

## Briefing Packet: Common Core State Standards

---

This briefing packet is intended as a resource for effectively communicating about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). When considering how to use this document, we recommend:

- **Customizing this material as much as possible to meet the unique needs of your audience.**
  - When speaking/writing for a state-specific audience, refer to “their new standards” where possible. For example, the CCSS have been adopted by more than 40 states across the country. As a result, these states have new standards. While seemingly subtle, it is critical to talk in terms of “your new standards” or “your state’s new standards” or “as <State> implements your new standards,” which helps increase ownership.
- **Getting in the habit of using and going back to this document to inform your work in the weeks and months ahead.**
- **Be clear on what the difference is between “standards” and “curriculum.”**
  - The CCSS are ***not a curriculum***. Standards are ***statements of the knowledge and skills*** that students need to master in order to be prepared for college and/or the workforce. Curriculum is ***the roadmap*** that teachers use to help young people acquire and master those skills. Depending upon the individual needs and learning styles of their students, teachers then develop instructional strategies and techniques to navigate the roadmap.

### ***Contents Include:***

- Key Messages
- Overview of the Common Core State Standards
  - Myths and Facts: Process, Content, and Adoption
- Content Brief: English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies & Science
  - Myths and Facts: English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies & Science
- Content Brief: Mathematics
  - Myths and Facts: Mathematics
- Quote Sheet
- Talking Points

## Key Messages

---

- Thanks to the hard work of experts and leaders in states, young people – regardless of their background or where they live – will be taught to education standards that, once mastered, will have prepared them for college and career success.
- More than 40 states have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that were created through a voluntary, collective effort by states and serve as the foundation for an education system that demands excellent teaching, high-quality professional development, rigorous curricula, and dynamic assessments.
- These consistent education standards provide a clear set of shared goals and expectations for the knowledge and skills that will help our students succeed.
- Now more than ever, the economic climate demands innovative thinking, collaboration, high expectations, and a willingness to learn from the past and move purposefully forward. We must support educators at all levels – teachers, principals, superintendents – as they work to implement their states’ new academic standards.
- Teachers and administrators, including principals and superintendents, will decide *how* the standards are to be taught and will establish the curriculum, just as they currently do—allowing for continued flexibility and creativity. Teachers will continue to create lesson plans and tailor instruction to the needs of the students in their classrooms. States are currently in the process of implementing their new standards and are developing programs and materials that suit their unique needs.

## Overview of the Common Core State Standards

---

- Standards are the skills and knowledge young people need to be academically successful. Until now, we've had different academic standards in every state, and too many states had standards that were not at a level that prepared students for college or careers.
- College and career readiness mean the ability to enter into a postsecondary school without remediation or the ability to enter a job that would provide a livable wage.
- The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are designed to provide consistent learning goals for all students, regardless of where they live, and allow parents and teachers to more effectively help all students achieve those goals.
- The CCSS drafting process relied on standards experts from across the country. In addition, many state experts participated in review and comment periods to create a thoughtful and transparent process. This was only made possible by many states working together.
- The goal from the outset was to apply the most advanced, current thinking on how to prepare young people for college and career success in order to move even the best state standards to the next level. So while the CCSS were informed by the best standards in the country, they also reflect additional evidence and expertise.
- Unfortunately, many young people who graduate and pass all the required tests – even in high-performing states – still require remediation in their postsecondary work. The CCSS are anchored by requirements for college and career success, providing a more accurate description of academic readiness.
- For example, most of today's high school students master narrative writing, which includes expressing opinions, beliefs, and personal experiences. That's a form of writing rarely required in the workplace or at college.
- Because of the type of writing needed in the workplace and college, the English Language Arts Standards put a greater emphasis on writing arguments. And because college and career readiness overwhelmingly focuses on complex texts outside of literature, the CCSS also ensure students are reading, writing, and researching in history and science, in addition to literature.
- Evidence shows that the complexity of texts students are required to read today does not match what is demanded in college and the workplace, creating a gap between what high school students can do and what they need to be able to do. The CCSS create a staircase of increasing text complexity so that students are expected to develop their skills and apply them to more and more complex texts.
- The high school CCSS set a *rigorous definition of college and career readiness*, not by piling topic upon topic, but by demanding that students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do.

