

National Governors Association And State Education Chiefs Launch Common State Academic Standards

Robust standards drafted by teachers, content experts, and leading researchers are the cornerstone of a state led effort to turn our nation's schools around.

Suwanee, GA – June 2, 2010 – Today, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) released a set of state-led education standards, the [Common Core State Standards](#), at Peachtree Ridge High School in Suwanee, GA. The English-language arts and mathematics standards for grades K-12 were developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including content experts, states, teachers, school administrators and parents. The standards establish clear and consistent goals for learning that will prepare America's children for success in college and work.

Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue, Delaware Gov. Jack Markell, West Virginia State Superintendent of Schools Steve Paine, Florida Commissioner of Education Dr. Eric J. Smith, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Randi Weingarten, CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools Andres Alonso, and Vice President of the National Education Association (NEA) Lily Eskelsen have come out in support of the standards.

The event featured a panel discussion moderated by President of Alliance for Excellent Education and former West Virginia Gov. Bob Wise. Panelists were:

- Byron V. Garrett, CEO, Parent-Teacher Association;
- Michael Wotorson, Executive Director, Campaign for High School Equity;
- Steve Rohleder, Group Chief Executive, Health & Public Service Operating Group, Accenture;
- William Bradley Bryant, Member, Georgia State Board of Education; and
- Leah Luke, Wisconsin 2010 Teacher of the Year.

The release of the standards marks the conclusion of the development of the Common Core State Standards and signals the start of the adoption and implementation process by the states. The year-long process was led by governors and chief state school officers in 48 states, 2 territories and the District of Columbia. The final standards were informed by nearly 10,000 public comments and by standards in other top performing countries so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy.

“American competitiveness relies on an education system that can adequately prepare our youth for college and the workforce,” commented Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue. “When American students have the skills and knowledge needed in today’s jobs, our communities will be positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.”

“Strong schools are the surest path to our nation’s long-term economic success. America’s students are now competing with children around the globe for jobs and opportunities after graduation. We need to maintain a national focus to ensure our kids are ready to compete and ready to win. That’s why our nation’s governors committed to this effort to create a common set of high expectations for students

across the country. The Common Core State Standards reflect what can come from cooperation to improve student achievement,” said Delaware Gov. Jack Markell, who joined via satellite from Delaware.

“The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents have a roadmap for what they need to do to help them. Further, these standards provide appropriate benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live, and allow states to more effectively help all students to succeed,” commented Steve Paine, West Virginia State Superintendent of Schools. “I am excited to have a common framework from which to share best practices with fellow superintendents across the nation. With students, parents, and teachers all on the same page and working together for shared goals, we can ensure that students make progress each year and graduate from school prepared to succeed and build a strong future for themselves and the country.”

“Our best understanding of what works in our schools comes from the teachers who teach in our classrooms every day. That is why these standards establish what students need to learn, but do not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, the standards enable schools and teachers to decide how best to help students reach the standards,” said Florida Commissioner of Education Dr. Eric J. Smith. “We are entering the most critical phase of the movement for Common Core State Standards. It is now up to states to adopt the standards and carry on the hard work of the educators and community leaders that worked to develop them.”

These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school fully prepared for college and careers. The standards are:

- Aligned with college and work expectations;
- Clear, understandable and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- Evidence- and research-based.

In the coming months, each state will follow its own procedures and processes for adoption of the Common Core State Standards. The NGA Center and CCSSO recognize that meaningful and effective implementation of the Common Core State Standards is critical to achieving these goals. To that end, the two organizations are continuing to work closely with a range of partners on how to best support states and districts as they move from adoption to implementation.

Quotes from Supporters

“Common education standards are essential for producing the educated work force America needs to remain globally competitive. This voluntary state-lead effort will help ensure that all students can receive the college- and career-ready, world-class education they deserve, no matter where they live. I applaud the states’ efforts that got us here today and the work of NGA, CCSSO and Achieve in supporting this important achievement.”

- Craig Barrett, Former CEO and Chairman of the Board, Intel Corporation

“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

“This is an historic day for American public education and for our nation as we begin the journey to level the academic playing field for every student. State Boards of Education are ready to play an active role in this process and some have already started the progression of adoption. We are eager to move this agenda forward.”

- William Bradley Bryant, Georgia State Board of Education

“The common core standards finally make real the promise of American public education to expect the best of all our schoolchildren.”

- Michael Casserly, Executive Director, Council of the Great City Schools

“The K-12 Common Core State Standards represent a major advance in standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts. They are grounded in evidence about what it takes for high school graduates to be ready for college and careers and build on the finest state and international standards. Importantly, they provide a clear and focused progression of learning from kindergarten to graduation that will provide teachers, administrators, parents and students with the information they need for student success. Achieve encourages every state to adopt and fully implement the Common Core State Standards.”

- Michael Cohen, President, Achieve

“AASA is pleased to support the process for the creation of common core standards currently led by the NGA and the CCSSO. We clearly understand the need for common standards, voluntarily adopted by each state, if the United States is to remain competitive in the global education environment. We also support the underlying concept of higher, clearer, fairer standards and agree that they will contribute to improve the quality of instruction in our schools and the raising of student achievement levels.”

- Dan Domenech, Executive Director, AASA

“We believe that this initiative is a critical first step in our nation’s effort to provide every student with a comprehensive, content-rich and complete education. These standards have the potential to support teachers in achieving NEA’s purpose of preparing students preparing students to 'thrive in a democratic society and a diverse, changing world as knowledgeable, creative and engaged citizens and lifelong learners.’”

