

BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE
COMMISSION RESPONSES
FOR NOVEMBER 10, 2011 MEETING

1. How are the Common Core State Standards different than existing or past standards?

a. Fewer Standards – Greater Depth – Critical Thinking

- CCSS are different in that for us they are fewer and require higher level thinking, more challenging material for teachers to teach and students to learn. They are based on what students need to know and be able to do both in college and/or in the workplace in order to be successful.
- Fewer standards deeper knowledge.
- They require more content knowledge than current GLEs and they are more rigorous and better aligned.
- More content knowledge to teach, awareness of differences and why it will be important.
- Common Core Standards appear to be more subject focused as opposed to a more broad approach
- The comment in today's discussion is doing less but doing it well. Very well, in fact. Makes sense.
- Less standards/more in depth
- More specific
- Will give students a deeper understanding and better prepare them for college and workplace.
- Fewer in number, more in depth, often more content-rich at earlier grades, more content knowledge occurs sooner.
- It appears that the move is to refashion curricula so that students learn critical thinking and problem solving within an environment that deepens drilling and equations and simple processes.
- More in depth, higher stakes, fewer, clearer.
- Fewer standards, but deeper learning and require more content knowledge.
- Quality verses quantity, fewer standards, higher level of BLOOMS especially at an earlier age, 50 % narrative, and 50% informational text, and college Arts & Science onboard with teacher education.
- More focused, less extraneous demands for teachers and students.
- The aim/purpose is deeper use and understanding of curricula.
- Critical thinking, analysis, crucial listening, communication skills, linkages between "traditional" and new content.
- Envision CCSS as being more direct, more simplified, and in a word, humane. Standards that students can understand. These are their standards after all. This means a minimum of jargon – concrete tasks,

experiences, and skills that the student can track to plot out what their year looks like.

- A clearer understanding of what will be taught (learned) and what the testing means.

b. Multi-State Focus

- The alignment of new state standards and national standards will provide greater integration of the necessary skills (21st century) that students will need to be career and college ready.
- Are we moving towards a national curriculum? What are they? Will new standards be sent home with kids, parents? What other states are involved? Let schools (states) know so they can compare.
- More standardized across 46 states, fewer, higher, clear teacher facilitates the learning, the learner struggles with perseverance and problem solving.

c. Other

- Opportunity to engage all segments of student population.
- Assurance that all children enter school ready to learn must be considered – more Pre-K programs will be needed.
- CCSS is aligned to be instructional framework as opposed to other standards.
- No laminated lesson plans or detailed advance plans.
- Lesson based on kids needs and the current learning communication with common message collaborative culture when teachers feel safe to ask questions.
- Professional development that shows, not tells, them how to develop the common message.
- Access to resources and training in advance.
- Unclear relative to content and states are networking extensively.

2. What needs to occur in Louisiana to help teachers, schools, and districts *change* and be prepared to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards?

a. Communication

- Teachers are generally the last to know. Need to know to mitigate frustrations, common message/professional development.
- A persistent (and consistent) message from LA Department of Education.
- Strong communications strategy explaining these upcoming changes and what role each group will have in successful implementation.

- Some communication to all about what is expected.
- CCSS awareness sessions are needed around the state immediately. How can this be done? What financial assistance will be provided? Technology needs and should be considered at all levels.
- Need leadership and a message to take the politics out of the conversations - it is about students.
- Media campaign.
- Much communication, professional development, and statewide business/ parent tool to send one message. The more we hear the more unafraid we are.
- A buy-in opportunity from teachers, schools, and districts.
- Awareness of public - media campaign to educate the community.
- A well-done PR sell as to why parents/teachers should trust the State Department of Education in this new succinct method of teaching (and measuring the data).
- A unified, centralized space where teachers can speak with one another and those steering the CCSS transition.
- Social media website for educators to share techniques and concerns/
- Much communication, professional development, and statewide business/parent tool to send one message. The more we hear the more unafraid we are.
- The state department also needs to look at financial implementation as well as how the move to CCSS will be communicated across all areas.

b. Identification and Use of Best Teachers

- Teachers need to see successful lessons.
- Put best teachers to teach the teachers (how this good can operate and happen).
- Put online with best teachers 24/7.
- Best practice display.
- Online demonstrations are a great idea.
- Will be no “master teachers” with limitations of online. Need to start this immediately.
- Use of models from other states.
- Visual archive of successful lessons.

c. Professional Development for Teachers

- Significant professional development for current in-service teachers.
- Professional support/guidance for teachers that is year around.
- Teachers need more time to explore them and education about how to do so.

- Think we are on the right track, a slow implementation with targeted professional development and transition will provide opportunities for teachers, parents, and students to adapt to changes.
- Professional development for teachers.
- Content and pedagogy, especially for experienced teachers transitional periods will be problematic.
- Systematic and intensive professional development for teacher and administrators in a manner which may be occurring in isolated schools but not statewide.
- Professional development.
- Platform or structure for professional development.
- Every opportunity for professional development. Overall, then by grade levels. This must be an ongoing process for success.
- Teachers need training in the CCSS.
- Common definitions, in-service, and implementation follow through.
- Professional development, transition period information provided ASAP; clear on PARCC assessments; video clips demonstrating type of teaching expected funding.

d. Professional Development for Teachers – Content Focus

- Teachers need content area-focused professional development because some will have difficulty teaching the content to this depth.
- Math common core at elementary level could be the biggest challenge due to math content knowledge of many elementary teachers being sub-par.