- In mathematics, the teaching practices of high-performing countries and the National Research Council’s Early Math Panel report indicate that it is important to focus on arithmetic in early grades – in part, because it takes time to master.
- The Mathematics Standards require a level of mastery in mathematics unlike any current system of standards. For example, nine laws of arithmetic underlie algebra. Previous state standards did not even describe these laws, but the CCSS use the laws as building blocks, laying the foundation that students will need to successfully master algebra.
- In addition, the CCSS commit to teaching mathematics in a real world context – presenting examples that apply the approach/reasoning to problems that aren’t presented as math problems.
- The CCSS address a problem identified by the National Mathematics Panel and international benchmarking studies: today’s math textbooks are overloaded, fragmented, sometimes incoherent, and lack effective presentation of concepts.
- In the CCSS, the mathematical progressions are careful and coherent – making it easier to develop better textbooks. Textbooks in high-performing school systems such as those used in the city-state of Singapore are not only more focused than U.S. textbooks, they also present the concepts that underlie the skills.
- The best understanding of what works in education comes from the ground up. That’s why the CCSS were developed by the states – not the federal government – and they incorporate the best and highest of current state standards.
- The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who lead them. That’s why the CCSS will establish *what* students need to learn, but they will not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students reach the CCSS.

## Myths and Facts: Process, Content, and Adoption

---

**Myth:** The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) only include skills and do not address the importance of content knowledge.

**Fact:** The CCSS recognize that both content knowledge and skills are important.

In English Language Arts, the CCSS require certain critical content for all students, including, *but not limited to*: classic myths and stories from around the world, America's founding documents, foundational American literature, and Shakespeare. Appropriately, the remaining crucial decisions about what content should be taught are left to state and local determination. In addition to content coverage, the CCSS require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

In math, the CCSS lay a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals in the elementary grades. Taken together, these elements support a student's ability to learn and apply more demanding math concepts and procedures. The middle school and high school CCSS call on students to apply mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically. The CCSS set a rigorous definition of college and career readiness, not by piling topic upon topic, but by demanding that students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do.

**Myth:** No teachers were involved in writing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

**Fact:** The CCSS drafting process relied on teachers and standards experts from across the country. From working group meetings to individual review, teachers played a critical role in the development of the CCSS.

**Myth:** The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are not research- or evidence- based nor are they internationally benchmarked.

**Fact:** The CCSS were based on a large body of evidence, including scholarly research, surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs, assessment data identifying college- and career-ready performance, and comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations. The CCSS are supported by appendices which provide extensive information on the research supporting key elements and are intended to help educators better understand the content and deliver instruction closely aligned to the CCSS.

In English Language Arts, the CCSS build on the firm foundation of the NAEP frameworks in Reading and Writing, which draw on extensive scholarly research and evidence.<sup>1</sup>

In math, the CCSS draw on conclusions from TIMSS and other studies of high-performing countries that the traditional U.S. mathematics curriculum must become substantially more coherent and focused in

---

<sup>1</sup> Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2010). *Common Core State Standards English Language Arts Appendix A*. Available online at [http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix\\_A.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf).

order to improve student achievement, addressing the problem of a curriculum that is “a mile wide and an inch deep.”<sup>2</sup>

**Myth:** The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were developed behind closed doors with no public input.

**Fact:** The state membership organizations coordinating the development of the CCSS – the Council of the Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices – conducted a robust public comment period that yielded more than 10,000 comments. A summary of the public feedback can be found at [CoreStandards.org](http://CoreStandards.org).

**Myth:** The U.S. Department of Education developed the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) behind closed doors with no public input.

**Fact:** The U. S Department of Education was *not* involved in the development of the CCSS. Instead, the state membership organizations coordinating the development of the CCSS – the Council of the Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices – led the Standards development and writing process, which included the release of several drafts of the Standards, as well as multiple rounds of feedback from states, educators, and the public.

**Myth:** The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were produced with stimulus funds from the federal government.

**Fact:** The CCSS were not funded by the federal government. It was a process approved, designed, and financed by governors and state superintendents from 48 states. Adoption of the CCSS is completely voluntary; to date, more than 40 states have signed on to implement the CCSS.

**Myth:** The Obama Administration and the U.S. Department of Education pressured states to adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

**Fact:** The CCSS Initiative is a state-led effort. Recognizing the strength of having high standards for all students, the federal government only required that states demonstrate that they had adopted college- and career-ready standards for all students. Race to the Top does not name the CCSS nor any other specific standards.

**Myth:** The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) tell teachers how to teach.

**Fact:** The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who lead them. That’s why the CCSS establish *what* students need to learn, but do not dictate *how* teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students master the knowledge and skills delineated in the CCSS. Research, including the 2010 Scholastic report “Primary Sources” shows that a majority of teachers believe that common standards will have a positive impact on student achievement.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2010). *Common Core State Standards Mathematics Appendix A*. [http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI\\_Mathematics\\_Appendix\\_A.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_Mathematics_Appendix_A.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Scholastic. (2010). *Primary Sources: America’s Teachers on America’s Schools*. Available online at [http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/pdfs/Scholastic\\_Gates\\_0310.pdf](http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/pdfs/Scholastic_Gates_0310.pdf).

