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Common Core standards better than English standards in 37 states, math standards in 39 states, Fordham finds

For several states, it's "too close to call." California, Indiana and the D.C. have English standards that are clearly superior to the Common Core's. No state has clearly superior standards in mathematics.

WASHINGTON – The K-12 academic standards in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics produced last month by the Common Core State Standards Initiative are clearer and more rigorous than those currently in use in three-quarters of the states, reports the Thomas B. Fordham Institute on the basis of a comparison released today. Specifically, the Common Core standards are stronger than today's ELA standards in 37 states and today's math standards in 39 states. In 33 of those states, the Common Core bests *both* ELA and math standards.

Yet California, Indiana and the District of Columbia have ELA standards that are clearly superior to those of the Common Core. And the ELA standards of 11 states (and the math standards of 11 states plus D.C.) are "too close to call," meaning they're in the same league as the Common Core standards.

"The rigor and subject-matter content of the Common Core standards surpass most states' standards in these subjects, though there are some intriguing exceptions," said Chester E. Finn, Jr., president of the Fordham Institute. "As state officials decide whether to replace their present standards with the Common Core, we hope that they will consider this analysis. At the same time," Finn added, "they need to determine whether they have the capacity and will to implement whatever standards their states embrace. Rigorous standards are important, but they're only the beginning."

In *The State of State Standards – and the Common Core – in 2010*, content experts reviewed the ELA and math standards of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as the Common Core standards; each was awarded a letter grade. This is the latest in a series of Fordham evaluations of state standards going back to 1997.

Reviewers gave the Common Core math standards the grade of A-minus and the Common Core ELA standards a B-plus. Here's how the states' standards compare:

| <u>English language arts</u> | <u>Mathematics</u> |
|--|---|
| CLEARLY SUPERIOR TO THE COMMON CORE California A District of Columbia A Indiana A | CLEARLY SUPERIOR TO THE COMMON CORE -None- |
| TOO CLOSE TO CALL Massachusetts A- Tennessee A- Texas A- Common Core B+ Colorado B+ Georgia B+ Louisiana B+ | TOO CLOSE TO CALL California A District of Columbia A Florida A Indiana A Washington A Common Core A- Georgia A- |

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|--|--|
| <p>Oklahoma B+</p> <p>Virginia B+</p> <p>Alabama B</p> <p>Arizona B</p> <p>Florida B</p> | <p>Michigan A-</p> <p>Utah A-</p> <p>Alabama B+</p> <p>Massachusetts B+</p> <p>Oklahoma B+</p> <p>Oregon B+</p> |
| <p>CLEARLY INFERIOR TO THE COMMON CORE</p> <p>Hawaii C</p> <p>Idaho C</p> <p>Kansas C</p> <p>Maine C</p> <p>Maryland C</p> <p>Minnesota C</p> <p>Nevada C</p> <p>New Hampshire C</p> <p>New Jersey C</p> <p>New Mexico C</p> <p>New York C</p> <p>Ohio C</p> <p>Oregon C</p> <p>South Dakota C</p> <p>Utah C</p> <p>Washington C</p> <p>Arkansas D</p> <p>Connecticut D</p> <p>Illinois D</p> <p>Kentucky D</p> <p>Michigan D</p> <p>Mississippi D</p> <p>Missouri D</p> <p>North Carolina D</p> <p>North Dakota D</p> <p>Pennsylvania D</p> <p>Rhode Island D</p> <p>South Carolina D</p> <p>Vermont D</p> <p>West Virginia D</p> <p>Wisconsin D</p> <p>Wyoming D</p> <p>Alaska F</p> <p>Delaware F</p> <p>Iowa F</p> <p>Montana F</p> <p>Nebraska F</p> | <p>CLEARLY INFERIOR TO THE COMMON CORE</p> <p>Arizona B</p> <p>Delaware B</p> <p>Idaho B</p> <p>Minnesota B</p> <p>New York B</p> <p>West Virginia B</p> <p>Arkansas C</p> <p>Colorado C</p> <p>Hawaii C</p> <p>Iowa C</p> <p>Louisiana C</p> <p>Maine C</p> <p>Mississippi C</p> <p>Nebraska C</p> <p>Nevada C</p> <p>New Jersey C</p> <p>New Mexico C</p> <p>North Dakota C</p> <p>Ohio C</p> <p>South Carolina C</p> <p>South Dakota C</p> <p>Tennessee C</p> <p>Texas C</p> <p>Virginia C</p> <p>Alaska D</p> <p>Connecticut D</p> <p>Illinois D</p> <p>Kentucky D</p> <p>Maryland D</p> <p>Missouri D</p> <p>New Hampshire D</p> <p>North Carolina D</p> <p>Rhode Island D</p> <p>Kansas F</p> <p>Montana F</p> <p>Pennsylvania F</p> <p>Vermont F</p> <p>Wisconsin F</p> <p>Wyoming F</p> |

At press time, about half the states had already adopted the Common Core standards; this analysis reviewed the standards that were in place before such adoptions.

Reviews of ELA standards were led by Sheila Byrd Carmichael, former deputy executive director of the California Academic Standards Commission and founding director of the American Diploma Project. Math reviews were led by W. Stephen Wilson, professor of mathematics at Johns Hopkins University and former Advisor for Mathematics in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education.

“The most compelling argument for national standards is *higher* standards,” said Michael J. Petrilli, Vice President for National Programs and Policy at the Fordham Institute. “And that’s exactly what the ‘Common Core’ standards would mean for the vast majority of states and the children in their schools.”

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To find out more about this study and the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, please visit www.edexcellence.net.

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