

National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)

THE PRACTICAL TEACHER

This Month's Topic:

Common Core State Standards – Overview (CCSS)

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are an effort by states to define a *common core* of knowledge and skills that students should develop in K-12 education, regardless of the state they live in, so they will graduate high school prepared for college or careers. The standards were released in 2010 and are divided into two categories: (1) K-12 standards, which address expectations for elementary through high school; and (2) College and career readiness standards, which address what students are expected to know when they graduate from high school. What's the CCSS all about? How does it relate to you as an educator, or to administrators and/or parents? How does it apply to students, especially those with disabilities? This issue of **NASET's Practical Teacher** (provided by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities) provides a resource to help you find answers to questions on the CCSS.

Overview of the CCSS

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- College and career readiness standards, which address what students are expected to know when they graduate from high school.

Why do we need common standards? | To date, states have *individually* decided what knowledge and skills students should have by the time they graduate from high school. Having common standards across the United States will help ensure that students are receiving a high-quality education consistently, from *school to school* and *state to state*. For military families, common standards can be a way to increase consistency of schooling as they relocate to new duty stations.

Who's in charge? | States are leading the CCSS initiative, which is being coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The federal government has not been involved in initiating or developing the CCSS.

How were the standards developed? | To write the standards, the NGA Center and CCSSO brought together content experts, teachers, researchers, and others. There were also two public comment periods on *drafts* of the standards. More than 10,000 comments were received.

<http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/process>

Where can I read the standards? | There's a central CCSS site you'll want to visit. You'll find the standards there—and a great deal more.

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

How many states have adopted the standards? | As of this writing, 45 states, 3 territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have formally adopted the Common Core State Standards. This gives the initiative critical mass in shaping the K-12 educational landscape.

<http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>

How will mastery of the CCSS be assessed? | The U.S. Department of Education has gotten involved in this aspect of the CCSS. It awarded grants to two consortia to develop assessment systems focused on the CCSS:

- the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), which is working on online exams; and
- the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a 23-state consortium, working on assessments in English and math.

Read about assessments being developed, at:

[http://www.k12center.org/rsc/pdf/Assessments for the Common Core Standards July 2011 Update.pdf](http://www.k12center.org/rsc/pdf/Assessments%20for%20the%20Common%20Core%20Standards%20July%202011%20Update.pdf)

There's also a pithy read on assessment in the Summer 2012 issue of *The Special Edge*. "Assessment and the Common Core" starts on page 3.

[http://www.calstat.org/publications/pdfs/Edge summer 2012 newsletter.pdf](http://www.calstat.org/publications/pdfs/Edge_summer_2012_newsletter.pdf)

What's Happening in Your State?

Has your state adopted the CCSS? | There's one quick way to find out. Visit the link below and see if your state is listed as an adopter.

<http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>

Where can you find out more about your state's efforts and progress? | The Council of Chief State School Officers is keeping track of this important information and serves as a hub for connecting with each individual state's efforts. The link below shows you a map of the U.S. Click on your state (if it's participating in the initiative) and go directly to home base—**your state's webpage on its CCSS activities**. You'll probably be amazed at how much guidance your state makes available on the CCSS.

[http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/The Common Core State Standards Initiative.html](http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/The%20Common%20Core%20State%20Standards%20Initiative.html)

How Do the Standards Apply to Students with Disabilities?

What do the *standards* say? | If the CCSS applies to all students in school, the standards also apply to students with disabilities. The standards themselves do recognize that implementation requires providing students with disabilities with a range of needed supports. In the document *Application to Students with Disabilities*, the standards indicate that instruction for students with disabilities must incorporate supports and accommodations, including:

- supports and related services designed to meet students' unique needs and enable their access to the general education curriculum;
- an IEP that includes annual goals aligned with and chosen to facilitate their attainment of grade-level academic standards; and

- teachers and specialized instructional support staff who are prepared and qualified to delivery high-quality, evidence-based, individualized instruction and support services.

Additional supports would be provided as needed, including:

- instructional strategies based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL); and
- assistive technology devices and services that enable access to the standards.

The *Application to Students with Disabilities* is available online at:

<http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-to-students-with-disabilities.pdf>

What are *others* saying? | The guidance available in the application is limited. How will this guidance be translated into action, as the implementation of the CCSS proceeds state by state? Here are several articles you may find enlightening.

Common Core Standards: Implications for students with disabilities.

This 2010 presentation by Martha Thurlow explores how students with disabilities are to be included in the CCSS, including discussions of instruction, accommodations, alternate assessments, and graduation exams. <https://ccsso.confex.com/ccsso/2010/webprogram/Presentation/Session1959/Thurlow%20-%20Common%20Core%20Standards%20Implications%20for%20Students%20with%20Disabilities.pdf>

CCSS: The promise and the peril for students with disabilities.

More insight from Martha Thurlow, who writes this article for the Summer 2012 edition of *The Special Edge*. http://www.calstat.org/publications/pdfs/Edge_summer_2012_newsletter.pdf

Six principles for principals to consider in implementing CCSS for students with disabilities.