**Myth:** Implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will be too costly for states.

**Fact:** In addition to ensuring young people graduate with the skills and knowledge they need today, consistent English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards shared by states offer an unprecedented opportunity to pool expertise and resources.

Every state currently spends time and money creating, revising, and implementing standards on its own. By working together, states won't have to duplicate efforts, which will be more efficient. States that have adopted the CCSS will benefit from shared tools and practices, including professional development designed to support teaching of the CCSS, and formative/interim assessments that can immediately inform instructional decision-making. In addition, aligned instructional materials (vendor developed and open-source) will be available.

While states, districts, and schools will unquestionably benefit from the sharing of costs, teachers, parents, and students will finally have clear, consistent guidelines of what students are expected to learn whether they live in Maine, California, or states in-between.

**Myth:** The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will not benefit teachers, students, or parents.

**Fact:** The real beneficiaries of the CCSS are the teachers, parents, and students who will have a consistent, clear understanding of what teachers are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn.

This clear understanding will inform teacher preparation programs and provide teachers entering the profession the opportunity to learn specific teaching strategies mapped to standards that their students will need to master – whether they end up teaching in Maine or California. Once in the classroom, teachers will have the ability to share information and best practices with colleagues in other states as well as to participate in professional development opportunities focused on ways to help all students meet and exceed the CCSS.

More consistent standards will permit greater opportunities to compare outcomes from district to district and state to state and will provide a clearer picture of how our students are faring in preparation for the global educational and business environment of the 21st century. Research, including the 2010 Scholastic report “Primary Sources,” shows that a majority of teachers believe that common standards will have a positive impact on student achievement.<sup>4</sup>

The CCSS will also reduce some of the problems associated with student mobility as students will no longer lose time as they acclimate to new expectations whenever they move from one school, district, or state to another – something that is more common today than had been in the past. According to the Military Child Education Association, military children – who move, on average, three times more frequently than their civilian classmates – will greatly benefit from “...finally hav[ing] a common, high-quality reference point that delineates expectations across state lines and grade levels.” Over 80 percent of the approximately 1.5 million military-connected school-aged children attend public school systems within the United States.

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

**Myth:** The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will be implemented through NCLB – signifying the federal government will be leading them.

**Fact:** The CCSS were developed through a state-led effort that is not part of No Child Left Behind. Although states collectively created the CCSS, each state made its own individual decision on adoption of the CCSS.

**Myth:** The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) amount to a national curriculum for our schools.

**Fact:** The CCSS are not a curriculum. They are statements of the knowledge and skills that students need to master in order to be prepared for college or the workforce. Teachers and administrators, including principals and superintendents, will decide *how* the standards are to be taught and will establish the curriculum, just as they currently do. Teachers will continue to create lesson plans and tailor instruction to the needs of the students in their classrooms. States are currently in the process of implementing their new standards and are developing programs and materials that suit their unique needs.

**Myth:** The U.S. Department of Education will control any future revisions to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

**Fact:** The development of the CCSS was state-led and was coordinated by the Council of the Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. As with the initial development, future revisions to the CCSS will be discussed and decided upon at the state level.

**Myth:** States adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will not witness any improvement in the current level of students needing to take remedial courses in post-secondary work.

**Fact:** Unfortunately, young people – even in high-performing states – are graduating and passing all the required tests, and *still* require remediation in their postsecondary work. The CCSS were specifically designed to prepare young people for college and career success. It may take a few years, but students with a high school diploma from participating states will be ready for work-force training programs and to take entry-level, credit-bearing college courses.

The development, adoption, and implementation of the CCSS have shown an unprecedented level of coordination between K-12 and higher education systems. Students will know, while still in high school, whether or not they have the skills required to take entry-level general education college courses without needing remediation.

According to a 2006 report, almost one-third of entering freshman at four-year and community colleges enroll in at least one remedial course. Every year, approximately \$1.4 billion is spent providing remedial education.<sup>5</sup> For students, there are cost savings achieved with respect to “opportunity costs”— school loans for years spent in remedial coursework while not building college credit, dropping out of college due to frustration, time lost, and more. When the need for remedial course work is reduced, higher education institutions will yield a cost savings (course and faculty costs) while also providing a shorter path to completion for students.

