

Common Core State Standard: Frequently Asked Questions

How were the standards developed?

Development of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was driven by the states, not the federal government.

- The Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and National Governor’s Association (NGA) led the initiative to provide consistency among states for mobile students (especially military families) and for a more consistent definition on college and career readiness. It is not part of No Child Left Behind and adoption of standards by the states is in no way mandatory.
- The CCSS were developed and voluntarily adopted by forty-five states, including the District of Columbia, four territories and the Department of Defense.
- The Florida State Board of Education adopted the Common Core in July of 2010.
- By focusing on the essential knowledge and skills for success in life, the CCSS address two major issues in the U.S., the growing number of college students in need of remedial courses and the growing skills gap in our workforce.

The CCSS were developed by educators and education experts from across the nation.

- Florida educators were involved in the writing of the CCSS.
- The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) reviewed and provided feedback prior to the release of the final set of standards.
- FDOE developed a state committee to review and recommend supplemental standards to meet Florida’s specific math and ELA requirements. The committee found no benefit to include additional standards and felt the Common Core State Standards were strong.
- The CCSS were built on international benchmarks and enable our students to compete with peers on both national and international levels.

Academic standards and curriculum/instruction are not identical.

- Academic standards are the “what” – the knowledge and skills – students are required to learn at each grade level. Curriculum and instruction are the “how” – the materials and delivery methods –students are taught.
- The CCSS do not require that educators teach with specific materials or methods.
 - Some materials, including novels, have been recommended as potential instructional materials. However, required ELA materials almost exclusively pertain to America’s founding documents, foundational American literature, Shakespeare and international literature.
 - Math requirements include mastery of foundational skills – such as fractions, decimals, multiplication – but also push for more application of math concepts and procedures for real-world practices.

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Will privacy laws change with the implementation of CCSS?

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), student information cannot be released without prior written consent from a parent or legal guardian.

- The only disclosure exceptions pertain to health and safety emergencies, school transfers, referral to state and local authorities for compliance, or release to research organizations.
- Schools are required to notify parents annually of their rights under FERPA, but notification methods are left up to local leaders.
- Nothing related to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards will result in any changes to sharing private student information and data.

As part of broader education reform efforts, states have adopted data systems that allow educators and parents to measure the progress of student achievement and growth from year to year.

- These data systems are not a result of CCSS, but rather a more than decade long effort to ensure students are learning a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time and that taxpayers are seeing a return on their enormous investment in education.
- The federal government has contributed funding for state data systems going back to 2006, as part of bringing accountability to schools, and states have been funding their own data systems for much longer than that.
- The CCSS will not erode students' privacy rights or allow the federal government to inappropriately "track" students, as some pundits have declared.

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Will student assessments change as a result of the CCSS?

Under CCSS, portions of the FCAT will be replaced by a new assessment that aligns with the CCSS.

- There are two state consortiums developing assessments aligned with the CCSS – Smarter Balance (SBAC) and the Partnership for Assessment for Readiness of College and Career (PARCC).
- Florida belongs to the PARCC consortia. Florida serves as the fiscal agent for and is a governing state of PARCC, which gives Florida an enormous responsibility and role in developing the assessments of CCSS.
- There is consensus that PARCC better aligns with the accountability standards and direction of Florida's education system. These assessments will be technology driven and require a greater level of thinking to be successful.
- As the assessments continue to develop, FDOE and districts are working to ensure schools have the technology to assess and instruct students under the CCSS as well as understand the changes in assessment time and structure.
- FDOE is committed to PARCC, but will determine in June 2013 which assessment will best meet Florida's needs. District and post-secondary leadership have been involved in the discussions pertaining to the CCSS assessment and EOCs.

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