

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why change to Common Core State Standards? *The CCSS represent a pathway to ensure our students are "college- and career-ready" with the skills and knowledge to compete in the emerging global marketplace.*

Are these national standards? *No. The Common Core State Standards are a state-led effort to establish consistent and clear education standards for English language arts and mathematics. States may voluntarily adopt the standards based on the timelines and context of their state.*

Parents, teachers, school administrators and experts from across the country together with state leaders, through their membership in the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) led the effort to develop a common core of state standards. In addition, CCSS and the NGA Center provided public comment periods for the public to submit feedback on the draft standards documents. These comments were then incorporated into the final standards document.

What are the College and Career Readiness anchor standards? *The College and Career Readiness Standards define the skills and competencies graduating high school students need in order to be competitive in a global market.*

How will the Common Core Standards affect DOK? *DOK is an assessment alignment tool used to align the Nevada Standards with the Nevada State Assessments (CRTs and HSPEs). Eventually, the Common Core State Standards will have its own assessment program developed by the SMARTER Balanced Consortium. At this time, it is unclear which assessment alignment tool will be used to develop test items based on CCSS.*

What about special education students and English language learners? *States, districts, and schools will continue to provide structures and supports for students with diverse needs. More information on this topic will be shared by the Student Support Services Division.*

Will state assessments between 2011-2014 include the CCSS? What will assessments look like? Will the interim assessments, CRTs, and High School Proficiency Exams change? *In ELA, Nevada State assessments will continue as they "are" until 2014. Assessment items based on the CCSS may be field-tested on CRTs and HSPEs between 2011-2014, but will not count toward AYP. At this time, it is unknown what the assessments will "look like" in 2014-2015. We know that some part of the assessment will include online or other technology-based parts. The SMARTER Balanced Consortium is responsible for developing assessments based on the CCSS.*

Will assessments be differentiated for subgroups? *The SMARTER Balanced Consortium is responsible for developing assessments based on the CCSS. At this time, it is unclear how students with diverse learning needs will be assessed.*

How do the Common Core State Standards affect HS English teachers during 2011-2012? Can HS teachers use the CCSS during 2011-2012? What can HS English teachers do during 2011-2012 to prepare for the Common Core State Standards in 2012-2013? *The initial implementation of the CCSS will occur in ELA for grades K-8 during the 2011-2012 school year. However, professional development based on the CCSS will begin in spring 2011 for teachers in grades K-12. High school teachers are encouraged to review the Translation Guide for grades 9-12 available at the NDE website at <https://bighorn.doe.nv.gov/sites/commoncore/default.aspx> as well as the Common Core State Standards document and appendices available at www.commoncore.org. High school teachers should not lose sight of the fact that current high school students will continue to take the HSPE in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science until 2014-2015.*

What about professional development support for teachers? When will professional development be available to teachers? How does the site liaison work? Will there be on-going professional support for school sites, administrators, and teachers? *Professional development for ELA teachers in grades K-12 will begin in spring 2011. Principals are asked to select an ELA teacher to become the site liaison for CCSS. The site liaison will participate in 45 hours of professional development between May and August 2011. The site liaison will provide assistance to ELA teachers at his/her school site regarding implementation of the CCSS as well as content-specific professional development throughout the 2011-2012 school year. In addition, CPD will offer content-specific professional development related to instruction using the CCSS.*

How do the Common Core State Standards affect RTI? Response to Instruction is an on-going effort that is not directly affected by the CCSS. The structures and supports currently in place must continue to ensure that diverse learners receive the support they need to learn while attaining success at the rigorous level demanded by the CCSS. Schools must ensure that structures and supports for response to instruction are in place as the District implements CCSS. Additional information regarding CCSS and RTI will come from Student Support Services Division.

Will professional development on the CCSS also support existing programs (e.g., Read 180)? *Information, including professional development support, regarding CCSS and District-supported programs for students with diverse needs will come from Student Support Services Division.*

How will separating the 9-12 grade band to 9-10 and 11-12 effect HS English classes and course sequences? *Unknown at this time.*

What are text exemplars? How are textbooks affected by Common Core State Standards? *Text exemplars illustrate the complexity, quality, and range of student reading in grades 6-12. They are representative of topics and genres within and across grade levels. Texts need to be selected around topics or themes that generate knowledge and allow students to study those topics or themes in depth. In the CCSS, text complexity is defined by three factors: qualitative evaluation of the text, quantitative evaluation of the text, and matching reader to text and task. The range of text types for grades 6-12 includes literature (e.g., stories, drama, poetry) and informational text (e.g., literary non-fiction, exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art of literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts).*

Many of the titles identified as text exemplars are anthologized in the adopted literature textbooks for middle school and high school. In addition, many of the texts are included in the public domain on the Internet. Teachers may need to “share” textbooks across grade levels in order to find the text exemplars related to their individual grade levels until the next textbook adoption for ELA grades 6-12 which is likely to occur in 2016.

How will student data be compared among districts and states? *At this time, we do not know how student data will be compared among districts and states. The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) is one of two multi-state consortia awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education to develop an assessment system based on the CCSS. As information regarding assessment and results reporting becomes available, it will be shared across the State.*

How will the CCSS impact area-mandated practices such as Tier 3 vocabulary? *These are exciting times. At this time, it is unknown how area practices will be affected by the CCSS.*

What changes can be expected in grading and reporting practices? *At this time, it is unknown what changes can be expected in grading practices. The K-5 Standards-Based Report Card will be revised to reflect the CCSS.*

How will the CCSS affect other content areas? How will those content areas be accountable? *At this time, it is unknown. There is a section within the CCSS titled “Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects” designed to supplement the content standards in those areas. Teachers in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects may use their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields.*

What is the funding plan? *Because states may voluntarily adopt the standards based on the timelines and context of their state, there is no specific funding available. Students may compete for federal grant funding (e.g., Race for the Top) to offset the cost of implementation. The Nevada Legislature approved adoption of the CCSS. Funding to implement the CCSS will come from district and regional professional development program budgets.*