

EDUCATION WEEK

## SPOTLIGHT

## On Implementing Common Standards

**Editor's Note:** In order to implement the Common Core State Standards, educators need instructional materials and assessments. But not all states are moving at the same pace, and some districts are finding common-core resources in short supply. This Spotlight highlights the curriculum, professional development, and online resources available to help districts prepare for the common core.

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## Educators in Search of Common-Core Resources

By Catherine Gewertz

**A**s states and districts begin the work of turning common academic standards into curriculum and instruction, educators searching for teaching resources are often finding that process frustrating and fruitless. Teachers and curriculum developers who are trying to craft road maps that reflect the Common Core State Standards can

find themselves in a dispiriting bind: Their current materials fall short, and there is a dearth of good new ones to fill the void.

"Teachers are struggling, and very few people are helping. Almost nothing is available for them to use," said Aaron Grossman, a former 5th and 6th grade teacher in Nevada's Washoe County district who now works at the district office writing curriculum.

Many school leaders are finding a rough road as well.

Greg Netzer, the principal of Van Horn High School in Independence, Mo., said he hasn't heard much from his district about new curriculum. Teachers at his school have banded together to search for material to inform course development and meet weekly to discuss and share what they've found.

"There seems to be very little out there, or it's just not in places we can find it," Mr. Netzer said. "To say we are prepared for common core would be a misconception."

Such frustrations are widespread. A report last fall by the Washington-based Center on Education Policy found school districts divided about how much curriculum change was truly required and reluctant to move forward with common-standards implementation, in part because of inadequate guidance from their states. In an *Education Week* webinar on the common standards last summer, the question most frequently asked by the 1,600 participants was where to find instructional resources for the new standards, which cover K-12 English/language arts and mathematics and have been adopted by all but four states.

Ironically, educators' frustrations take shape during an unprecedented buzz of activity to build knowledge about the standards and prepare resources for them. States and districts are bringing educators together to discuss the fundamental shifts demanded by the standards, which were unveiled in 2010. Advocacy groups and architects of the standards are holding workshops and posting documents and videos on the Web to illustrate new ways of thinking about and teaching what many now call simply "the core."

But those messages have yet to reach everyone, and the resources and discussions taking shape online can be tough to locate.

Not everyone supports the new standards, however. And some educators who don't are quite content with the complications of the current landscape.

"People at my school are looking for new stuff, but I just sit in those meetings and nod. I'm not getting involved," said a Colorado English/language arts teacher who asked that her name be withheld to avoid sparking the ire of her school's leaders. "As far as I'm concerned, it's better if we just keep doing what

we know works, instead of jumping at every new thing just because someone decides it should work."

### Assembling Resources

The states that have adopted the standards—and districts in those states—have been responding to the need for knowledge and resources in a variety of ways. Ohio's model curriculum for the standards is drawing attention. Sample instructional units and other resources on New York state's [engageny.org](http://engageny.org) website have been widely used. Officials from the largest school districts have been meeting, through the Council of the Great City Schools, to help one another craft curricula.

Educators from across state lines are flocking to resources that Kansas created to help teachers evaluate the complexity of texts. Through "summer academies" that convened teachers from across the state, the Kansas education department began to build a storehouse of model lesson plans and other resources forged by its own teachers.

"We wanted to carve out a space for teachers to say what they've created or found useful," said Matt Copeland, an English/language arts and literacy consultant to the state education department. "It's wonderful. But it can be a double-edged sword, because teachers can be overwhelmed with information."

Sharing news of its resources with a national organization of state English/language arts coordinators generated a "buzz" about the site, Mr. Copeland said, and Kansas watched other states pick up and build on its work. "We saw what a great opportunity for state collaboration it was," he said.

Louisiana, one of the states that made use of Kansas' text-complexity work, teamed up with Kansas last month for a webinar on that topic hosted by the Council of Chief State School Officers, which helped spearhead the common-core initiative with the National Governors Association. Within three weeks, it had been viewed by 2,200 people, according to the CCSSO.

Subject-matter groups have been creating resources for teachers. The National Council of Teachers of English, which has taken a neutral stance on the new standards, has issued a series of four books that guide teachers in lesson planning for the standards and highlight stories of how teachers thought through their own approaches. The organization has also hosted webinars and offers expert members as consultants to schools.

The NCTE has also joined with the International Reading Association, the two national teachers' unions, and other groups to form a coalition that will provide policymakers and practitioners with the "informed, independent,



Teachers want something right away, but I say, 'Look, this is going to take some time. We have to stay the course.' ... Lots of folks are working on this."

MIKE SHAUGHNESSY

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

and, when possible, collaborative perspectives” of teachers on the transition to the new standards, said Barbara Cambridge, the director of the NCTE’s Washington office.

The major mathematics education groups formed the Math Common Core Coalition, which is building resources into its website, including guidance on choosing or writing math curricula and a series of explanatory videos featuring lead writers of the math standards.

The coalition’s website also includes widely used links to two other projects by architects of the math standards: the Illustrative Mathematics Project, which offers examples of tasks for each standard in each domain and grade level, and draft math “progressions,” which describe how knowledge builds through the grades in each topic.

### A Valuable Gap

Even as such resources can help educators shape curriculum, they can’t address the need some feel to have lesson plans available immediately, said Mike Shaughnessy, the president of the Reston, Va.-based National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, one of the Math Common Core Coalition members.

“Teachers want something right away, but I say, ‘Look, this is going to take some time. We have to stay the course.’ Lots of folks are working on this, and there will be some good things,” he said. “But it will take some time.”

The schism between demand and supply, however frustrating, is productive, said Michael D. Casserly, the executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, a Washington group that represents the nation’s largest school districts.

“This period has value, even though it appears chaotic, because it forces people to get into the guts of the standards and what they mean,” he said. “The weight of the lift involved here is so substantial that it’s not realistic to think there are going to be extensive materials out there just yet.”

Some of the most abundant and easiest-to-find resources for the common standards come from the major educational publishers.

McGraw-Hill School Education, for instance, has produced supplements that teachers can use with their existing reading programs to meet the common standards, said Dan Caton, the division’s president. It is also writing new reading programs based on the standards, he said.

On the math side, McGraw-Hill has revised such programs as Everyday Math and also published new ones based on the standards, such as the elementary-level My Math, Mr. Caton said. In addition, the company has created explanatory materials that are intended to “unpack and demystify” the standards for teachers.