---

<sup>5</sup> Alliance for Excellent Education. (2006). *Paying Double: Inadequate High Schools and Community College Remediation*. Available online at <http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/remediation.pdf>.



**Myth:** The federal government is creating a national test that all students will be required to take.

**Fact:** The federal government is not developing a national test. The federal government has provided funding to two coalitions of states – in which 44 states and the District of Columbia are all participating in at least one. The two coalitions are: The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC or Partnership).

Both consortia are developing assessment systems that will include summative tests in addition to formative measures. By working together, states can spend more on development than they could alone because they are sharing costs. Having formative items that are closely aligned to CCSS will provide teachers and administrators opportunities to measure student progress throughout the school year, and data can be used to modify instruction where needed and/or to tailor instruction to meet individual student needs.

## Content Brief: English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies & Science

---

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) advance the best elements of standards-related work to date. The English Language Arts Standards (ELA Standards) articulate a clear progression of learning from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. They illustrate a vision for student literacy across subject areas that applies to reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This breakthrough resource is designed to help teachers better understand how instructional efforts at each grade level contribute to college and career readiness.

### Evidence Base

The CCSS are based on a large body of evidence including scholarly research; surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs, assessment data identifying college- and career-ready performance, and comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations. The ELA Standards also build on the firm foundation of the NAEP frameworks in Reading and Writing, which similarly draw on an extensive body of scholarly research and evidence.

### Responding to the Evidence Base

- *Clear focus on college and career readiness.* A particular standard was included only when the best available evidence indicated that its mastery was essential for students to be college- and career-ready in a 21<sup>st</sup> century, globally competitive society. As new and better evidence emerges, the ELA Standards will be revised accordingly. By focusing on the most essential elements of college and career success, teachers and students will spend their time and efforts on the skills required to achieve long-term success.
- *Greater focus on text complexity.* There is clear evidence that the texts students are reading today are not of sufficient complexity and rigor to prepare them for the reading demands of college and careers. The ELA Standards devote as much attention to the complexity of what students are reading as to how well students read them. As students advance through the grades, they must develop more sophisticated comprehension skills and apply them to increasingly complex texts.
- *Shared responsibility for students' literacy development.* Most college and career reading consists of sophisticated informational text in a variety of content areas. The ELA Standards include a significant focus on informational text in grades 6-12, and a special section designed for history/social studies and science teachers to supplement the content CCSS in their respective disciplines. This focus is in addition to, not in place of, literary texts.
- *A focus on writing to argue or explain in the later grades.* The ELA Standards include developing student writing skills in three areas: argument, information/ explanation, and narrative. As students progress toward high school-level work, the emphasis on writing shifts to focus overwhelmingly on writing to argue, inform, and explain by using evidence from sources (which corresponds to the NAEP's shift in emphasis).

- *Research and media skills integrated into the CCSS as a whole.* In college and the workforce, students will need to research information and will also consume and produce media. As media is embedded into elements of current curriculum, it is also embedded throughout the CCSS rather than being treated as a separate section. Students are expected to research and utilize media in *all* content areas.
- *Recognition that both content and skills are important.* The ELA Standards require certain critical content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, America’s Founding Documents, foundational American literature, and Shakespeare. Appropriately, the remaining crucial decisions about what content should be taught are left to state and local determination. In addition to content coverage, the ELA Standards require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

#### **Support for Teacher Understanding and Innovation**

The ELA Standards use individual grade levels in grades K-8, then two-year grade bands in grades 9-12 (9-10 and 11-12) to allow schools, districts, and states greater flexibility in high school course design.

The ELA Standards demonstrate to teachers how each element connects with the grades preceding and following, and ultimately the connection to college and career readiness.

The ELA Standards are supported by three appendices which provide extensive information on the research supporting key elements of the CCSS, examples of texts to illustrate appropriate range of reading for various grade levels, and annotated writing samples to demonstrate adequate performance. These appendices help educators better understand the content and deliver instruction more closely aligned to the CCSS.

### **Myths and Facts: English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies & Science**

**Myth:** The English Language Arts Standards (ELA Standards) suggest teaching “Grapes of Wrath” to second graders.

**Fact:** The ELA Standards suggest “Grapes of Wrath” as a text that would be appropriate for 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade readers. Evidence shows that the complexity of texts students are reading today does not match what is demanded in college and the workplace, resulting in a gap between what high school students can do and what they need to be able to do. The ELA Standards create a staircase of increasing text complexity, so that students are expected to both develop their skills and apply them to more and more complex texts. Appendix B provides grade level examples of literature and informational texts to inform decision-making regarding appropriate text complexity.