- Lily Eskelsen, Vice-President, National Education Association

“National PTA enthusiastically supports the adoption and implementation by all states of the Common Core State Standards, which were recently released in final form. The K-12 standards for math and English Language Arts are challenging and clear, and states that adopt them will be on their way to graduating more of their high school students ready for college and career. 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.”

- **Byron V. Garrett, CEO, National Parent-Teacher Association**

"With the states' release today of a set of clear and consistent academic standards, our nation is one step closer to supporting effective teaching in every classroom, charting a path to college and careers for all students, and developing the tools to help all children stay motivated and engaged in their own education. 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, Co-Chair, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

“The Common Core State Standards Initiative is an important step forward in ensuring that the United States remains competitive in the global economy. Career technical education (CTE) shares the Initiative’s goal that all students must be college and career ready. CTE programs that incorporate the Common Core Standards will ensure students have the academic and technical knowledge and skills to be successful in the 21st century workplace.”

- **Kimberly Green, Executive Director, National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium**

“Nearly a century ago, Andrew Carnegie said that educated citizens were the strength of American democracy. While that fact remains true today, our competitive 21st century world requires innovative educational strategies that will enable students to succeed in a global economy. Indeed, in an age overwhelmed by information, there is a genuine need to create a real and meaningful transformation of our education system that will help students learn how to organize information into knowledge—as well as protect the promise of social mobility for young people that lies at the heart of the American dream. I welcome the development of common standards as a necessary step in the process of reform and I salute the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers for leading the way.”

- **Vartan Gregorian, President, Carnegie Corporation of New York**

The Common Core Standards could presage a breakthrough in the dreary record of 8th-grade reading scores over the past 40 years. Based on sound principles from cognitive science, the new language-arts standards place a unique emphasis from the earliest grades on science, history, and the arts, so that students will gradually build the general knowledge they need to read and to comprehend. The standards state that they can only be properly implemented both within a grade and in moving from one grade to the next through a coherent, cumulative progression of knowledge -- not just a collection of readings. (An excellent illustration of such a progression is the example on “the human body.”) Also very welcome, in this final version is the emphasis on civic knowledge and on the seminal texts of the nation. These standards mark, then, a real advance on even the best of existing state language-arts standards. If they are indeed accompanied by a coherent curriculum that ensures students accumulate needed knowledge starting in earliest grades, they will form a platform on which we can finally address the literacy crisis in this country.

-**E.D. Hirsch**

“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

“Common standards ensure that every child across the country is getting the best possible education, no matter where a child lives or what their background is. The common standards will provide an accessible roadmap for schools, teachers, parents and students, with clear and realistic goals.”

- Gov. Roy Romer, Senior Advisor, The College Board

“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

“We at ACT offer our deep support for the Common Core State Standards Initiative and its goal to prepare all students for college and career. The standards are unique in that they are based on decades of sound empirical data on what students must know and be able to do to succeed after high school.”

- Cynthia B. Schmeiser, Education Division President and Chief Operating Officer, ACT

“If we use these common standards as the foundation for better schools, we can give all kids a robust curriculum taught by well-prepared, well-supported teachers who can help prepare them for success in college, life and careers.”

- Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers

“Today’s release of the Common Core Standards in math and English language arts marks the first step in realizing the goal of establishing consistent and aligned standards across the nation. We recognize that today’s release is only the beginning of the process to transform our schools and The National Association of State Boards of Education looks forward to assisting state boards as they move forward with implementation.”

- Brenda L. Welburn, CEO, National Association of State Boards of Education

“The National Center for Learning Disabilities is pleased to support the Common Core Standards. We applaud and appreciate the work of the NGA and CCSSO and the expectation that all students can achieve high standards and become college and/or career ready. We are prepared to support families, teachers, schools and states as they strive to help all students succeed.”

- James H. Wendorf, Executive Director, National Center for Learning Disabilities

“Now, perhaps more than ever before, high quality education serves as a vital pathway out of poverty, both in the U.S. and abroad. If our country is not just to compete, but also win in that global environment, we must continue to shake off the educational status quo and reinvigorate our schools and students with innovative ways of thinking, learning and doing. Put simply, the nation’s future depends upon our willingness today to create a new educational framework, one that raises academic expectations of all children and provides them the skills, tools and resources needed to succeed. The

broad adoption of common academic standards is integral to that framework and, thanks to the efforts of the Council of Chief State School Officers and National Governors Association, is increasingly closer to becoming a welcome reality.”

- **William S. White, CEO and President, C.S. Mott Foundation**

“Zip codes might be great for sorting mail, but they should not determine the quality of a child’s education or success in the future workforce,” said Bob Wise, president of the Alliance for Excellent Education and former governor of West Virginia. “With common standards and assessments, students, parents, and teachers will have a clear, consistent understanding of the skills necessary for students to succeed after high school and compete with peers across the state line and across the ocean.”

- **Gov. Bob Wise, President, Alliance for Excellent Education**

The Common Core mathematics standards succeed in being both mathematically coherent and grade level appropriate. Overall, they are the best standards that I have seen in the past twenty years. If we can design a professional development program of the same caliber to go with these standards, then our nation will be making a substantial first step towards educational excellence in mathematics.

- **Dr. Hung-Hsi Wu, Professor of Mathematics, University of California at Berkeley**

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To learn more about the **Common Core State Standards**, please visit www.corestandards.org.

*Founded in 1908, the **National Governors Association (NGA)** is the collective voice of the nation’s governors and one of Washington, D.C.’s most respected public policy organizations. Its members are the governors of the 50 states, three territories and two commonwealths. NGA provides governors and their senior staff members with services that range from representing states on Capitol Hill and before the Administration on key federal issues to developing and implementing innovative solutions to public policy challenges through the NGA Center for Best Practices. For more information, visit www.nga.org.*

***The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)** is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public www.ccsso.org.*