



State Academic Standards

Activity around the Common Core

Education Commission of the States

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States and the (not so) new standards — where are they now?

Tonette Salazar and Kathy Christie (Sept. 1, 2014)

States began adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010 after they were launched by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association. Five years later, policymakers in numerous states continue to debate the Common Core and related elements, such as how to assess the standards.

This brief provides a sampling of state legislative activity and executive branch action around the CCSS through Sept. 1, 2014. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list; rather, it is narrowly focused on the single issue of state affirmation, modification or replacement of the Common Core.

State legislatures ultimately are responsible for establishing academic standards in nearly all states. Most legislatures then task state boards of education or departments of education with adopting and implementing the standards. However, a number of legislatures have recently added steps, such as waiting periods for public comment, that state education leaders must follow. At this point, 46 state legislatures have convened in 2014 and 38 have adjourned for the year.

Concerns about the Common Core — whether arising from worries about data privacy or anxiety over control of classroom content — have drawn widespread media attention. It should be noted that the vast majority of states adopting the Common Core continue to support the effort.

Included in this report:

- **State activity to exit CCSS:** IN, OK
- **State attempting to exit CCSS:** LA
- **States reviewing, potentially replacing CCSS:** MO, NC, OH, SC
- **States affirming CCSS, local control:** GA, ME, MS, TN
- **States affirming CCSS, reviewing implementation:** CT, IA, WI
- **States committing to CCSS implementation:** CT, IL, KY, MD, NV
- **State affirming CCSS but limiting future multi-state standards:** SD
- **States affirming CCSS but renaming:** AZ, 25+ states
- **State affirming CCSS but modifying and renaming:** FL
- **States not adopting or partially adopting CCSS:** AK, MN, NE, TX, VA

Additional materials:

- **Who controls standards-setting?**
- **How states have renamed the CCSS.**

By the Numbers

Initial adoption

- 45 states + D.C. adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English and math since 2010.
- 1 state – Minnesota – adopted the English standards only.
- 4 states – Alaska, Nebraska, Texas and Virginia – did not adopt the CCSS but have approved new standards.

Recent activity

- At least 9 governors issued executive orders pertaining to state standards; 1 order was an action – in Louisiana – to attempt to exit the CCSS.
- 2 states – Indiana and Oklahoma – passed legislation to exit the CCSS; 4 states are reviewing and potentially repealing the standards – Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio and South Carolina.

Tally as of publication date

- 43 states and D.C. continue with the CCSS in place.
- That number could decline as 5 states are considering repeals and Louisiana's governor is in court over the issue.
- Activity around the CCSS is likely to continue in 2015.

State activity to exit the Common Core

Legislative activity

- **March 2014: Indiana** lawmakers ordered a pause in implementation of the Common Core in 2013 and required a state review by a committee jointly appointed by the governor and superintendent of public instruction (House Bill 1427). Following the review, legislation passed requiring the state to adopt new standards and leave the CCSS by July 1, 2014 (Senate Bill 91). The Indiana Academic Standards were adopted in April 2014; CCSS critics [argue](#) the new standards draw heavily from the Common Core.
- **June 2014: Oklahoma** lawmakers authorized the immediate reversion to the 2010 standards, called the Priority Academic Student Skills, in place prior to the CCSS. The State Board of Education is mandated to adopt new academic standards by Aug. 1, 2016. State lawmakers added legislative approval to any modification or adoption of new state content standards moving forward (House Bill 3399).

State activity attempting to exit the Common Core

Executive orders

- **June 2014: Louisiana** Gov. Bobby Jindal, previously a CCSS supporter, issued an executive order removing the state from the CCSS ([Executive Order BJ 2014-6](#)). The state's education commissioner claims the governor has no authority to make such a decision. The dispute has moved to the courts. The state will continue to operate under the CCSS as planned absent further legal or legislative action.