**Myth:** The English Language Arts Standards (ELA Standards) are just vague descriptions of skills; they don’t include a reading list or any other similar reference to content.

**Fact:** The ELA Standards do include sample texts that demonstrate the level of text complexity appropriate for the grade level and compatible with the learning demands set out in the ELA Standards. The exemplars of high quality texts at each grade level provide a rich set of possibilities and have been

very well received by educators. This provides teachers with the flexibility to make their own decisions about what texts to use – while providing an excellent reference point when selecting their texts.

**Myth:** English teachers will be asked to teach science and social studies reading materials.

**Fact:** The English Language Arts Standards continue the traditional role of the English teacher to teach their students literature, as well as literary non-fiction. However, because college and career readiness overwhelming focuses on complex texts outside of literature, these standards also ensure students are prepared to read, write, and research across the curriculum, including in history, social studies, and science. These goals can be achieved by ensuring that teachers in other disciplines also focus on reading and writing to build knowledge and skills within their subject areas.

**Myth:** The English Language Arts Standards (ELA Standards) don't have enough emphasis on fiction/literature.

**Fact:** The ELA Standards include a balance between fiction/literature and non-fiction/biography/informational texts. This balance is intended to ensure that students develop literacy skills in other content areas.

In the elementary grades, teachers can utilize science and social studies lessons to develop literacy skills and build students' background knowledge, which research shows improves their success in later years. In secondary classrooms, this means teachers in subjects other than ELA address these skills within their content areas and the responsibility for literacy skill development is shared among all teachers. High school English teachers will continue to teach literature and non-fiction in accordance with the demand for increasing text complexity. Examples of appropriate texts for each grade level and categories of fiction/literature and non-fiction/informational texts is found in Appendix B to the ELA Standards.

## Content Brief: Mathematics

---

The Mathematics Standards (Math Standards) are a breakthrough in focus and coherence. The Math Standards articulate a progression of learning that deepens a student’s ability to understand and use mathematics. The Math Standards concentrate on core conceptual understandings and procedures starting in the early grades, enabling teachers to take the time needed to teach core concepts and procedures well – and to give students the opportunity to really master them.

### Evidence Base

The Math Standards are informed by a large body of evidence, including scholarly research, surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs, assessment data identifying college- and career-ready performance, and comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations. Notable in the research base are conclusions from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and from other studies of high-performing countries that the traditional U.S. mathematics curriculum must become substantially more coherent and focused in order to improve student achievement. The Math Standards address the problem of a curriculum that is “a mile wide and an inch deep” – a problem that has plagued many states for years.

### Responding to the Evidence Base

- *Focus as seen in high performing countries.* In current practice, many teachers must rush through material in an effort to cover a broad swath of topics at every grade. As a result, students learn enough to get by on the next test, but do not engage in deep learning or understanding. Teachers must then spend significant time reviewing concepts again the following year. The Math Standards focus on critical elements for future learning and application, giving students enough time to develop the procedural fluency and conceptual understanding that are needed to truly master mathematical concepts. By limiting the topics expected to be addressed in each grade, teachers will have more time to teach for understanding.
- *A solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals.* Taken together, these elements support a student’s ability to learn and apply more demanding math concepts and procedures that follow in the upper grades. The Math Standards devote attention to these building blocks, aligning with practices of high performing countries and the recommendations of our own National Research Council’s Early Math Panel report. For example, kindergarten expectations are focused on the *number core*: learning how numbers correspond to quantities, and learning how to put numbers together and take them apart, which lays the foundation for the addition and subtraction skills found in the first grade Math Standards. This logical progression of concepts and skills continues through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- *Preparation for algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.* The Math Standards for middle school are robust and provide a coherent and rich preparation for high school mathematics. Students who have mastered the content and skills through the 7<sup>th</sup> grade will be well-prepared for algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and the Math Standards accommodate a full algebra course in either 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

- *Application to the real world.* The middle and high school Math Standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically. The Math Standards set a rigorous definition of college and career readiness, not by piling topic upon topic, but by demanding that students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do.
- *Emphasis on mathematical modeling.* The Math Standards require middle and high school students to use mathematics and statistics to analyze problems, understand them better, and improve decisions. As students choose and use appropriate strategies to solve problems, they develop a better sense of quantities and their relationships in physical, economic, public policy, social, and everyday situations. Students are encouraged to use technology in developing mathematical models, allowing them to vary assumptions, explore consequences, and compare predictions with data.

