

# What are the Common Core State Standards?

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The information provided herein is taken from the Common Core State Standards Initiative website ([www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)) and a document prepared by Achieve, Inc. and the Ready Future Project, titled, "*The Common Core State Standards*."

**The Common Core State 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. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.**

**Building on the excellent foundation of standards state have laid, the Common Core State Standards are the first step in providing young people with a high-quality education. It should be clear to every student, parent, and teacher what the standards of success are in every school.**

## **The Common Core State Standards were developed collaboratively and involved 48 states, hundreds of experts, and thousands of educators:<sup>1</sup>**

- Led by the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 48 states and D.C., along with teacher, content experts, and higher education faculty who sat on writing and review committees were involved in their development.
- To date, 45 states, 4 territories and Washington, D.C., adopted the CCSS in *Mathematics* and *English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Sciences, and Technical Subjects* as their state standards in those subjects, to be fully implemented by the 2014-15 school year.
- The significant promise of the CCSS Initiative is not just the development of standards; states are collaborating on common assessments and model curricular and instructional materials.
- In addition, the fact that they are common ensures all students are held to the same expectations, regardless of zip code, mitigating challenges with student and teacher mobility.

## **The Common Core State Standards are anchored in the goal of ensuring all students graduate ready for college and careers, and reflect the knowledge and skills most valued by employers and higher education.<sup>1</sup>**

- The CCSS define what all students need to know and be able to do upon graduating high school to be well-prepared for continuing their education—either in college or in a workforce training program. Based on a nationally representative survey of postsecondary faculty, when asked if the standards as a whole were sufficiently challenging to prepare students for their classes, nearly 96 percent of respondents said they were.<sup>2</sup>
- The Common Core represent a baseline of the academic knowledge and skills that all students need to pursue college and careers. They are aligned to college- and career-ready expectations; as students master the standards they will find themselves on track to graduating fully prepared for their next steps.
- We can't successfully prepare students for college and careers unless we set the right expectations and goals. While standards alone are no silver bullet, they do provide the necessary foundation for local decisions around curriculum, assessments and instruction.
- The CCSS also are internationally benchmarked against academic standards from the highest-performing countries, such as Singapore and Japan.

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### **Common Core Math Standards<sup>1</sup>**

In mathematics, the first major advance is around how they are organized. The CCSS emphasize coherence at each grade level—making connections across content and between content and mathematical practices in order to promote deeper learning. In addition, the standards focus on key topics at each grade level to allow educators and students to go deeper into the content.

The standards also emphasize progressions across grades, with the end of progression calling for fluency—or the ability to perform calculations or solving problems quickly and accurately.

The Common Core also include *Standards for Mathematical Practice* which describe mathematical “habits of mind,” and aim to foster reasoning, problem solving, modeling, decision making, and engagement among students. These eight standards connect with content standards in each grade.

### **Common Core ELA/Literacy Standards<sup>1</sup>**

In Reading, the major advances are the shift away from literature-focused standards to a balance of literature and informational texts to reflect college- and career-ready expectations. There is also a greater focus on text complexity and at what level students should be reading.

In Writing, there is a strong emphasis on argument and informative explanatory writing, along with an emphasis on writing about sources or using evidence to inform an argument.

The Common Core also include Speaking and Listening expectations, including a focus on formal and informal talk, which can be done through presentations and group work. The Language standards put a stress on general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.

A final major shift in the Common form from most current academic standards is that they address reading and writing and literacy standards for science, social studies and technical subjects. These standards complement rather than replace content standards in those subjects, and are the responsibility of teachers in those specific disciplines, making literacy a shared responsibility across educators.

### **CCSS Implementation and NSHE**

The Nevada System of Higher Education is a key partner in the successful implementation of the CCSS in Nevada and is currently participating in the NGA CCSS Postsecondary Collaborative Grant to identify steps necessary for a seamless transition from K-12 into college and careers. Areas of examination under the grant include transition courses and options to help high school seniors who do not meet college-readiness benchmarks under the new assessments based on the CCSS; communication strategies to explain to students, parents, policymakers, and other stakeholders the anticipated impact of the more rigorous CCSS and related assessments; and NSHE faculty preparation to understand the value and positive, tangible impact of the CCSS in educating future NSHE students.

For more information on Common Core State Standards, visit [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

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#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The Ready Future Project (2012). *The Common Core State Standards*.  
<http://www.futurereadyproject.org/sites/frp/files/The-Common-Core-State-Standards.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>National Governors Association (2012). *Common Core Standards: Background, Key Messages, and FAQ*.  
<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1209GEPAINstituteCommonCore.pdf>



## **Nevada Partners with Common Core Postsecondary Collaborative To Help Postsecondary System Implement New State Standards**

Nevada has taken several steps to create an unprecedented opportunity for more students to succeed and thrive. By adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Nevada will raise the bar for learning in Math and English language arts in all schools. These K-12 standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn so teachers and parents know what they need to succeed in college and careers. Forty-five states and the District of Columbia have adopted the CCSS.

Nevada is also partnering with other states as part of the Smarter Balanced Consortium to develop new high-quality assessments that will better identify the needs and strengths of each student and their progress toward being ready for college or careers. By adopting research-based, globally benchmarked curriculum standards and new high-quality assessments, Nevada will build a stronger future by ensuring that its students are well prepared for a changing and more competitive world.

These steps, however, will create a ripple-effect of change at all levels, from middle school to graduate school. That is why the involvement of postsecondary educators and faculty in implementing these standards is critical to their ultimate success: The standards will affect preparation for success in college, pre-service and in-service teacher education, placement of students, and many other areas.

Nevada educators at all levels are working together to understand the standards and their role in phasing them in. To aid this effort and ensure that postsecondary decision-maker involvement is robust, the National Governors Association (NGA), in partnership with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute (EDI) and the National Association of System Heads (NASH), have launched the Common Core Postsecondary Collaborative (CCPC), a joint effort designed to help states map and execute key actions related to postsecondary implementation of CCSS.

Resources provided by the William and Flora Hewlett and the Lumina Foundations are supporting this effort in Nevada, with the expectation that successful models will be built which can be expanded to other states in subsequent efforts.

Funds will support state and system teams to:

1. Gauge system and state capacity to implement new standards;
2. Develop a state and system-level implementation plan;
3. Prepare a map of the regulatory and policy authority for decisions about assessments, and use of assessments for placements into credit bearing work; and
4. Create a communications plan to reach multiple stakeholders.

Resources are being provided through NGA and EDI to supplement the state-and system-level work, with implementation specialists from EDI and policy and communication analysts from NGA and NASH. Grants will also provide support to states and systems to defray costs for expanded postsecondary involvement in the implementation of the new standards. And participants will be brought together in a national convening with colleagues from other states to share experiences and successes.