



Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to announce that we have recently posted a [Common Core Resources document](#) to our website. CCSSO developed this list of tools and resources to point states to promising practices and tools to support Common Core State Standards implementation. This document primarily lists resources developed by CCSSO and the lead writers of the standards and is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all resources available. As we learn of resources, we will add them to this document.

You may be aware of the recent [Brookings Institution report by Tom Loveless](#) that claims the Common Core State Standards will have little impact student achievement. The Fordham Institute's Kathleen Porter-Magee offers [a critique of the report on Fordham's Common Core Watch blog](#). Porter-Magee acknowledges that standards alone will not change student achievement, but that setting clear and rigorous standards are an important first step in improving student achievement and that implementation by states is critical.

Please do not hesitate to contact [Katey McGettrick](#) with questions, ideas for future newsletters, and success stories from your agencies and classrooms.

Thank you,

CCSSO's Common Core Implementation Team - Carrie Heath Phillips, Margaret Millar and Katey McGettrick

Featured in this newsletter:

- Materials and Recording of February 23 Webinar on Communications Now Available
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- Self-Assessment Tool for Districts
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Materials and Recording of February 23 Webinar on Communications Now Available

On February 23, CCSSO hosted a webinar for state education agency staff on Common Core communications. The webinar marked the release of a series of customizable one page handouts to communicate about the Common Core State Standards quickly and easily with district leaders, legislators, and other audiences. During this webinar, CCSSO communications staff shared how best to use this new resource. Representatives from PTA, AFT, and SHEEO discussed how these brochures could be used with the constituencies these organizations represent, what concerns these constituencies have with Common Core implementation, and meaningful ways to engage these constituencies in standards implementation. A recording of the webinar and the associated materials are available to state education agency staff on the state collaborative site, spaces.ccsso.org, under the 2012 Webinar Series folder.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) launches new website

This month, SBAC launched its new website, www.smarterbalanced.org. A project timeline on the site features work the consortium has completed to date and what it expects to accomplish in the future. Other features of the website include a list of upcoming events and sections dedicated to K-12 education, higher education, and parents and students. To follow SBAC's work, you may sign up for the newsletter through the website.

Self-Assessment Tool for Districts

The Midwest Common Core Consortium, in collaboration with Great Lakes East & Great Lakes West Comprehensive Centers, has created a [self-assessment tool](#) to assist districts in

developing a systematic approach for moving forward with Common Core implementation. The tool can assist districts in creating a descriptive vision of what implementation looks like in action and developing and assessing clear standards implementation goals that focus on aligning assessments and developing instructional materials.

Understanding the Debate around the Effect of Pre-reading Strategies on Struggling Students

To use or not to use pre-reading strategies with struggling students is an ongoing debate in reading instruction circles that has implications for teaching the Common Core ELA standards. [A recent blog post by Kathleen Porter-Magee of the Fordham Institute](#) summarizes this tension in the reading community over the role of pre-reading activities in instruction. In the post, Porter-Magee compares the views of David Coleman, one of the lead writers of the CCSS ELA standards, who rejects using extensive pre-reading strategies, with those of Doug Lemov, author of *Teach Like a Champion*, who advocates for the critical role of such strategies.

ETS Develops Quick Guides for Next Generation Assessments for Special Populations

ETS has published on its website summaries of the designs of the two alternate assessment consortia for students with the most significant cognitive impairments – the Dynamic Learning Maps Consortium (DLM) and the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC). It has also published a similar summary for the Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems (ASSETS) design. [These publications are free and available to the public through the ETS K-12 Center website.](#)

Campaign for Full-Day Kindergarten Stresses Common Core Expectations

In its advocacy for universal full-day kindergarten programs, The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) highlights the fact that meeting the kindergarten benchmarks in the Common Core State Standards heightens the need for access to such programs. Most states require school districts to offer kindergarten to families who want it, but children in six states aren't guaranteed that opportunity. Only 10 states and the District of Columbia require kindergarten to be a full school day experience. [Learn more about CDF's advocacy on this issue.](#)

K-12 Teachers Alliance Posts CCSS Resources for Teachers

The K-12 Teachers Alliance, a professional organization of teachers that posts news, recommendations, and resources for teachers, [has posted information for teachers on the](#)

CCSS, including tips for teachers on how to transition to the new standards.

Past and Upcoming Events

- On February 15, the Fordham Institute hosted [a state summit in Ohio called "Embracing the Common Core: Helping Students Thrive"](#). The event convened key stakeholders in Ohio for a conversation on Common Core Implementation in Ohio. The event was webcast and videos and materials from the event are posted on the Fordham Institute's website.
- On Thursday, March 1, 2012, the Alliance for Excellent Education and the Center for K-12 Assessment & Performance Management at ETS (K-12 Center) are hosting a webinar from 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., ET, to allow the leaders of SBAC and PARCC to provide an update on their activities, including information about content frameworks and specifications and a technology readiness survey. A former state and district superintendent, Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., and a former governor, Bob Wise, will place the consortia's work in a policy context. [Register and submit questions for the webinar online](#). Please direct questions concerning the webinar to alliance@all4ed.org
- CCSSO Webinar on Connecting Educator Effectiveness and Common Core Implementation (Open to ICCS Members Only) Tuesday, March 13, 2 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. EST. ICCS members will receive an email about registration.
- CCSSO Webinar on Engaging Higher Education in Common Core Implementation (State Education Agency Staff Only) Thursday, March 22, at 2 p.m. Registration and event details forthcoming.