#### **Support for Teacher Understanding and Innovation**

The K-5 Math Standards provide *detailed guidance to teachers* on how to navigate their way through knotty topics such as fractions, negative numbers, and geometry, and do so by maintaining a continuous progression from grade to grade. These grade-by-grade progressions were informed by current best state standards, as well as by international models, education research, and the insights of professional mathematicians.

By drawing on the best lessons from high performing countries, the Math Standards provide a *foundation for redesigning and refocusing the math curriculum* – and moving sharply away from the "mile wide and inch deep" approach.

The Math Standards ensure that students spend sufficient time mastering the building blocks of mathematical thinking in K-5, and allow middle and high school teachers to engage students in hands-on learning and real world applications in geometry, algebra, probability, and statistics.

An extensive appendix has also been created to demonstrate optional pathways through either a traditional high school math course sequence or an integrated math course progression.

## Myths and Facts: Mathematics

---

**Myth:** The Mathematics Standards (Math Standards) do not prepare or require students to learn algebra in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, as current standards do in many states.

**Fact:** The Math Standards do accommodate and prepare students for algebra 1 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, by including the prerequisites for this course in grades K-7. Students who master the K-7 material can move to algebra 1 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. At the same time, grade 8 standards are also included which allow students to further develop pre-algebra skills and prepare for rigorous algebra. Both paths are available and allow states and local districts to determine course projections.

**Myth:** Key math topics are missing or appear in the wrong grade.

**Fact:** The mathematical progressions presented in the Math Standards are coherent and based on research and evidence. The Math Standards are informed by a large body of evidence, including scholarly research, surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs, assessment data identifying college- and career-ready performance, and comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations.

As states implement the Math Standards, some topics may have to be moved up or down in the grade level sequence. This is unavoidable. What is important to keep in mind is that the progression in the Math Standards is mathematically coherent and leads to college and career readiness at an internationally competitive level. And by covering the same math content at each grade level, students who move from state to state won't be hampered by gaps in their math learning, streamlining their ability to get the most out of their education.

**Myth:** The Mathematics Standards (Math Standards) mandate states to use an integrated or blended approach to math.

**Fact:** The high school Math Standards identify the knowledge and skills students need to be prepared for postsecondary education programs including those leading to a technical credential or specialized certificate. The Math Standards are purposely *not* delineated by courses or grade-level to leave to state and/or local determination how to craft high school courses using either a traditional high school math course sequence or a series of integrated math courses. Appendix A was developed and is provided specifically to assist states and/or local districts in how to use the Math Standards to accommodate their curricular models.

## Quote Sheet

---

### Governors/Legislators

“Common education standards and assessments aligned to those standards are in the best interest of both Georgia and the nation. They will allow for an authentic, credible scoreboard that tells us how we are doing compared to students in other states.” - **Former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue**

“I support these Common Core State Standards because they provide clear, consistent guidelines for children across our nation. It is time that we ensure all students — no matter where they live — are learning the essential skills they need to succeed and that they are reaching the appropriate benchmarks for their grade. I am pleased to see this major state-led effort come into fruition. If we want our children and grandchildren to compete globally then as states we must set standards that ensure they acquire 21st century skill sets.” - **U. S. Senator Joe Manchin III from West Virginia, Former Governor**

### State Education Leaders

“Our nation’s schools will ultimately be better because of this effort.” - **Joe Morton, Alabama State Superintendent of Education**

“In Wyoming, our decision [to adopt] was not about Race to the Top. It was about what was good for Wyoming.” - **Sandra Barton, Chairwoman of Wyoming Board of Education**

"It's a sea change. States themselves saw the need to come together and agree there's a common core of skills and abilities that students need to be successful." - **Susan Morrison, Illinois Deputy Superintendent of Education**

"These standards are just as rigorous, and in many cases more rigorous, than the standards we have, and they better prepare students for college and career readiness. More than anything, it's just so much better for the students." - **Valerie Harrison, South Carolina Deputy Superintendent of Education**

“[The standards] are high and they are rigorous. I don’t have any doubt they will be a step forward for us as a state.” - **Larry Shumway, Utah State Superintendent**

"These standards are aligned with college and career expectations, will ensure academic consistency throughout the state and across other states that adopt them, and have been benchmarked against international standards for high performing countries." - **Tony Evers, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Wisconsin**

“It only makes sense that we have some platform of expectations in terms of rigorous common standards in core subjects across this nation if we’re going to be able to reasonably compare achievement, progress and learning.” - **Kay Persichitte, Dean, University of Wyoming College of Education**