Education companies have been dogged by skepticism about how truly their materials embody the common standards, however. Many issued statements within a month or two of the standards’ final release, claiming their materials were “aligned” to or “compliant” with the common core.

One teacher told *Education Week* that the publisher of his district’s basal-reader program sent information to the district explaining how each lesson in the program reflected the standards. But when he and a colleague studied and compared them, the two concluded that “what we had on our hands was something entirely different, that it wasn’t just a matter of rejiggering things.”

The teacher asked that he and the publisher not be named to avoid damaging his district’s relations with the publisher.

Mr. Caton said McGraw-Hill has been careful to make distinctions between materials that were created to bridge gaps between existing resources and the common core and those that were “built from the ground up” to reflect the standards.

### Lead Writers Expand Role

The chief writers of the common standards are playing an expanding role, meanwhile, in building the storehouse of help for the standards. One, William McCallum, a University of Arizona math professor, is leading the Illustrative Mathematics Project and sharing its progress through his blog. Another math writer, Jason Zimba, is co-leading work on the draft progressions.

Mr. Zimba and two of the lead English/language arts standards writers, David Coleman and Susan Pimentel, launched a new website last month, [achievethecore.org](http://achievethecore.org), through the New York City-based nonprofit they founded, Student Achievement Partners, that will serve as a repository of sparingly chosen free resources. (See *Education Week*, Feb. 8, 2012)

Among the website’s starting stock of tools are guides to “close reading” and creating text-dependent questions—both key emphases in the new standards—and a delineation of the core areas of math focus in each grade. Mr. Coleman said Student Achievement Partners will work with teachers across the country to develop and post additional resources.

The Council of Chief State School Officers, too, has drafted a list of resources for states that it considers useful in the transition to the common standards.

It includes explanatory materials about the standards, such as guides for parents, implementation workbooks for state policymakers, and resources that bear directly on teaching, such as instructional tools being created by math and literacy “design collaboratives” and tried in eight states, with funding from the

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (The Gates Foundation also helps underwrite coverage of business and innovation in *Education Week*.)

“We’re trying to share high-quality resources as widely as possible,” said Chris Minnich, the interim director of the CCSO’s standards, assessment, and accountability initiative. The organization won’t be crafting instructional materials, said Margaret Millar, who co-leads the group’s common-standards work, preferring instead to focus on being a convener of state officials, teachers, principals’ groups, and professional-development groups for those purposes.

The two groups of states that are designing tests for the new standards are also working on instructional resources, but few are complete. The Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or PARCC, has produced content frameworks that could guide teachers and curriculum developers. It plans an online resource center that will hold an array of tools, such as model instructional units and released assessment tasks.

The other state test-design group, the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, is working on its own version of a digital library, including written and videotaped instructional exemplars and training to help teachers understand and use formative-assessment techniques.

Later this year, the Council of the Great City Schools plans to release guides to help teachers “scaffold” the standards for English-learners and use response-to-intervention techniques in teaching the standards, Mr. Casserly said.

Much of the push to produce common-core resources is—and should be—about changing teaching, said Barbara A. Kapinus, a senior policy analyst at the National Education Association.

“Many conversations about ‘creating resources’ are really about professional development,” she said. “What we need is not a bunch of lesson plans online. It’s not a simple matter of step A, step B, then step C.

“Teachers really have to monitor kids’ progress and understand the development of their thinking,” Ms. Kapinus said. “It’s a complex array of skills, not just ‘finding the main idea.’ Many teachers have not been teaching kids to do the things that these standards require, so they don’t know how. What we need is really responsive teaching, and support for that.”

*Coverage of “deeper learning” that will prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world is supported in part by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, at [www.hewlett.org](http://www.hewlett.org).*

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# Higher Ed. Gets Voting Rights on Assessments

By Catherine Gewertz  
*Alexandria, Va*

A group of states that is designing tests for the common academic standards has taken a key step to ensure that the assessments reflect students' readiness for college-level work: It gave top higher education officials from member states voting power on test-design questions that are closest to the heart of the college-readiness question.

At its quarterly meeting on April 3, the governing board of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or PARCC, voted unanimously to give members of its advisory committee on college readiness voting power on four issues: how to describe the expected performance levels on the tests, who will set the cutoff scores for the tests, what evidence will be used to decide the cutoff scores, and, crucially, what the cutoff scores will be.

The move puts the highest-ranking officials from one college or university system in most of PARCC's 24 member states at the voting table, alongside its governing board—the K-12 schools chiefs from each member state—when it comes to the most pivotal questions about crafting tests that reflect college readiness.

Richard M. Freeland, the commissioner of higher education in Massachusetts and co-chairman of PARCC's college-readiness advisory committee, told the governing board that getting an active voice in the test-shaping process was something “we enthusiastically endorse and are happy to put our energy behind.”

The consortium is “taking a huge step in operationalizing” a definition of college readiness that reflects higher education's expectations, Mitchell D. Chester, the commissioner of K-12 education in Massachusetts and the chairman of PARCC's governing board, told the meeting participants.

## Support Pivotal

PARCC's decision illustrates the importance that states are placing on higher

## Key issues

One of the two state consortia designing assessments for the Common Core State Standards has decided to give higher education representatives from its leading states voting power in deciding “key matters” related to test design. They are:

1. How to describe the expected performance levels on the test.
2. Who will set the college-readiness cutoff score for the tests.
3. What evidence will be used to decide the cutoff score.
4. What the college-readiness cutoff score will be.

SOURCE: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

education's embrace of the common-standards tests as proxies for college readiness. Colleges and universities pledged support to the idea. But their willingness to actually use the final tests as proxies for readiness—to let students skip remedial work and go right into entry-level, credit-bearing courses—is considered pivotal to the success of the common-standards initiative, which rests on the idea that mastery of those expectations will prepare students for college study.

“This verges on being historic,” said David T. Conley, an Oregon researcher widely known for his work to define college readiness. “In the U.S., on this scope and scale, it's unprecedented to have this level of partnership between postsecondary systems and high school on a measurement of readiness.”

PARCC and another group of states, the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, have \$360 million in federal Race to the Top money to design assessment systems for the Common Core State Standards. The standards, which cover English/language arts and mathematics, have been adopted by 46 states and the District of Columbia.