States reviewing and potentially replacing Common Core

Legislative activity

- **May 2014: South Carolina** lawmakers mandated a review of the CCSS by the state department of education by Jan. 1, 2015, with implementation of the resulting new standards in 2015-16 (House Bill 3893/Act 200, 2014). The state board must approve any proposed changes to the standards, with the consent of the legislative Education Oversight Committee; state lawmakers must approve any future standards not developed by the South Carolina department of education.
- **July 2014: Missouri** Gov. Jay Nixon signed legislation requiring the state board of education to convene work groups of educators and parents to develop and recommend new academic standards for the board's approval by Oct. 15, 2015, with implementation in 2016-17. The work groups must hold at least three public hearings. Meanwhile, the CCSS remain in place until 2016-17 (House Bill 1490).
- **July 2014: North Carolina** lawmakers passed and Gov. Pat McCrory signed a compromise proposal that directs the state board of education to rewrite the CCSS using recommendations from a new 11-member Academic Standards Review Commission (SB 812). The CCSS will remain in place until new standards are adopted. The commission has the option to incorporate parts of CCSS into any new standards.
- **July 2014: Ohio** introduced legislation ([House Bill 237](#)) that prohibits the state from adopting and implementing CCSS. The state board of education is required to hold public hearings prior to adoption of any standards, but a process for development of new standards is not currently in the legislation.

States affirming Common Core and local control over implementation

Legislative activity

- **May 2014: Tennessee:** A recent law establishes that no educational standards may be imposed on the state by the federal government. Adoption of educational standards is to be “done freely” by the state board of education; any change or addition to an educational standard is to be posted for public review on the state board's website at least 60 days before the state board meeting and votes may only occur at public meetings where a quorum is present ([House Bill 1549](#)).

Executive orders

- **May 2013: Georgia** Gov. Nathan Deal issued an executive order emphasizing the state’s commitment to local control over the education of its students and the priority the state has on protecting student data privacy. In August, Deal ordered a review of the CCSS, which remain in force ([Executive Order 261](#)).
- **September 2013: Maine** Gov. Paul LePage issued an executive order affirming commitment to the CCSS while also prioritizing local control over curriculum and protection of student privacy rights ([Executive Order 6](#)).
- **December 2013: Mississippi** Gov. Phil Bryant issued an executive order affirming the state is responsible for academic standards, curricula and assessments, and not the federal government. Bryant has publicly described the CCSS as “failed” but the state’s Common Core implementation continues ([Executive Order 1333](#)).

States affirming Common Core but reviewing implementation

Legislative activity

- **June 2013: Wisconsin** lawmakers approved the 2013 state budget bill, prohibiting the state’s department of public instruction from further action to implement the Common Core standards without further review. State education leaders held three public hearings as required by the law and issued a news release stating overwhelming support for the new standards. Implementation continues, though Gov. Scott Walker is publicly encouraging legislation to withdraw (Act 20).

Executive orders

- **October 2013: Iowa** Gov. Terry Branstad issued an executive order emphasizing the state of Iowa, and not the federal government or any other entity, determines the content of the state’s academic standards. The order also requires a regular review and public comment on the Iowa Core ([Executive Order 83](#)).
- **March 2014: Connecticut** Gov. Dannel Malloy signed an executive order creating a Common Core implementation taskforce of educators and parents, charged with identifying gaps in Common Core preparation and recommending ways to improve implementation ([Executive Order 41](#)).

States taking extra steps to assist Common Core implementation

Legislative activity

- **April 2014: Maryland** passed a law creating an implementation workgroup to assist with technical support and professional development to successfully implement Maryland’s College- and Career-Ready Standards at the local level. These standards incorporate the CCSS. In addition, the workgroup is to consider how special populations of students, resources for implementation,

technological readiness, school calendars and teacher evaluations will be impacted by the state's standards (House Bill 1164).

- **Connecticut:** State lawmakers mandated the state board of education, the board of regents for higher education and the trustees of the University of Connecticut create a pilot program to incorporate the Common Core in priority school districts and align the curricula with college-level programs (House Bill 6001, 2012). In March 2014, Gov. Dannel Malloy, via executive order, created a Common Core implementation task force. Based on its findings, Malloy instructed the state department of education to allocate \$2 million to fund educator training and up to \$1 million in mini-grants to purchase Common Core aligned resources for classrooms and communities. He also required additional funding for teachers of students with special needs and for school technology updates. He launched the Common Core Initiative to continue public dialogue.
- **Illinois:** Lawmakers, citing the statistic that only 40 percent of high school graduates test ready for college-level math, mandated the creation of middle and high school math curriculum models to assist educators in implementing the Common Core math standards. The models are required to include sample lesson plans; training for teachers and administrators is to be made available in person and in electronic format (Senate Bill 3244, 2012).
- **Kentucky:** The first state to assess students on the Common Core state standards used clear and frequent public channels of communication to help communities understand initial results would likely be discouraging. The results showed a marked dip in performance, earning headlines across the country but prompting minimal reaction from Kentucky residents. Kentucky had one-time, outside funding to assist with its communications campaign (Senate Bill 1, 2009).