### **Education Organizations**

"The CCSS provide the foundation for the development of more focused and coherent instructional materials and assessments that measure students' understanding of mathematical concepts and acquisition of fundamental reasoning habits, in addition to their fluency with skills. Most important, the CCSS will enable teachers and education leaders to focus on improving teaching and learning, which is critical to ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality mathematics program and the support that they need to be successful." - **Joint Statement by Mathematics Education Organizations**

"These standards are important for all students in this country because they will allow us to strive for a level of achievement competitive with students around the world." - **Dane Linn, Director of Education, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices**

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

"I'd say this is one of the most important events of the last several years in American education. Now we have the possibility that for the first time, states could come together around new standards and high school graduation requirements that are ambitious and coherent. This is a big deal." - **Checker E. Finn, Jr., President Fordham Foundation**

"These standards, fully implemented, will provide all students with a K-12 education that will give high school graduates a full range of options and opportunities to choose their path after high school. High expectations for all students that reflect the demands of the real world will open more doors for all, rather than just a few." - **Michael Cohen, President, Achieve**

"We've been supportive of common standards since they've been a thought. Our kids won't have a shot if we don't have them. They are the ones most likely to be left behind and be victims of low standards." - **Delia Pompa, Vice President for Education, National Council of La Raza**

"By its very design the process has sought to include the best ideas, the best practices, the most innovative practices and approaches ... so that at the end of the day the idea is that kids of all colors ... are having access to the best kinds of practices." - **Michael Wotorson, Executive Director, Campaign for High School Equity**

"The release of the Common Core Standards will help guarantee that the same high standards and opportunities for achievement are expected of every student in all parts of the country for the first time. When every child is able to compete on a level playing field, the chance for every child to succeed is inherently elevated. The National Association of State Boards of Education looks forward to assisting state boards as they move toward that goal." - **Brenda Welburn, Executive Director, National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)**

### **Teachers and Teacher Organizations**

“Speaking as an experienced middle school teacher and New Hampshire's current teacher of the year, I fully support New Hampshire's decision last year to adopt new education standards. They are rigorous and applicable to the real world. Once mastered, they will ensure that New Hampshire's young people have the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in college or their career - here in New Hampshire or across the globe.” - **Angie Miller, Language Arts Teacher and New Hampshire Teacher of the Year**

“It’s not that the standards in Wisconsin are so bad, it’s just that there are so many of them. These are more user-friendly.” - **Leah Lechleiter-Luke, Spanish Teacher and Wisconsin Teacher of the Year**

“The new content standards give students something to progress forward with each year; not more of the same with a different story or writing assignment...By eliminating the guesswork, particularly for new teachers, I think we will get happier students who see a purpose in what they are learning.”  
- **Meekah Hopkins, English teacher, Dulaney High School in Baltimore County, Maryland**

“Once the states adopt this, that’s when the preparation really begins to take this from ‘should’ to ‘will.’ If it looks like we’re unabashed supporters, it’s because we are, to make sure our country’s better days are in the future and not in the past.” - **Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers**

“The attentiveness of CCSSI leaders to the ideas of teachers provides real classroom grounding for the learning progressions and ideas in the standards.” - **Dennis Van Roekel, President, National Education Association**

“The standards form a solid foundation for the high quality education systems that states must build. If states adopt the standards and align their curriculum, assessments and professional development to the new standards, many more of their students will graduate with the skills they need to succeed in college or a career.” - **Charles J. Saylor, President, National PTA**

"They will help create some really exciting lessons that will help the students grasp that concept and actually put it somewhere in their brain that they can remember it forever instead of just for that particular class." - **Sharron Oxendine, President, Kentucky Education Association**

### **Business Leaders**

"The more states that adopt these college and career based standards, the closer we will be to sharing innovation across state borders and becoming more competitive as a country." - **Bill Gates, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

“As a former CEO of a Fortune 500 company, I know that common education standards are essential for producing the educated work force America needs to remain globally competitive. Good standards alone are not enough, but without them decisions about such things as curricula, instructional materials and tests are haphazard. It is no wonder that educational quality varies so widely among states... State education standards evolve over time, and the Common Core State Standards Initiative is an important step forward.” - **Craig Barrett, Former CEO and Chairman of the Board, Intel Corporation**

“State Farm is pleased to support the Common Core State Standards Initiative. State-by-state adoption of these standards is an important step towards maintaining our country’s competitive edge. With a skilled and prepared workforce, the business community will be better prepared to face the challenges of the international marketplace.” - **Edward B. Rust Jr., Chairman and CEO, State Farm Insurance Companies**