When the U.S. Department of Education offered test-design funding to groups of states, in April 2010, it asked for assessment systems that can serve many purposes. Those include measuring student achievement as well as student growth, judging teacher and school performance, offering formative feedback to help teachers guide instruction, and providing gauges of whether students are ready—or are on track to be ready—to make smooth

transitions into college and good jobs.

Leaders of both consortia recognize that much is riding on the support of higher education, since the common-standards initiative rests on the claim that mastery of the standards—and passage of tests that embody them—indicate readiness for credit-bearing entry-level coursework. If colleges decline to use the tests to let students skip remedial work, that could undermine the claim that the tests reflect readiness for credit-bearing study.

That thinking was woven through the Education Department's initial invitation to the states to band together to design the tests. To win grants in that competition, the consortia had to show that they had enlisted substantial support from their public college and university systems. Both did so.

### The Challenge of Consensus

Whether those higher education systems maintain their support for the final tests remains to be seen, however. Skeptics have noted that getting states' K-12 systems and their diverse array of college and university systems to agree on cutoff scores that connotes proficiency in college-level skills, for instance, will be challenging.

"This cut-score thing is going to be a nightmare," Chester E. Finn Jr., the president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a Washington think tank, said at an August 2010 meeting of the National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP. "I'm trying to envision Georgia and Connecticut trying to agree on a cut score for proficiency, and I'm envisioning an argument."

PARCC's college-readiness committee will not only vote on test-design issues, but it also already plays an active role in the consortium's strategy to engage higher education colleagues in dialogue about the assessment and enlist their support, PARCC officials said. The consortium's higher education leadership team, which includes additional college and university leaders, is also playing a leading role in that dialogue and engagement.

The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium's nine-member executive committee includes two higher education representatives with full voting power: Charles Lenth, the vice president for policy analysis and academic affairs for the State Higher Education Executive Officers, a Boulder, Colo.-based group, and Beverly L. Young, the assistant vice chancellor of academic affairs for the Califor-

nia State University system.

In addition, the consortium has appointed higher education representatives from each member state to provide input into test development and coordinate outreach to colleges and universities in their states. Higher education representatives also take part in 10 "work groups" that focus on key issues, such as psychometrics, technology, and accessibility and accommodations.

The consortium's governance structure "is designed to ensure input from higher education through representation on the executive committee, collaboration with higher education state leads, and participation in state-led work groups," said consortium spokesman Eddie Arnold.

Mr. Conley, who advises the SMARTER Balanced group, said it is important to have higher education representatives at the table during test design to create a shared concept of the skills necessary to college success and how to measure those on a test. But he cautioned that those ideas must also have the support of college faculty members—not just their leadership—if the idea of shared standards is to succeed.

Discussion at the PARCC governing board meeting offered hints about the difficulty of getting consensus on critical issues of test design.

Soliciting feedback from board members, Mary Ann Snider, Rhode Island's chief of educator quality, asked how many performance levels they thought the tests should have: three, four, five, or some other number. Most states voted for four levels, largely mirroring the current practice in most PARCC states. Ms. Snider asked when indicators of being "on track" for college readiness should first appear on test results: in elementary, middle, or high school. Most members voted for elementary school.

She also asked whether the tests should show only how well students have mastered material from their current grade levels, or how well they've mastered content from the previous grade level, too. Responses came back deeply divided.

### Bumpy Road Ahead

That question attempted to explore an important part of the dialogue about the new assessments: how to design them so they show parents, teachers, and others how students are progressing over time, rather than provide only a snapshot of a given moment. But the prospect of having a given grade's tests reflect students' mastery of earlier grades' content raised

some doubts on the board.

"If I'm a 5th grade teacher, am I now responsible for 4th grade content in my evaluation?" asked James Palmer, an interim division administrator in student assessment at the Illinois state board of education.

Gayle Potter, the director of student assessment in Arkansas, said it's important to give parents and teachers important information about where students are in their learning. But she also said she worried about "giving teachers mixed signals" about their responsibility for lower grades' content.

Some board members noted that indicators of mastery of the previous year's content would be helpful in adjusting instruction. But others expressed doubt about whether a summative test was the best way to do that. Perhaps, they said, that function is better handled by other portions of the planned assessment system, such as its optional midyear assessments.

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# Common Core's Focus on 'Close Reading' Stirs Worries

Academic leaders say shift may be a leap for teachers

By Catherine Gewertz  
*Tampa, Fla.*

**W**hat would happen if English/language arts teachers revolutionized their instruction to focus intently—and exclusively—on the texts students are reading?

That's what chief academic officers from 14 urban school districts discussed here last month. It's a key shift in the Common Core State Standards that now guide teaching and learning in all but four states: Students are expected to engage in "close reading" of complex literary and informational texts.

In contrast to common practice, in which teachers explain reading passages and supply background information before students read, "close reading" confines initial study to the text itself. Students make sense of it by probing its words and structure for information and evidence. Through questions and class exercises, teachers guide students back through the reading in a hunt for answers and deeper understanding.

That scenario, however, requires profound shifts not only in how teachers teach, but how districts choose texts, how they test what students know, and how they evaluate teachers.

Gathered for a leadership-network meeting facilitated by the Aspen Institute, the chief academic officers of the 14 participating districts expressed praise for the approach. But they also had deep concerns about providing the type of professional development necessary to deliver it well in their districts. To preserve the frank, problem-sharing nature of the meeting, the Aspen Institute asked that *Education Week* not quote district leaders by name.

"I'm really worried that we haven't prepared our teachers for this," one chief academic officer said. "The academic and cognitive demand [on teachers] is quite high."

The officials spent part of a day walking through an example lesson on close reading with David Pook, a New Hampshire

teacher who helped shape the common English/language arts standards. He built the lesson around a selection that one of the network districts, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C., has been using with its 6th graders: an excerpt from Russell Freedman's *The Voice That Challenged a Nation*, about Marian Anderson's historic recital at the National Mall in 1939.

The chief academic officer "students" were asked to read the passage silently, without any context or background knowledge supplied by their "teacher," Mr. Pook, except brief word definitions listed in the margin. They explored "text dependent" questions that he had developed to help students understand the meaning and structure of the passage. The answers to such questions lie in the passage itself and help students make inferences and follow the arguments in it.