Executive order

- **June 2013: Nevada** Gov. Brian Sandoval issued an executive order creating a CCSS Steering Committee to assist with implementation of the standards statewide ([Executive Order 2013-06](#)).

State affirming Common Core but limiting future multi-state standards

Legislative activity

- **March 2014: South Dakota** affirmed its commitment to the CCSS in legislation but the law also created a two-year moratorium prohibiting the state board of education from adopting any uniform content standards drafted by a multi-state consortium that are intended for adoption in two or more states from July 1, 2014, through July 1, 2016 (Senate Bill 64).

States affirming Common Core but renaming standards

Legislative activity

- **More than 25 states** adopting the Common Core standards have modified the names of the standards, from the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards to the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards. Other names adopted include the Iowa Core, Maine's Learning Results and West Virginia's Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives. See appendix for state listing.

Executive order

- **September 2013: Arizona** Gov. Jan Brewer issued an executive order renaming the state standards the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. In addition, the order affirms the federal government cannot impose curriculum ([Executive Order 2013-8](#)).

State affirming Common Core but modifying and renaming standards

Legislative activity

- **May 2014: Florida** state board of education members, after providing options for public input to policymakers, adopted recommended changes to the CCSS in English language arts and math. Florida lawmakers also approved a bill using a new name, Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, and removed any terms in statute about transitioning to the CCSS or assessments (House Bill 7031).

**States have cyclical review of all state standards, including English language arts and math. Florida is an example of a state revising CCSS as originally adopted. Others making more minor modifications include Tennessee, which has added cursive handwriting to its English language arts standards.*

Status of states not adopting the Common Core

- **Alaska:** Work on new state standards began in 2010, with input from state educators, industry leaders and national experts from the nonprofit National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment. State Board of Education members adopted [new standards in English language arts and math](#) in 2012. In a January 2014 legislative hearing, Alaska's Education Commissioner Mike Hanley described the state standards as "[substantially similar](#)" to the Common Core, according to a news report. **The Anchorage School District adopted the Common Core standards. Subsequently, state lawmakers approved a bill prohibiting spending money on CCSS implementation (House Bill 278).*
- **Nebraska:** State law requires all academic standards be reviewed every five years. State board of education members are expected in 2014 to vote on new English language arts and math standards, last approved in 2009. As part of its review process, the proposed standards have been compared to the Common Core State Standards by state education officials and by the McRel regional education laboratory. State leaders say those comparisons show "[the Nebraska State Standards are equally as rigorous as the CCSS, and in some cases, more rigorous.](#)"
- **Texas:** State law [prohibits](#) the state board of education from adopting the Common Core State Standards (Tex. Code Ann. 28.002) and prohibits the state education agency from adopting or developing a criterion-referenced assessment based on CCSS. Texas law has required college and career readiness standards since 2006 and periodic review of the standards is required. State education experts say there's similarity between the Texas standards and the Common Core – a University of Texas college of education professor said the English language arts standards are "[similar in a lot of ways](#)" while a state curriculum expert [estimated two-thirds of math standards overlap](#).
- **Virginia:** State board of education members adopted math standards in 2009 and English language arts standards in 2010, following side-by-side reviews with the Common Core standards. The board's president [issued a statement](#) noting the reviews found the two sets of standards are "comparable in content and rigor" and "the board's established process for revising and adopting standards is ideally suited to incorporating Common Core content ... where warranted." Virginia asserts the state's [college and career-ready performance expectations](#) also are aligned to the Common Core and international standards.