“The Massachusetts business community supports Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) standards because we have seen that our children – although they score high in national standardized tests – too often arrive in colleges and workplaces unprepared for success. One third of students at our public colleges need remedial instruction before they are ready for coursework that earns credits. Three-quarters of students entering most community colleges don’t graduate within three years. Half of Massachusetts high school students score below proficiency level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress test.” - **Jack Dill, President and CEO of Colebrook Realty Services, Inc. in Springfield (MA), and David Southworth, CEO of Southworth Company in Agawam (MA)**  
*(Both are members of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education Advisory Council)*

“I think if implemented correctly and quickly, [the Common Core State Standards] could be the standard that businesses use to relocate. If they are moving from one state to the next, and a state isn't involved in it or hasn't adopted to a certain level, I think that's going to be a key criteria. Because as they move employees, the first question those employees are going to ask is what education system is there for my children. It's a very personal decision as businesses move around the United States.” - **Steve Rohleder, Group Chief Executive, Health & Public Service Operating Group, Accenture**

“We believe that the Common Core State Standards Initiative, led by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, has produced K-12 standards in the foundational subjects of math and English that meet the business community’s expectations: they are college- and career-ready, grounded in evidence and internationally-benchmarked. We, the undersigned companies and organizations, support the adoption of the Common Core State Standards by the states.” - **Letter signed by 60 business organizations, including Boeing, IBM Corporation, etc.**  
[http://corestandards.org/assets/k12\\_statements/Business\\_Endorsement\\_Letter\\_on\\_CCSS.pdf](http://corestandards.org/assets/k12_statements/Business_Endorsement_Letter_on_CCSS.pdf)

“The K-12 standards work recognizes that students in the United States are now competing in an international environment and will need to meet international benchmarks to remain relevant in today’s workplace. We are pleased that both college *and* career readiness have been considered as the standards were developed and view this work as foundational in the effort to address the full range of academic, employability and technical skills that students need to be successful. ACTE looks forward to working with NGA, CCSSO and states as the K-12 standards are implemented.” - **Janet B. Bray, CAE, Executive Director, Association for Career and Technical Education**

“For years we have struggled to articulate expectations and standards to help all students achieve their full potential. In particular, we have struggled to align student learning at the end of high school with the demands of college-level work, beginning with core areas such as mathematics and language arts. This task has become more of an obligation as we open the doors of higher education to more students, and it has become more important as we seek to ensure student success, increase education attainment, and meet the demands of a competitive workplace and global economy. Clear learning goals for these fundamental skills through K-12 education will give students and teachers a better roadmap toward the goal of success in college and life.” - **Paul E. Lingenfelter, President, State Higher Education Executive Officers**

“This initiative is extremely important to ensure students are prepared for college. The plan is to have students who master English and mathematics to have the skills and knowledge necessary for college classes when they graduate from high school. Standards will help students avoid remedial classes and be better positioned for success as they begin their college careers. Having better prepared students could help decrease time to degree, raise graduation rates and help ensure student success.”  
- **Peter McPherson, President Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)**

## Talking Points

---

### *For Business Leaders*

- <<State's>> decision to adopt the Common Core State Standards was in the best interest of our young people, state, and our economic future. We should not reverse course.
- As a <<State>> business leader, I strongly believe that we need a strong, highly-skilled, well-prepared workforce to be competitive.
- When looking at <<State>> jobs that are in high demand and require advanced skills, it's clear that we need young people who can read with high degrees of comprehension, are active listeners, and can think critically.
- I support our new standards because they focus on preparing young people to think analytically and write persuasively. Today, too often the focus is on ensuring that young people can write about their own opinions or personal experiences. The reality is that writing a narrative of your personal experiences is not a real workplace expectation. I expect employees to provide me with information and recommendations.
- By leveraging the expertise in our state and around the country, <<State>> now has a set of highly rigorous education standards in math and English Language Arts that reflect real-world expectations that young people will face when they enter the workforce.
- Our new standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them succeed.
- In addition to ensuring young people graduate with the skills and knowledge they need today, our new state standards offer an unprecedented opportunity to pool expertise and resources.
- By working together, <<State>> and the other states who have adopted the Common Core State Standards will benefit from better aligned instructional materials including those that are open-source, and will be well positioned to share best practices for professional development and effective instruction.
- Benefitting from economies of scale and leveraging the best set of standards available are two powerful reasons that convinced me that our new standards are in the best interest of both our students and our state's economy.

This information is provided as an example for the viewer's convenience at this convening and is not generated nor endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education. No endorsement by the U.S Department of Education of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in these presentations is intended nor should be inferred.

In addition, the instructional practices discussed or shown in the presentations are not intended to mandate, direct, or control a State's local educational agencies' or schools' specific instructional content, academic achievement system and assessments, curriculum or program of instruction.