One such question was: "What words did Freedman use to characterize what happened next?" A key point of the presentation was that students could not expect their teacher to answer that for them. Instead, teachers would take what Mr. Pook called a "let's find out" approach, guiding students to the passage for answers.

One of the chief academic officers said that such a process represents a more significant change for teachers than they might realize. Most of his teachers, he said, would quickly say they already ask those kinds of questions.

"They'll say, 'Yeah, I always ask what happened next,'" he said. "But that's not the question. The question was, 'What words did Freedman use?'"

His colleagues, along with Mr. Pook, smiled and nodded. Moving teachers toward this way of working will require "some significant professional development" as they learn to refrain from providing quick answers, figure out instead how to formulate new kinds of questions that take them and their students back to the text repeatedly in their search for understanding.

The idea, Mr. Pook said, is that this work

"moves students toward independence" by developing their abilities to build vocabulary and access a text's structure; grasp a text's meaning and build arguments from it based on evidence in the text itself; and eventually build the confidence to grapple with tough reading on their own.

## Too Much Change?

Some longtime reading advocates doubt the basic approach of "close reading," noting that the wide variations in background knowledge that students bring to reading makes it necessary for teachers to build bridges toward them to make sure all students can access the material successfully.

"Ideally, having all students just go ahead and read the text can level the playing field," said Richard M. Long, the director of government relations for the International Reading Association. "The attempt is to make it just about the text. But it is never just about the text. Our concern is that this doesn't take into account that prior experience exists and always affects the way the student interacts with the text."

None of the chief academic officers at the Aspen meeting criticized "close reading" as a goal, and most lauded it. But they saw a rocky road ahead in reaching it.

How, for instance, would they build skill among their educators to provide sufficient supports for struggling readers, special education students, and English-learners to tackle text this way? How would teachers respond to a "sea change" that reframes their role from provider of information to facilitator of inquiry? And where would they get deep, focused lessons for such instruction?

"The percentage of my teachers who weren't ever taught some of the skills you're talking about here, like the 'pivot point' in a paragraph," said one official, her voice trailing off in a sigh. "The teachers themselves don't know many of those concepts."

## Curriculum Materials

Some of those who led in drafting the common standards have created “publisher’s criteria” in mathematics and in English/language arts that are intended to guide publishers in creating curriculum materials that embody the intent of the common standards. States and districts, too, are creating their own materials, as are a host of organizations. Many intend to make them freely available, but most are not yet complete, and there is no centralized location for those that are.

Likewise, many private groups have been publicizing professional-development offerings for the common standards, even as some of the common core’s strongest proponents express skepticism that “drive-by” sessions can accomplish the change that is required by the new standards.

A number of districts, including those in the Aspen network, are starting to design their own professional-development modules. Even as they do that work, though, officials from large districts worried about how they will ensure that thousands of teachers have a sufficiently deep understanding of the key shifts in the standards, as well as district supports to design lesson plans and other materials.

During a break in the meeting, a group of chief academic officers brainstormed about approaches to professional development in a big district. A “train the trainer” model risks dilution of effectiveness as it gets farther from the original trainers, and yet it’s an immense challenge to free hundreds of teachers at once to attend sessions with experts, they noted.

*Coverage of “deeper learning” that will prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world is supported in part by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.*

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# Few States Cite Full Plans for Carrying Out Standards

By Catherine Gewertz

**F**orty-six states and the District of Columbia have adopted a common set of academic standards, but only seven have fully developed plans to put the standards into practice in three key areas, according to a study released last week.

The EPE Research Center, operated by Editorial Projects in Education, which publishes *Education Week*, teamed up with Education First, a Seattle-based education policy and consulting group, on a survey of states’ plans to implement the Common Core State Standards.

It found that “a handful of states are particularly far along” in their plans to transform the common standards into practice, but “most states ... still have a long way to go” before they have blueprints to take the standards from paper to practice.

“Whether the pace and quality of state planning efforts will be strong enough to ensure a smooth transition to the [standards] remains an open question,” the report says.

The survey was conducted in June and finalized in October, when 45 states and the District of Columbia had adopted the common standards. The report on the survey examines the status of plans in those states. It excludes Montana, which adopted the standards in November.

In response to a general question, every

state but Wyoming reported that it had some type of formal implementation strategy for making the transition to the new standards. Wyoming said it was in the process of making such a plan and didn’t provide details. Most state plans include timelines or descriptions, but they vary greatly in their specificity.

The numbers got smaller and more mixed, however, as the researchers burrowed into those plans in three key areas: providing curriculum or instructional materials, offering professional development to teachers, and adapting teacher evaluation to reflect instruction in the new standards. States that reported having plans in any of those areas were asked to characterize them as complete or in development.

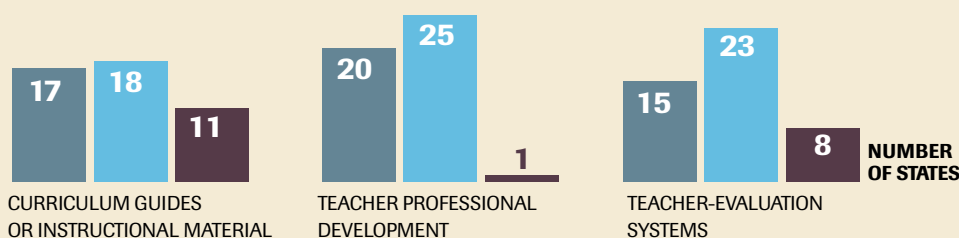
While seven states—Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, and West Virginia—said they had completed plans in all three of those areas, 18 reported no completed plans in any of them.

## Training on Front Burner

Curriculum and instructional materials stood out as the area in which states have made the least progress. Thirty-five reported that they are making or have completed plans to provide such materials and resources, but 11 reported no plans in that area. Some states said it was because dis-

## Common-Core Status

A survey of plans to implement the Common Core State Standards found states at varying stages of development in three key areas.



districts take the lead on curricular decisions. Other states said that even though such matters are up to districts, they intended to offer a range of supports and tools that districts can use if they wish.

States seem to be focusing most of their attention on providing professional development to teachers. Only New Hampshire reported no plans to provide it, while the other 45 said they have complete or partial plans to do so. The most commonly cited methods were conferences, workshops, online modules, and webinars.

Thirty-eight states said they have complete or partial plans to revamp teacher evaluation linked to the new standards, and eight reported no plans.

