

K-12 Common Core State Standards FAQ **(Updated September 20, 2010)**

NOTE: This FAQ document will be updated, with changes indicated in purple, as more information becomes available.

1. What are the Common Core State Standards? Who developed them?

The Common Core State Standards Initiative (<http://www.corestandards.org>) has been led by the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), working with Achieve, ACT and the College Board, among others.

State departments of education specialists, including those in Vermont, were involved in an extensive feedback and review process.

The Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics were released to the public on June 2, 2010.

2. What is the reason behind the Common Core State Standards?

No Child Left Behind brought accountability – but not necessarily consistency – in the adoption of standards across state lines. As Americans have become more mobile, our children face increasing difficulty in moving from state to state or school to school, finding varying standards and related curriculum in the core areas of mathematics and language arts. The Common Core Standards Initiative is the beginning of a national effort to ameliorate those differences. Focused in the areas of mathematics, reading, writing, speaking and listening, the Common Core Standards are internationally benchmarked and designed to better prepare our young people for 21st century college and career opportunities.

3. Why is Vermont adopting them? What is the timeline for adoption?

Governors and State Commissioners of Education from 48 states, 2 territories and District of Columbia – including Vermont – signed Memoranda of Understanding in 2009 to develop and adopt these standards, a requirement linked to the acceptance of significant state funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards at the regularly scheduled meeting on August 17, 2010.

4. Will there be a national assessment?

The U.S. Department of Education announced funding for two consortia on September 2nd. Each consortium will develop an assessment system to measure the Common Core. Vermont is a governing member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). This means that we have committed to implementing the assessment in SY2014-2015. SBAC was awarded \$160 million and includes 30 other states, 17 of which are currently governing states. The other consortium is Performance Assessment of College Career readiness (PARCC).

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) will determine the future role of initiatives that have begun outside of the current requirements of NCLB.

Further information on SBAC is available on the department's Web site at:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_curriculum.html.

5. What will be the impact on NECAP and Vermont's Grade Expectations?

There is no immediate impact. We will continue with NECAP development and administration until 2013 and possibly until fall 2014. School accountability will continue to be based on *NECAP* **until at least SY2013-14. The current NECAP assessment will not be changed to measure the Common Core. In the intervening years, the department will be working to build regional and district capacity to assist educators with the transition from the NECAP Grade Expectations to the Common Core State Standards (see # 7).**

The department is working with our partner states in the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) and Vermont stakeholders to examine the alignment of the Common Core State Standards with our current *Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities* and associated state-assessed *Grade Expectations* in mathematics and literacy. **The sharing of these alignment results will become part of the transition from Grade Expectations to the Common Core in curriculum, instruction and assessment.**

6. What will be the impact on local assessments and curriculum?

Recently enacted state legislation requires that supervisory unions establish supervisory-union curriculum by July 2012. Practical timelines and processes to meet this requirement, as well as to align to the Common Core, will be a focus of the Common Core implementation strategy.

7. How does the DOE intend to support the field during the transition period?

The department is developing a multi-year statewide implementation plan that will be announced in mid-**September**. The goal of the plan is as follows: "Each Vermont educator will have an equitable opportunity over time to develop an understanding, appropriate to his or her educational responsibilities, of the Common Core State Standards and their application to curriculum, instruction, and assessment."

8. How are the ELA Standards organized?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (College and Career-Ready Standards at the beginning of each strand):

Grades K – 5 Strands--

- Reading is grade by grade into Literature and Informational Text, with additional Foundational Skills.
- Writing has standards for narrative, informative, and opinion/argument.
- Speaking and Listening
- Language Skills focus on grammar, usage, and mechanics; and vocabulary acquisition and use.

Grades 6 – 12 Strands --

- Reading 6 – 12 has standards for 6, 7, and 8, while the high school years are clustered into 9 – 10 and 11 – 12. The texts are Literary and Literary Nonfiction.
- Writing includes standards for narrative, information, and argument.
- Language Skills focus on grammar, usage, and mechanics; and vocabulary acquisition and use.

Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science:

- **Reading Standards 6 – 12** are aligned with the College and Career-readiness standards but are focused on informational, content-specific text.
- **Writing Standards 6 – 12** are aligned with the College and Career-readiness standards but are focused on informative/explanatory and arguments focused on “*discipline-specific content.*”

9. How are the Math Standards organized?

The Common Core math standards are divided into two categories. These categories are: Standards for Mathematical Practice which apply to all grade levels and promote mathematical thinking and Specific Content standards organized by mathematical domains and grade levels

Math Standards K – 5 are organized under the domains of

- Number – Counting and Cardinality, Operations and the Problems They Solve, Base Ten, Fractions
- Measurement and Data
- Geometry

Math Standards 6 – 8 is organized under the domains of

- Ratios and Proportional Relations
- The Number System
- Expressions and Equations
- Functions
- Geometry
- Statistics and Probability

Math Standards for High School is organized under Conceptual Categories of

- Number and Quantity
- Algebra and Functions
- Geometry
- Statistics and Probability
- Modeling

Appendix A contains drafts of model high school course descriptions based on the standards.

10. Do the Common Core Standards address the 21st Century skills?

While the Common Core Standards address skills such as “evaluating the accuracy and credibility of sources” and reference “online texts” in a number of places in ELA, many of what have been identified as 21st Century skills are found in *Vermont’s Framework of Standards* in the *Vital Results* and *Learning Opportunities*.

11. Are there future plans for developing Common Core Standards in other content areas?

In the recent announcement of the Race to the Top Assessment Competition, the USDE has indicated that there will be other grants for the next generation of assessment in Science, for example. Although no specific timelines are yet public for either the development of standards or assessments in other content areas, there are suggestions that this is a likely direction at some point.