The September/October 2012 issue of *Principal* features this succinct analysis by Margaret McLaughlin of the multiple challenges involved for implementing the CCSS with students who have disabilities, including assessments.

<http://www.naesp.org/principal-septemberoctober-2012-common-core/access-common-core-all-o>

Common Core Standards: What special educators need to know.

From the Council for Exceptional Children, this webpage looks at the impact of CCSS on special education, implications for assessment processes and results, and the significant challenges in implementing the common core of standards for students with disabilities.

http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=CEC_Today1&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=15269

Implications for students receiving special education services.

This brief reflects upon the opportunity that transitioning to core standards gives schools and administrators to improve their programs for all students, especially those with disabilities. Schools must address five key elements to support the achievement of students receiving special education services: ownership; high expectations; intervention systems; inclusion/collaborative teaching; and organization/professional development. From the International Center for Leadership in Education.

<http://www.leadered.com/pdf/Special%20Ed%20&%20CCSS%20white%20paper.pdf>

Resources Especially for Administrators

Spotlight on the CCSS: What do district administrators need to know?

This 4-pager reviews actions district administrators should consider taking now to prepare their schools for CCSS implementation.

<http://educationnorthwest.org/resource/1756>

For principals, tools to help you implement the CCSS.

NASSP is the National Association of Secondary School Principals. NASSP's landing page for the common core offers a range of resources for principals, including links to webinars, videos, and articles on implementing the

CCSS.

<http://www.nassp.org/KnowledgeCenter/TopicsofInterest/CommonCoreStateStandards.aspx>

Get the dialogue going with the IDEA Partnership's collection.

Need to engage multiple stakeholders in discussions of how to implement the CCSS and how to assess mastery toward them? Use the IDEA Partnership's dialogue guides, which are especially designed to help you engage deeply in the conversation and the work.

http://www.ideapartnership.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1522

So—how's implementation going? A survey toolkit.

How will states know how implementation of CCSS is playing out in classrooms? Here's a Common Core Survey Tool to help state and district leaders track the quality of implementation of the new standards.

<http://www.deliveryinstitute.org/publications/feedback-loops-common-core-state-standards-implementation>

Resources Especially for Educators

9 ways the common core will change classroom practice.

Naturally, teachers worry how the CCSS fits into existing state academic standards and—closer to home—the work they do in the classroom. This article sums up 9 shifts in practice that may occur for teachers.

<http://www.hepg.org/hel/printarticle/543>

Educator's guide to standards insight: Common Core Standards unpacked.

Here's a good roadmap to finding the elements in the CCSS that apply to you as an educator.

<http://www.cesa7.org/rcc/documents/TheEducatorsGuide.pdf>

From the page to the classroom.

Check out the CCSS professional development videos (and accompanying info) created by the Council of Great City Schools. The videos provide the background of the CCSS and highlight the three shifts that are inherent in these standards.

<http://www.commoncoreworks.org/Page/344>

Videos | Common core lessons for teachers.

There are over 100 free videos related to Common Core instruction available on the *Teaching Channel*. The videos provide lesson ideas, an overview of the English Language Arts and Math standards, and demonstrations of teaching practices. All you need to do is register—for free.

https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos?categories=topics_common-core

Share my lesson... by teachers, for teachers.

Share My Lesson is a place where educators can come together to create and share their teaching resources.

Developed by teachers for teachers, this free platform has a significant resource bank for the CCSS, covering all aspects of the standards, from advice and guides to help with dedicated resources that support the standards.

<http://www.sharemylesson.com/article.aspx?storyCode=50000148>

Teaching to the Common Core Standards.

From *EdTech Digest*, this blog will connect teachers with educational technology already available to help them address the common core in their classrooms, including lesson plans.

<http://edtechdigest.wordpress.com/2011/08/17/teaching-to-the-common-core-standards/>

Implications for career technical educators.

For a crash course in how the common core and CTE go together, have a look at *Common Core State Standards and Career Technical Education: Bridging the Divide Between College and Career Readiness*. The document provides strategies for infusing CCSS into CTE.

<http://www.achieve.org/files/CCSS-CTE-BridgingtheDivide.pdf>

Resources Especially for Families

Parents' guide to school success.

From the National PTA, this guide for parents was developed in response to the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematic. Available in English and Spanish.

<http://www.pta.org/4446.htm>

10 things parents should know about the CCSS.

Available in both English and Spanish, from Colorín Colorado.

http://www.colorincolorado.org/educators/common_core/parents/

Spotlight on the CCSS – What do parents need to know?

This tidy 4-page summary from Education Northwest is available in both English and Spanish.

<http://educationnorthwest.org/resource/1547>

3-minute videos in English and Spanish and Parent Roadmaps.

Sweet! Want a crash intro to the CCSS in math and in English—and in Spanish or English? Visit the Council of Great City Schools's Common Core resources.

<http://www.commoncoreworks.org/site/default.aspx?PageID=239>

A parent's guide to the Common Core Standards.

From Education.com.

<http://www.education.com/magazine/article/parents-guide-to-common-core-standards/>