“The results of our survey suggest that states are working intently to develop plans that would make new, common standards a classroom reality,” the study says. “However, few states have completed their planning, even though most intend to start measuring student performance against the new standards by the 2014-15 school year.”

Assessments for the new standards are scheduled to be fully operational in 2014-15. Using \$360 million in federal Race to the Top money, two groups of states are working to design those testing systems. (See *Education Week, Jan. 11, 2012*)

The EPE/Education First study covers some of the same terrain as a survey released last January by the Washington-based Center on Education Policy. The CEP study included fewer states, since it was conducted before additional states had adopted the standards. The CEP plans to issue an update on states’ progress soon. (See *Education Week, Jan. 12, 2011*)

The CEP study asked states if and when they expected to make changes in teacher evaluation, professional development, and curriculum/instructional materials, as well as in other areas. The EPE/Education First study asked states for “formal” plans and requested copies of them, to determine how clearly those changes were being mapped out. Education First plans further analysis of those plans in the coming months.

Diane Stark Rentner, the CEP’s director of national policy, said the EPE/Education First report captures states’ struggles with tight economic times. Noting the finding that Race to the Top states seem to be farthest along in their common-core planning, she said it’s “not a lack of will but a lack of funding” that is affecting that process.

Many states might also lack a sense of urgency because the tests won’t be given for three more years, but that is “cause for concern,” Ms. Rentner said.

“They know it’s coming, but it’s a little far-off and ethereal for them at this point.”

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# Common Core Poses Challenges for Preschools

## Educators walk a tightrope between academics and young children’s developmental needs

By Jaclyn Zubrzycki

**A**lthough the common-core standards are calibrated to ensure that students leave K-12 schools ready for work and college, they are also posing challenges for the educators who work with children just starting out their school careers.

As 46 states and the District of Columbia work this year to put the new curricular guidelines in place, preschool and early-childhood educators are determining how to balance the common standards’ emphasis on increasing and measuring academic rigor with research findings on young children’s developmental needs, which place a high value on play, the arts, social skills, and integrated instruction.

“We have to be careful that those standards, particularly as they extend downward, appropriately recognize these important social, communication, and self-regulation skills that are really as critical for kids’ learning in those early and later years as whether they know the alphabet,” said Robert C. Pianta, the dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville.

Every state has guidelines outlining what preschool-age children should be able to do in a number of developmental domains, according to a 2007 review of states’ policies published in the journal *Early Childhood Research & Practice*. But in the 2011-12 school year, fourteen states rolled out the common-core standards for kindergarten, K-1, or K-2, according to Carrie Heath Phillips of the Council of Chief State School Officers, and that puts issues of school readiness and the content of those preschool skill guidelines in the spotlight.

The latest Race to the Top competition from the U.S. Department of Education also supports the idea that college- and career-readiness has to start even before a child enters kindergarten. It’s offering \$500 million for states with plans to improve early-learning programs. Thirty-five states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have submitted applications. Most of those states or territories have adopted the common core, which means their early-years plans must reflect the new standards’ expectations.

The federal Head Start preschool program for disadvantaged children has also felt the influence of the Common Core State Standards Initiative: It recently aligned its Child Development and Early Learning Framework with the common core.

Mari E. Blaustein, the director of early-childhood initiatives at the Source for Learning, a Virginia-based nonprofit that develops educational resources, which partnered with the National Head Start Association on the task, said correlating the Head Start framework with common-core standards made sense, as both sets of guidelines are used in multiple states.

Still, there are no plans to create nationwide common-core standards in the mold of the K-12 standards for early childhood, said representatives of the National Governors’ Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, which coordinated the common-core initiative.

“There’s no doubt that what goes on in early-childhood programs needs to be informed, shaped, and aligned with what students are going to start with in kindergarten, but there’s not a national plan,” said Michael Cohen, the president of Achieve, a Washington-based organization that helped



design the common-core standards for English/language arts and math.

### A Pivotal Time

As they look on their own to improve their pre-K programs, states have started to write common-core-based guidelines for early childhood, attempting to balance existing guidelines, the common core's higher academic standards, and the Head Start framework. But standards for early childhood are also shaped by knowledge about child development, society's values, and goals for what children should be able to do at the end of their education, said Sharon Lynn Kagan, a professor of early childhood and family policy and a co-director of the National Center for Children and Families at Teachers College, Columbia University.

"It's a pivotal time for early childhood. Early childhood has got to rise to the occasion and really think hard about what its values are and what it wants to transmit," she said.

Just what those values are and which standards and assessments best reflect them is the subject of research—and debate. There is an increasing focus on preparing children for rigorous, college-bound English/language arts and math standards, but many early childhood researchers and advocates say that time for play, the arts, and developing communication and executive-function skills are more important for young children—and that young children's irregular development patterns make assessing specific academic skills difficult and even misguided.

Gillian D. McNamee, a professor of teacher education at the Erikson Institute, in Chicago, said: "With young children, art and physical movement aren't a frill. They are the disciplines that offer resources for the expression and the development of ideas."

The common-core standards only address math and literacy, but Ms. McNamee said even adding science, social studies, or fine arts standards wouldn't reflect how profoundly integrated learning is in the early years.

Ms. McNamee also said children's irregular development cycles argue against testing them against a rigid, even progression of standards. Head Start Executive Director Yasmina Vinci said that is why her organization's framework doesn't lay out specific academic requirements for its young students.

Assessing young children's performance also presents a unique challenge in and of itself. "Observational methods [appropriate for assessing young children] require more training," said Samuel J. Meisels, the president of the Erikson Institute.

Mr. Meisels said it is important that the early-childhood community's voice be heard as new teaching guidelines take shape.

"People are happy to say early childhood is important. But when it comes time to sit down around the table, I'm not sure they remember to invite early-childhood folks," he said.

Many of these issues are relevant to early elementary students, too, some educators say.

Edward Miller, a senior researcher at the Alliance for Childhood, an advocacy group based in New York, said, "We feel that the early-education [K-3] standards—particularly the kindergarten standards, but also the early elementary grade standards—in the common core are a disaster, and are going to greatly worsen what is already a crisis situation in early-childhood education."