e. Professional Development for Educational Leaders

- Principals and assistant principals need to be in-serviced about what to look for when observing teachers and lessons about how CCSS-based teaching will look different than GLE-based teaching.
- Principals and superintendents must understand this is different.
- Professional development for principals.

f. Teacher Evaluation

- Evaluation instruments may need revision to ensure that teachers are getting good advice about how to improve the quality of their instruction for value-added to work in conjunction with this.

g. Master Teachers/School Teams

- The idea of school teams which are knowledgeable and can be sounding boards for teacher concerns.
- Districts must begin training master common core teachers now.

h. PARCC Assessments

- Teachers need clear guidelines for the assessments.
- Need to know how students will be assessed.
- PARCC needs to release assessment items.
- Shouldn't Act 54 be simultaneous with common cores first assessment to establish baseline for student growth?
- Need to know what PARCC assessments look like.
- Need to know how questions or tests will be worded.

i. Teacher Preparation

- Utilize student-teacher prep programs at colleges in the state.
- New teachers can become the ambassadors of common core filtering in to every school Look at representation of future teachers at the college level.

j. Curriculum

- Focus the curriculum to the core standards.
- Develop frame work and choice for districts to use when purchasing curriculum materials.
- Teachers need to be given curriculum early!
- What can we take out of current curriculum?
- Give curriculum to teachers earlier.

k. Standards

- Greater information dissemination about the competencies to all stakeholders.
- Concrete examples and information for teachers so they can implement standards.

l. Operational Issues

- A timeline for the implementation of the "change" process.
- Develop specific metrics to guide implementation of core standards.

- Standardization of implementation of CCSS.
- What financial support will be provided to districts for implementation.

m. Resources

- Resources for training of various groups, including teachers and higher education.

n. Other

- Our teachers are the key.
- Sources are great.
- Tie into accountability must be the hammer and the carrot.
- “Tracking” – learning to group students, based on their skill (e.g. great in math, good in science) to ensure the student can learn the standards and core competencies.
- What about rural schools and resource challenged schools.
- Complete surveys that can be used to revise/update goals .
- Tracking database.
- Streamline requirements for teachers and schools.
- Targeted with engaging all students about relevancy and critical thinking.

3. What needs to occur in Louisiana to help parents change and be prepared to help their children reach new expectations as defined by Common Core State Standards?

a. Communication with Parents

- A statewide outreach in which we educate the community through PTA’s, stakeholders, school partners, and community groups.
- Need education so that they know what’s coming and what to look for in class work and assessments.
- This is a big question. Think PTA meetings and school meetings will be necessary and will serve the already engaged parents.
- Parents’ guide like PTA brochures are a good start.
- Systemic and intensive statewide communication and engagement of parents.
- Lots of communication of all types.
- Media campaign.
- Provide communication or hotline to answer questions or post on website.
- Provide information that is simple and understandable to parents.
- Get the PTA Parent Guides.

- Education using all areas of media (newspaper, Governor, pamphlets, teachers, schools).
- Need to know that it is coming. They need information on how they can help their children prior to entering Pre-K and throughout their school years.
- We need state PSA's, local board member education (school board members). We don't teach or assess the way they were taught and assessed. We need to communicate in a variety of ways (QARs, website, pamphlets).
- Communication – understanding.

b. New Methods to Interact with Parents

- We will have to be creative in developing methods to reach those other parents, - sometimes the ones who need preparation most.
- I like the idea of taking information meetings to other venues, i.e. Chamber of Commerce, Church gatherings, etc.
- Go to where the parents are – story library hours, churches, bus stops – community organizations and pastors can also be the key. Classes for pastors? Address dropout and CCSS.
- An app for telephones.
- Social networking.
- Will need to seek new methods of interacting to parents who are not engaged.
- Social media website for parents.
- Technology and implementation – iPods, etc.

c. Post-Secondary Education

- Louisiana needs all children to be ready for post-secondary education, which can occur in high school years with dual enrollment.
- Define what is college ready.

d. Professional Development for Parents

- Parents have to be able to engage their children in activities that promote higher order thinking. They will have to be shown how to create these activities.
- Provide in-service to parents at parents convenience (brochures, TV, and in person).
- Parent education – defining their role in their child's education; how they can support learning; what to expect the change will look like.

- Meetings to provide understanding and information about how PARCC will impact their children; how test scores will impact their children's future (post secondary).

e. Other

- A new day in Louisiana: Learning that is clear, relevant, and better standards.
- Every child has a right to his/her own pursuit of happiness. We are going to help them get there.
- What is responsibility for parents? What is expected?
- Roles of PTAs and other groups that can provide linkages.
- What is parental involvement gap? Measure it now.
- Use of models from other states.
- Do the parents understand what is different (chart) old – new.
- Why does it matter, it's about success/jobs.
- How do you get to private, home school and others involved?
- Embrace technology.
- Patience: This transition will take years, possibly even a decade, before precedents will be established and the old standards/habits are gone. Parents need to have faith in the revised system and give it time to take effect.
- Develop ways to engage parents, making them a partner.
- Engage parents in the roll out of CCSS so they will have complete buy in.
- Parents want to help kids. Would love a short blurb to put on my web weekly.
- Endorse textbooks at state department could be ultimate goal.
- Parents should be warned that they may see a dip before they see growth.
- Awareness communication to inform parents.
- Raising expectations for parental involvement in their child's education.
- Parents can't change in the absence of information. Schools will have to inform parents and provide online access to relevant materials.
- Still interested in research that ties value-added to college preparation programs (received the narrative).