



# Illinois State Board of Education

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## Common Core State Standards Q and A

*Q. What will the Common Core State Standards cost the taxpayer? Where will this money come from in our already struggling state?*

A. There is no additional cost associated with implementing the Common Core State Standards as the process uses existing resources. The state sets learning standards, which outline the content and skills students must master at each grade level in order to be on track for high school graduation and postsecondary success. School districts then implement curriculum to meet these standards. The implementation of the Common Core standards is included in curriculum costs already incurred by local school districts. No line item in Illinois's current education budget proposal, which is available at <http://www.isbe.net/budget/FY14/FY14-budget-request.pdf>, is devoted to implementing the Common Core. Over time, the standards may even result in cost savings for Illinois as the Common Core will allow states to share curriculum materials, items on state tests, best practices and experiences. Therefore, each state does not have to separately invest time and money in these often expensive undertakings. It is also important to note that Illinois' education budget has been reduced by nearly \$900 million since Fiscal Year 2009, and the state's contribution for education is ranked the lowest of all 50 states.

*Q. What if the Common Core State Standards do not work for our students? Will parents' voices be heard if they are unhappy with the way standards are being implemented?*

A. The standards establish *what* students need to learn, but do not tell teachers *how* to teach. Teachers will continue to create lesson plans and tailor instruction to the unique needs of the students in their classroom. The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who are in them, which is why the standards allow each teacher in each classroom to figure out what works best. Implementation decisions will remain local. Teachers and school leaders will determine how the standards are to be taught and will establish the curriculum, just as they currently do, allowing for continued flexibility and creativity.

*Q. Did the public have an opportunity to discuss the Common Core State Standards before they were implemented? How were teachers involved in the standards' development?*

A. Illinois was in the process of updating standards in English Language Arts and Math, which had not been updated since 1997, when our state joined an initiative spearheaded by governors and state education chiefs from across the nation to develop common standards. The Common Core State Standards drafting process relied on teachers and standards experts from across the country. Additionally, many state experts came together to create the most thoughtful and transparent process of standard setting. This was only made possible by many states working together. Illinoisans had the opportunity to provide feedback on the Common Core during two public comment periods, one in September 2009 and the other in March 2010. Teachers, parents, higher education representatives, and community members from Illinois offered their comments on the standards. Illinois contributed to development of the Common Core as well by having Illinois State Board of Education staff provide feedback on multiple drafts of the standards throughout the development process.

*Q. Why was there no legislative action for this massive change in education? Did the legislature know this was taking place?*

A. The Illinois State Board of Education initially reviewed the standards on June 24, 2010. The standards were also published in the *Illinois Register* on July 9, 2010, which initiate a 45-day public comment period. The Board adopted the rulemaking on Sept. 24, 2010, and the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, a bipartisan legislative oversight committee, issued a Certification of No Objection on Oct. 19, 2010. The rulemaking incorporating the standards took effect on Oct. 28, 2010 and was published in the *Illinois Register* on Nov. 12, 2010.

*Q. Does the implementation of the Common Core State Standards give the federal government control over our state's curriculum?*

A. The federal government was not involved in the development of the Common Core standards, and it will not govern the initiative. Implementing the Common Core has been a state-led and driven initiative from the beginning. States will voluntarily adopt the standards based on the timelines and context in their state. The Common Core does NOT amount to a national curriculum for our schools as the standards are not a curriculum. The standards are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others will decide how the standards are to be met.