"I'm not opposed to the idea of standards," Mr. Miller said. "We know a lot about what children need in order to be successful. But it has very little to do with very narrowly defined bits of knowledge. . . . If you expect every 5-year-old to be able to read and drill them on reading skills, the ones who don't get it are defined by the schools and by themselves as failures."

### Complex System

Educators around the country are grappling with these same issues as they put standards into practice: "What does rigor look like in a 1st or 2nd grade classroom? How do you support students while achieving rigor?" said Mark Baumgartner, the director of professional issues for the Cleveland Teachers Union. Cleveland has initiated a professional-development effort to help teachers answer those questions as they transition to the common core, Mr. Baumgartner said.

The approach to alignment with the common core—or with K-12 education in general—varies from state to state.

"Right now as it stands, most states say that their early-learning guidelines—which could be for birth-to-pre-K or just 3- to 5-year-olds—align with K-12, or at least with kindergarten. But the depth of that alignment varies," said Laura Bornfreund, a policy analyst for an early-education initiative begun by the New America Foundation, a think tank and policy institute based in Washington and Sacramento, Calif. Some states have undertaken detailed rewritings to link up with the common-core standards, as in Maryland, while others, like Arkansas, have designed charts showing how their frameworks connect to K-12 standards or Head Start.

States may also face challenges in creating assessments for early-childhood curricula and standards.

"Assessing and evaluating children's outcomes is expensive and tricky. It's with a workforce that's less trained than any other education workforce," said Karen J. Cadigan,



What never served early childhood well was when we were seen as a separate entity. You can't have really meaningful early-childhood education and not have it tied to the entire flow of curriculum and what children learn.

SHARI OSTROW SCHER

Early Childhood Specialist, Frederick County Public Schools, Frederick, MD.

the director of the Minnesota education department's office of early learning. Ongoing budget concerns mean that money for that kind of professional development and program components can be hard to come by.

Ms. Cadigan also pointed to a challenge peculiar to the early-childhood world: "Even if you tried, you couldn't find every 4-year-old in the state." Because early-childhood education is not funded or regulated in the same way as K-12, providers range from tiny, private, home-based daycare centers to fully aligned, state-funded programs. Even programs like Head Start serve only a small portion of the population that qualifies.

In a few states, all licensed providers must use state guidelines, but more often, the guidelines are required of state-funded programs and voluntary elsewhere.

### Ahead of the Curve

Despite the difficulties, some states have been working towards aligning pre-K standards and curricula with K-12 standards since the early 2000s, even before the common core.

Jim J. Lesko, the director of early development and learning resources for Delaware's education department, said his state's efforts to do so had been well-received.

"People do want their children to be ready to be successful in kindergarten, and we understand much better now what we need to do to help support children's learning prior

to kindergarten so they come to school with skills they need.” Mr. Lesko emphasized that Delaware’s early-learning guidelines “focus on all domains of learning, not just reading and math.”

Maryland has also already aligned its pre-K standards with the common core and is in the process of outlining an updated pre-K curriculum. At least one district, Montgomery County, tied its pre-K standards to the common core before the state. The district’s Curriculum 2.0 went into effect last year.

“We worked to make a fully integrated elementary curriculum, then took a step back to make sure pre-K was integrated,” said Janine Bacquie, the director of the district’s division of early-childhood programs and services.

Martin Creel, the director of the school district’s department of enriched and innovative programs, said that when the 144,064-student district hosted “parent academies” to demystify the new curriculum, many parents’ concerns were linked to the name: “They thought ‘common’ meant low and ‘core’ meant basic.” But when the standards were presented as part of an effort to learn from international best practices and embedded in a curriculum that also focuses on skills like cooperation and critical thinking, parents got on board, he said.

### Beyond Academics

Montgomery County kindergarten teacher Juliet D. Wolf said that the common core has been a positive change, allowing teachers to be more rigorous and focus on fewer topics, but said other parts of the curriculum have been even more important.

“It changed the way we’re delivering content,” she said. “We’re spending more time on creative-thinking skills, getting kids to think about how they’re thinking and collaborating more.”

In most places, however, thinking P-12 is not the status quo, according to experts. But, said Shannon Ayers, an assistant research professor with the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University in New Jersey: “Having some alignment between pre-K and K in the future is important for teachers, kids, and parents. It transforms pre-K and says, this is real school. Because what we’re doing in pre-K is leading and connected to what they’ll do in K, 1, 2 and beyond.”

“What never served early childhood well was when we were seen as a separate entity,” said Shari Ostrow Scher, an early-childhood specialist in Frederick, Md., who has been in the field for 20 years. “You can’t have really meaningful early-childhood education and not have it tied to the entire flow of curriculum and what children learn.”

*Published March 1, 2012, in Education Week Teacher Professional Development Sourcebook*

# Common Core Raises PD Opportunities, Questions

By Katie Ash

**W**ith all but five states having adopted the Common Core State Standards in math and language arts, education leaders are expecting to see a surge of on-line professional development resources to help guide teachers through the transition.

“We’ve always had the ability to share resources, but now those resources are aligned with the same student expectations,” notes Greta Bornemann, the project director for the implementation of the common standards for the office of public instruction in Washington state. “Especially during the fiscal crisis that we’re in, we can really tap into the power of working together [as a nation] around professional development.”

Many districts have yet to take the essential steps toward integration of the Common Core State Standards Initiative into classroom instruction, including providing face-to-face or online professional development for teachers, according to a survey released this fall by the Washington-based Center on Education Policy.

In fact, more than half of the 315 districts surveyed indicated they had not provided professional development for teachers of mathematics or English/language arts—the two common-core subject areas—and were not planning to provide such PD for those teachers during the 2011-12 school year.

But professional development will be critical to the overall success of the common standards, says Timothy Kanold, the past president of the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics, a Denver-based leadership network that provides professional development for math teachers.

“To help the stakeholders—teachers, counselors, administrators, paraprofessionals—in order for them to be confident in the common core and teaching deeper into the standards, they need meaningful and supportive professional development,” he says.

For many teachers, shifting to the common standards will require major changes.

There are as few as 28 standards for math for some grade levels, “which is fewer standards than ever before, but you now have to teach them and drill much deeper into them,” Kanold says. “Students are expected to conjecture and reason and problem-solve. That’s a new day in math. That’s a shift for everyone; therefore, we have real professional development that needs to get done.”