Partially adopting the Common Core

- **Minnesota:** State education leaders adopted the Common Core standards in English language arts in 2010. But they opted not to adopt the CCSS in math, publicly stating they believe the state's math

standards, adopted in 2008, are more rigorous. For example, Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius said [Minnesota students are required to finish Algebra I by eighth grade and Algebra II by 10th grade, something the Common Core does not mandate.](#)

Who controls standards-setting?

A 50-state policy scan conducted by ECS found that state legislatures ultimately are responsible for establishing academic standards in nearly all states. Nearly every legislature then tasks its state board of education or department of education with adopting and implementing the standards. However, following concerns surrounding the Common Core, some legislatures are strengthening their hands.

Indiana: Act 91 in 2014 voided the adoption of the Common Core State Standards and required the state board of education to adopt college- and career-readiness standards that met legislative specifications. Legislation enacted in 2013 required the state board to report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and wait for legislative action before purchasing any assessments associated with the Common Core.

Kentucky: Legislators charge the state board with adopting standards. But lawmakers now require the Kentucky Department of Education, in collaboration with the Council on Postsecondary Education, to plan and implement a comprehensive process for revising the academic content standards in all areas.

North Carolina: Senate Bill 402 required the state board to report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee prior to the purchase and implementation of a new assessment instrument to assess student achievement on the Common Core State Standards. The bill prohibited any purchase of such an assessment instrument without the approval of the General Assembly.

Oklahoma: Legislation initially required the state board to adopt academic standards. However, lawmakers required the board to adopt revisions. Most recently, the state Supreme Court ruled the legislature had the authority to repeal Common Core standards in the state's public schools.

South Dakota: State law tasks the state board of education with standards adoption, implementation and cycles of review. It also requires the state board to conduct hearings prior to adoption. Lawmakers recently required a waiting period prior to the adoption of new uniform content standards to provide for an opportunity for public comment.

Texas: Lawmakers prohibited the state board from adopting the Common Core State Standards. The legislature also prohibits the state education agency from adopting or developing a criterion-referenced assessment based on CCSS. Texas has not adopted CCSS.

Utah: Lawmakers recently modified the duties of the state board of education by requiring its members to establish a timeline for the review of core curriculum standards by a standards review committee. Law specifies committee membership and directs the state board to take into consideration the committee's recommendations in adopting core curriculum.

**Minnesota, New Mexico and Wisconsin do not have state boards of education.*

Appendix: State names for Common Core standards

Alabama	Alabama College and Career Ready Standards
Arizona	Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards
Arkansas	Common Core State Standards
California	Common Core State Standards
Colorado	Colorado Academic Standards
Connecticut	Connecticut Core Standards
Delaware	Common Core State Standards
D.C.	Common Core State Standards
Florida	Mathematics Florida Standards <i>and</i> Language Arts Florida Standards Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (for all other academic standards)
Georgia	Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
Hawaii	Hawaii Common Core Standards
Idaho	Idaho Core Standards
Illinois	Illinois Common Core Standards
Iowa	Iowa Core
Kansas	Kansas College and Career Ready Standards
Kentucky	Kentucky Core Academic Standards
Louisiana	Common Core State Standards
Maine	Maine Learning Results
Maryland	Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy; Mathematics
Michigan	Michigan Common Core State Standards
Minnesota	Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards (using CCSS for English Language Arts only)
Mississippi	Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards
Missouri	Missouri Learning Standards
Montana	Montana English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards
Nevada	Nevada Academic Content Standards
New Hampshire	New Hampshire College and Career Ready Standards
New Jersey	Common Core State Standards
New Mexico	New Mexico Common Core State Standards
New York	New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards
North Carolina	Standard Course of Study
North Dakota	North Dakota Common Core State Standards
Ohio	Ohio's New Learning Standards
Oregon	Oregon Common Core State Standards
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania Core Standards
Rhode Island	Common Core State Standards
South Carolina	Common Core in 2014-15 school year; new standards by 2015-16
South Dakota	South Dakota Common Core
Tennessee	Tennessee's State Standards
Utah	Utah Core State Standards
Vermont	Common Core State Standards
Washington	Common Core State Standards
West Virginia	The Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives
Wisconsin	Common Core State Standards
Wyoming	Wyoming Content and Performance Standards

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