

The Arizona School Boards Association presents

Are you ready for

THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS?

OVERVIEW

Implementation of the Common Core Standards is now underway in Arizona. The Common Core Standards Initiative originated with the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association. Their mission was to develop more rigorous national standards in mathematics and English-language arts. These standards are intended to encompass the knowledge and skills that high school graduates need to succeed in college and careers; however, these standards are neither designed to tell teachers how to teach, nor are they a comprehensive curriculum. Experts state that the Common Core Standards are approximately two grade levels more difficult than current standards.

The standards have been adopted by 45 states, as well as the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Arizona adopted the Common Core Standards on June 28, 2010. This widespread adoption paves the way to clear and consistent standards of student achievement across the country.

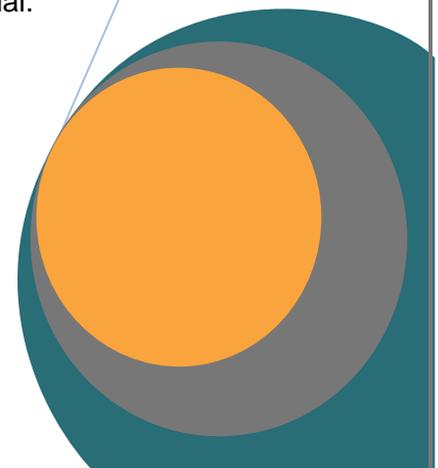
A consortium of 25 states, including Arizona, is now working to develop assessments that are aligned with the Common Core Standards. This group is called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Full implementation of the PARCC assessment will begin statewide in 2014-15. Some districts have already begun to prepare, finding ways to implement the Common Core Standards as soon as possible.

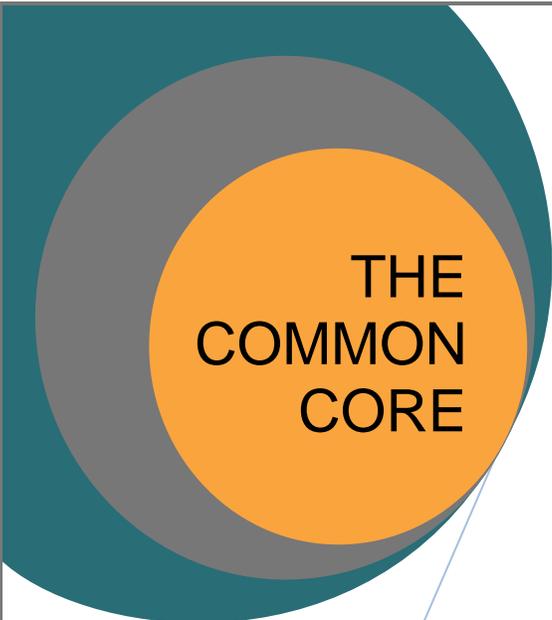
BENEFITS

- The more rigorous standards are intended to reduce redundancy and variation between states. This allows for more direct national comparisons, stricter accountability measures, and allows for more national collaboration to ensure student success at all levels.
- Instead of using memorization to achieve basic topical understandings, students will analyze and evaluate ideas with critical thinking skills. They will be asked to read and write more, while making connections between the real world and course material.

CONCERNS

- A lack of resources for implementation is a significant concern; however, it is important to note that you don't have to start from the beginning. Use what you have (i.e. the mathematics Common Core Standards have been built on a decade of work) and invest in needed areas not covered.
- The heightened rigor of the Common Core Standards could increase the achievement gap for race/ethnicity, as well as family income.





THE
COMMON
CORE

What Should You Do as a Board Member?

It's important that you as a member of a policymaking body ask the important questions to ensure that your district is on track to successfully implement the Common Core Standards. Your job is not to be the actual implementer; that's for your district administration. However, your board provides the community with the confidence that the district is ready. You might begin by considering the following questions:

- **Have we involved various stakeholders – teachers, school leaders, parents and civic and business leaders, for example - in what the Common Core Standards and PARCC assessment will mean to our district?**
- **How will the Common Core affect other areas of reform (i.e. teacher and principal evaluation, A-F accountability, etc.) that we are already implementing?**
 - **What changes to curriculum practice should we anticipate?**
 - **Can we reallocate current resources to implement the Common Core? Do we need to invest additional monies?**
- **How are we going to communicate these changes to all involved: our students, our parents, our community, our taxpayers?**
 - **How do we ensure that we are equipped to bridge the achievement gap and not widen it?**