



## **Fast Facts about Ohio & the Common Core**

**What are standards?** Academic standards, also called learning standards, guide educators about what students should know and be able to do as they progress through school. They are clear goals for student learning. Standards do not dictate curriculum (e.g., textbooks and reading lists) or prescribe a method of instruction. Local communities make those decisions. By law, for more than a decade, Ohio has academic standards in place in many subjects for grades K-12.<sup>1</sup>

**Who sets learning standards in Ohio?** The State Board of Education.<sup>2</sup> The board includes eleven elected members and eight appointed ones.

**What are the Common Core State Standards?** The Common Core State Standards are what Ohio is using for English language arts and math for the state's New Learning Standards. The Common Core standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter credit-bearing entry courses in two or four year college programs or enter the workforce. The standards are clear and concise to ensure that parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of the expectations in reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics in school.<sup>3</sup>

**Who developed the Common Core?** The Common Core is a states-led effort, organized and led jointly by the National Governors Association (NGA), which represents all state governors, and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CSCCO), which represents all state superintendents of education.<sup>4</sup>

The NGA and CCSSO brought together teachers, content experts, and researchers to develop the Common Core. The draft K-12 standards were released in March 2010 for public comment and standards were finalized in June 2010.<sup>5</sup>

**What is the purpose of the Common Core?** The Common Core standards seek to define the knowledge and skills that students should have to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing, academic college courses and in workforce training programs. They are internationally benchmarked to ensure that all of America's students are prepared to succeed in a global society.<sup>6</sup>

**Is the Common Core curriculum?** No standards are curricula. They are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents, and school boards decide how the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.<sup>7</sup> Local school boards will adopt text books and other instructional materials

**Who makes curriculum choices in Ohio?** The responsibility of prescribing curriculum lies with local boards of education.<sup>8</sup> That was the case before Ohio adopted its current standards and will be the case under the Common Core.

**Are the Common Core standards superior to the ones they replace?** Yes, according to the 2010 *State of State Standards* study, conducted by the Fordham Institute, the Common Core standards in math and English language arts are superior to the state's current standards in both rigor and content & clarity and specificity.<sup>9</sup>

**When did Ohio adopt the Common Core and when will it go into effect?** The State Board of Education adopted the Common Core in June 2010. The motion to adopt the Common Core in math and English language arts was passed unanimously.<sup>10</sup> The Common Core will be fully implemented starting in 2014-15, though many districts have already begun implementing them.

**Can Ohio leave the Common Core?** Yes, participation in the Common Core is voluntary.

**What is the federal government's role in the Common Core?** The federal government has no formal role in the Common Core. The U.S. Department of Education provided support for states to implement the Common Core through the Race To The Top competitive grant program. Ohio received \$400 million in federal funds, half of which went to the Ohio Department of Education and the other half to local school districts.<sup>11</sup> Also, through the Race To The Top program, the two Common Core testing consortia received \$186 million each to develop assessments aligned to the Common Core.<sup>12</sup>

**What is PARCC?** The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a consortium of 22 states plus the U.S. Virgin Islands working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math.<sup>13</sup>

**What is the role of Ohio in the PARCC consortium?** Ohio is a member of the PARCC governing board, with the State Superintendent as representative.<sup>14</sup> He has voting rights on key decisions about the assessments.

**What are the implementation challenges to come?** Challenges are common to any change in standards, including:

- Adequate teacher preparation for the new standards;
- Adequate technical infrastructure for the aligned assessments, to be administered online;
- Political backlash from those unwilling or afraid of change; and
- Informing the public and parents about the changes.

**Who supports the Common Core?** Supporters include members of the business community, teachers and their unions, school leaders, researchers, and political leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> Ohio Revised Code §3301.079(A)

<sup>2</sup> Ohio Revised Code §3301.07(3)(a) and §3331.079(A)(1)

<sup>3</sup> Common Core State Standards Initiative, "Frequently Asked Questions," <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>

<sup>4</sup> The Council of Chief State School Officers, "The Common Core State Standards Initiative," [http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/The\\_Common\\_Core\\_State\\_Standards\\_Initiative.html](http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/The_Common_Core_State_Standards_Initiative.html).

<sup>5</sup> Common Core State Standards Initiative, "Process," <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/process> and

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<sup>6</sup> National Governors Association, Center for Best Practices, “Common Core State Standards,” <http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-issues/page-edu-issues/col2-content/main-content-list/common-core-state-standards.html>

<sup>7</sup> The Common Core State Standards, “Myth versus Fact,” <http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CoreFacts.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Ohio Revised Code §3313.60(A)

<sup>9</sup> Sheila Byrd Carmichael, et al. *The State of State Standards* (Washington DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2010): 255-260.

<sup>10</sup> Ohio Department of Education, “State Board Meetings for 2010 – June 7-8,” <http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=576&ContentID=78915&Content=117945>.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Education, *Ohio: Application for Phase 2 Funding Under Race To The Top*, CFDA Number 84.395A (June 2010), <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase2-applications/ohio.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Education, “Race To The Top Assessment Program,” <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/awards.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, “About PARCC,” <http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc>

<sup>14</sup> Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, “Governing Board,” <http://www.parcconline.org/governing-board>.