And PD should not be confined to a one-time conference or class, says Kanold, but rather become an ongoing process for teachers. Online professional development, in particular, may help teachers embed training opportunities into their daily schedules more naturally because it is so easily accessed, he says.

“It’s instantaneous,” says Kanold. “I don’t have to wait for the conference.”

### Questions of Quality

Tanya Baker, the director of national programs for the National Writing Project, a Berkeley, Calif.-based nonprofit organization with multiple sites throughout the country that provides resources and professional development to writing teachers, says the writing portion of the standards also represents a shift to a richer and more rigorous understanding of writing.

“Teachers with a significant amount of experience might not have very much experience with the kind of teaching that would lead kids to be successful with these standards,” she says.

But while acknowledging that the common standards provide an opportunity to share PD resources between states, Baker cautions that teachers may still have varying needs.

“My worry about online professional development around common-core standards is that it’ll be one-size-fits-all,” she says. “Even as we’re thinking nationally, we need

to be aware locally” of teachers’ specific backgrounds and instructional methods.

Identifying high-quality resources may be another challenge, adds Bornemann of Washington state’s office of public instruction.

“One of the challenges is that everybody, at least in their claims, appears to be aligned to the common core with professional development and instructional supports,” she says. Looking at those resources with a critical eye and making sure they are high-quality before distributing them to teachers is essential.

The James B. Hunt Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy, an affiliate center of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in Durham, N.C., is one of the early providers of online resources on the common core. The organization has created a series of videos, posted on YouTube, that describe various aspects of the common core, such as how the standards were developed, what the key changes are in the subject areas involved, and the reasoning behind those changes.

“This is intended to spark a conversation,” says Lucille E. Davy, a senior adviser for the institute. The videos are designed not only for teachers, but also for school board members, policymakers, administrators, and even the PTA.

“Everyone needs to understand this—not just the teacher in the classroom,” Davy says.

As schools and educators get a better grasp on what the standards mean for students and teachers, more online and print resources will become available, says Davy. “Right now, I think you’re seeing the development of a lot of [curricular] materials,” she says, “and then the professional development to actually use those materials and teach the standards is the next frontier.”

And while providing much professional development for teachers on the scale that’s needed may seem overwhelming, Davy is hopeful that the common core will provide the economies of scale, especially with online professional development, needed to overcome some of the most persistent problems in K-12 education.

“The need to close the achievement gap was already here,” she says. “Implementing common core together gives us our best shot for achieving. We can work together, share best practices, and share the burden of doing the work so [states] are not doing it all alone.”

Number of varied state adoption plans that expect to fully implement the common core standards in various years.

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## COMMENTARY

# Standards: A Golden Opportunity for K-16 Collaboration

By Brad C. Phillips and Bruce Vandal

**T**he time for the Common Core State Standards is now. With U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s recent announcement that the federal Department of Education will relax enforcement of the No Child Left Behind Act in states in exchange for the adoption of rigorous college and career standards, it is safe to say that many states will simply formalize their commitments to the standards as part of their waiver requests, opening the door to the full implementation of the standards. That could—and should—be a good thing.

However, a survey released earlier this year found that barely half the school districts in states that have adopted the common standards have begun the intensive process of aligning their teaching to the standards. And, no one seems to be asking whether colleges and universities are considering the standards and how they relate to college-level work. This is more important than ever, particularly given the level of authority granted to postsecondary institutions to approve the standards in the NCLB waiver-request guidelines. For that reason, states will need to move quickly to get postsecondary institutions on board with the common core. In addition, state legislators and other community leaders who have been standing on the sidelines of the common-core debate are finally going to have their say.

But the implied connection of the common core to federal accountability requirements may empower many to question the standards as a further imposition of government control. To build broad commitment to the standards, there should be proven models that show how the common core can facilitate greater alignment between postsecondary education and K-12 education.

The result would be a reduced need for remediation for struggling students, increased college-success rates, and faster degree attainment.

**How Do We Know This?** The English Curriculum Alignment Project, or ECAP, in San Diego offers some important lessons for the thousands of school districts nationwide that will be held accountable by the common-core standards by the 2013-14 school year. ECAP, which launched in 2004 and with which we are both familiar, is an intensive, groundbreaking effort to align what is taught in high school with what students will need to know and be able to do in college.

Together, high school teachers and college faculty members participating in ECAP looked through years of transcript information made available through the California Partnership for Achieving Student Success. Examining student performance over time, San Diego educators learned that students who took advanced English courses through 12th grade needed the same level of remediation in community college as students who stopped taking English courses after 10th grade.

Disturbed by this finding, teachers dug deeper for the source of students’ collegiate struggles. After sharing lesson plans and curricula, they discovered that high school teachers taught mostly literature, focusing on characters and story lines in classic works of fiction. Meanwhile, English instructors at the community college involved in ECAP were teaching students about argumentation and writing clearly to inform, persuade, and describe—key skills needed to succeed at work, think critically, and contribute to the community.

Recognizing this startling disconnect, San Diego teachers worked to better align their teaching with college expectations. Standards-based high school lesson plans were



developed that helped students organize content and write clearly with a deep understanding of genre, audience, purpose, and argument. The thoughtful blend of the literary and rhetorical values of the English-literature classroom and an emphasis on rigorous writing, reading, and critical-thinking skills put students on track for success in college and career. It is an approach right in line with the common-core standards, which put greater emphasis on writing and non-fiction.

**Avoiding a ‘Rude Awakening.’** We shouldn’t underestimate the task of getting our high school and college-level teachers to connect their work to the common core and of routinely monitoring student-performance information. State leaders also need to understand that it will take hard work to foster collaboration between K-12 and higher education. The distance between adopting the standards at the state level and actually putting them into practice in the classroom can be measured in how well the work of teachers from both levels of education fits together. Simply having a standard in place is no assurance that higher education and K-12 teaching are aligned to the standard and to the expectations for college-level work.

We’re in for a rude awakening if the work of implementing the standards is not done now in states. The shock will hit after the first set of results is announced from the implementation of the two common-core-aligned assessments being developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or PARCC, and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. States that are caught flat-footed by these results will face a perilous political environment that could undermine the common core before it even has a chance to transform classrooms across the country.

The enthusiastic and imperative work of translating the broad standards into daily lessons should be given the same meticulous attention that developing the standards and gaining state approval received. Gathering the necessary input and support required a herculean effort by the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Achieve.

