newsletter, *Core Connection*, that highlights the progress of Common Core standards implementation, resources from across the nation, and ASCD's contributions to the initiative.

Many of ASCD's state affiliates have taken leadership roles in their states with the Common Core State Standards. For example,

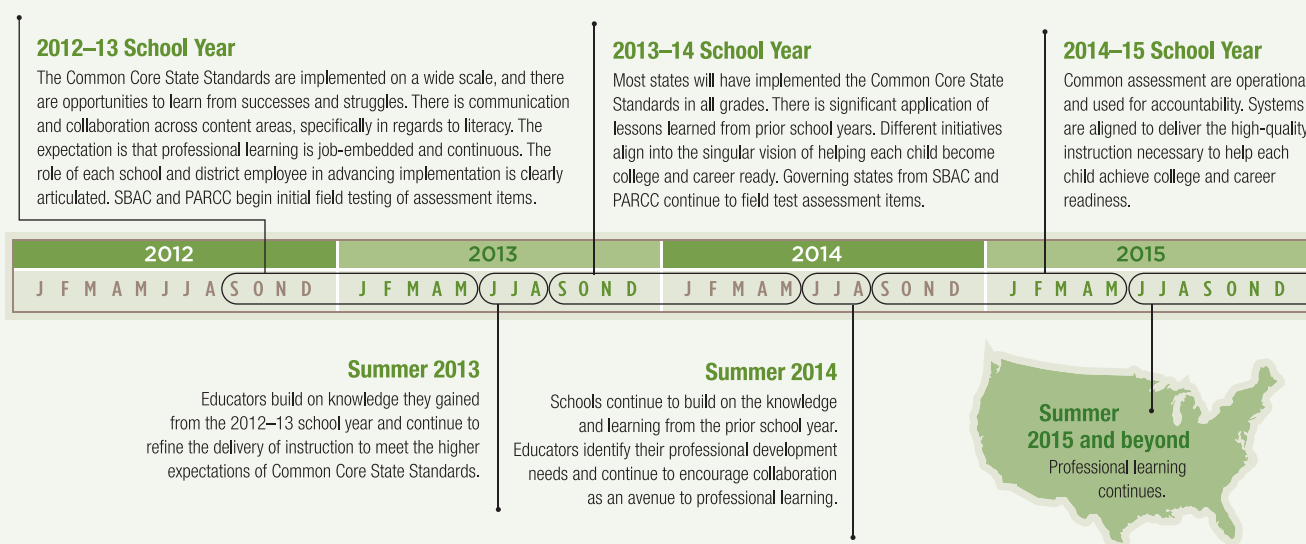
- **New Jersey ASCD** held a summit of K–12 and higher-education stakeholders to learn more about the common core and discuss the intersections of their work and needs.
- **Arkansas ASCD** held virtual events that helped highlight how the Common Core State Standards support ASCD's Whole Child Initiative.

- **North Carolina ASCD** offered professional development for the Common Core State Standards in both English language arts and literacy and mathematics to help teachers deeply understand the standards and begin to develop appropriate lessons and units.
- **Wisconsin ASCD** convened educators from across the state to be informed about and discuss the Common Core State Standards before they were finalized. This allowed for feedback and awareness early in the process.
- **Illinois ASCD** offered a series of informational and awareness symposia about the Common Core State Standards across the state.

Learn more about the ASCD Affiliate Program or join the ASCD affiliate in your state at www.ascd.org/affiliates.

Affiliates' knowledge of current issues in their states coupled with ASCD's knowledge of national issues provides a comprehensive perspective for educators. Technical resources can also be distributed through ASCD affiliates to inform educators across the United States.

Projected Common Core State Standards Implementation Timeline



A Look at Implementation in the 2012–13 School Year

The 2012–13 school year is a pivotal time for implementing the Common Core State Standards, as a critical mass of teachers begin to assimilate the standards in their classrooms. This provides an unprecedented opportunity for professional learning and collaboration, because the initiative is new to everyone.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative has set the stage for educators, not only within schools and districts but also across the nation, to hold rich discussions during professional learning time about which lessons are most effective, how to integrate literacy across the content areas, and which lessons and topics were a struggle.

The districts and schools that engage in professional learning in the 2012–13 school year will be best positioned to identify the professional development needs of their educators moving forward—and have time to provide more training before the new assessments are available in the 2014–15 school year.

With the main focus on leveraging teachers' time and talent by building capacity, schools and districts will begin to see the Common Core standards instructional shifts in practice.

A principal can walk down the hall of her school and in one classroom see the math department discussing their upcoming lesson plans, takeaways from past lessons, and the best ways to formatively assess their students. In another classroom, she can see an English teacher assigning appropriate complex texts that coordinate with the current social science lesson.



Teachers will be using technology to teach and engage students with their lessons and to collaborate with colleagues across state lines. No longer isolating their learning to an individual classroom or school, teachers will take advantage of lessons learned across the nation.

Few will master everything early on, but continuous learning will make the implementation of the Common Core State Standards a success and allow the initiative to fulfill its promise of every child across this nation leaving school college, career, and citizenship ready.

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For more information on
Common Core State Standards implementation, contact
1-800-933-ASCD (2723) • 1-703-575-9600

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