We must not waste this golden opportunity to create a standards thoroughfare between K-12 and higher education. It is the necessary next step in collectively raising our standards for student success and developing the next-generation education system we need to compete in an increasingly competitive global economy.

*Brad C. Phillips is the president and chief executive officer of the Institute for Evidence-Based Change, an Encinitas, Calif.-based nonprofit organization that helps educators collaborate to use data to boost student achievement. Bruce Vandal directs the Getting Past Go initiative on remedial education reform at the Education Commission of the States, in Denver.*

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## COMMENTARY

# The Common-Core Contradiction

By Stephanie Hirsh

**N**ow bearing the imprimatur of 46 states and the District of Columbia, the Common Core State Standards represent a major step forward for schools and the students they must prepare to graduate from high school ready for college and careers. Yet a fundamental contradiction underlies the progress: While we are promoting radical change in creating a coherent national framework for what students should know and the way they learn, we have not yet committed to offering teachers the deep learning they will need to transform the way they work.

Too much of today’s professional learning is not up to the task of supporting the substantive changes required of teachers to meet these new standards for English/language arts and mathematics—and too many plans for supporting the transition to the common core read more like communication plans than serious road maps for preparing educators to teach the standards.

Gene Wilhoit, the executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, one of the groups behind the common-core initiative, made this point directly to state leaders recently when he asked them: “What made you think you could transform teacher practice and student learning with traditional models of professional development?” To their credit, most states acknowledge the contradiction as they struggle with the scope of this undertaking in an ambitious time frame. Still, few states can say they are taking the steps to address the challenge. That must change.

For all the investment of time and resources in the common core, we will not achieve the outcomes we expect and need without comprehensive professional learning for educators that supports the new standards. The dramatic shift in teaching prompted by the common core will require

practical, intensive, and ongoing professional learning—not one-off “spray and pray” training that exposes everyone to the same material and hopes that some of it sticks.

For the same reasons that common standards for students make sense, states should also adopt common standards for professional learning. They must infuse the new standards into existing school improvement processes, plans for professional learning, and relicensure requirements.

Because the common core focuses on the application of knowledge in authentic situations, teachers will need to employ instructional strategies that integrate critical and creative thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, research and inquiry, and presentation and demonstration skills. They will need subject-area expertise well beyond basic content knowledge and pedagogy to create dynamic, engaging, high-level learning experiences for students. They will need greater data literacy as we shift from current accountability systems to more granular ways of assessing student learning. And, their leaders will need to champion professional learning in their buildings and back the teachers who coach and support each other.

Too few states and school districts act consistently on what research has shown to improve educator practice and student achievement. And even fewer take steps to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness.

We know from research what constitutes highly effective professional learning and how to engage educators in it. Administrators and teachers working together plan, execute, and assess professional learning. It is driven by data that pinpoint what students need. It is collective and collaborative within and across buildings, so the quality of instruction improves consistently from classroom to classroom and from school to school. It includes time for teachers to learn from each other, examine research



and effective practices, and problem-solve. It demands leadership from teachers as coaches and mentors, while continuing to tap the knowledge of outside experts and resources.

Emerging technology holds the promise of making this kind of high-quality professional learning more accessible and relevant to more teachers. Platforms that facilitate shared learning, learning analytics, and continuous improvement and evaluation systems can accelerate the pace of change needed to put the common core into place. Along with emerging tools such as classroom video capture, earbud coaching (in which teachers receive real-time coaching via an earpiece while they work), virtual classroom simulations, and online tutoring, innovative technology can support an approach to professional learning that addresses each educator's individual needs, incorporates data, monitors the impact of new learning, and supports the spread of best practices to improve teaching at scale.

For the common core to be successful, states will have to be much more thoughtful about organizing, managing, implementing, and evaluating these tools and strategies. State leaders will have to work together, with consortia, and with K-20 systems to develop comprehensive programs that deeply immerse teachers in the common core, its related curriculum and assessment systems, and content-specific pedagogies—and then provide ongoing classroom support and feedback.

Education leaders must alter school calendars—both the yearly calendar and daily schedules—to provide dedicated time for professional learning and for teachers to collaborate on a continuing basis. They must promote professional-learning academies and the use of knowledge systems and other interactive technology. In short, to meet the end goal of graduating students who are competent in the common-core standards and college- and career-ready, states must create a culture that supports and accelerates change, not delays and diffuses it.

To help identify ways of establishing the needed infrastructure to support common-core implementation, our organization, Learning Forward, selected Kentucky as a demonstration site late last year for a laboratory for effective professional-learning models that align with the common core. Other states—Georgia, Illinois, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Utah, and Washington—are also part of this effort, serving as critical friends, helping pilot and evaluate tools and strategies to create a truly comprehensive professional-learning system.

Along with its commitment to the standards, Kentucky has already made progress toward some of its key goals; for example, it is working on organizing classwork around reading and writing in all subjects. It has also

signaled its willingness to make real changes to support professional learning. Our work developing this infrastructure for professional learning will also be supported by new technology and partnerships within and beyond the seven participating states, with support from the Sandler Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It is through this combination of commitment to the standards and comprehensive change in professional learning that we hope to see the promise of the common core come to life.

The common core will not be self-implementing—executing this overhaul of expectations for students and teachers represents a tremendous undertaking.

We hope that states will watch closely, learn from these efforts in Kentucky, and take action, and that additional funders and policymakers will develop strategies to inspire states to build transformative professional-learning systems. The most powerful tools that states and districts have at their disposal to improve teacher effectiveness and ensure that students can meet the new standards remain unchanged. Thoughtful professional learning is crucial if we want to promote deep understanding of content and transformed instruction, rather than merely aim for higher standards and hope for the best.

*Stephanie Hirsh is the executive director of Learning Forward, a nonprofit international association based in Dallas and focused on increasing student achievement through effective professional learning.*

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**Common Core State Standards: Progress and Challenges  
in School Districts' Implementation**

<http://www.cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=374>

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**The Hunt Institute YouTube Channel**

<http://www.youtube.com/user/TheHuntInstitute>

**Math Common Core Coalition**

<http://www.nctm.org/standards/mathcommoncore/>

**Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)**

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

**Preparing for Change: A National Perspective on Common Core  
State Standards Implementation Planning**

<http://www.edweek.org/media/preparingforchange-17standards.pdf>

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