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## **Implementing the Common Core Standards (ICCS)**

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Dear colleagues,

Colorado and New Mexico hosted statewide summits this month to assist educators in transitioning to the new standards. At the New Mexico summit, nearly 400 educators convened to learn about the Common Core, including presentations on strategies for implementation in rural and small school districts, the role of principals and instructional leaders in implementation, and the key instructional shifts in the standards. Governor Susana Martinez addressed the group to close out the summit. The summit coincided with the launch of [New Mexico's Common Core website](#), which includes recordings of the summit events and the materials that were distributed as well as the [state's implementation plan](#). More information about the new site is included below.

[The Colorado summit](#), hosted with the support of ASCD and the Gates Foundation, also convened hundreds of educators to discuss the transition to the Colorado Academic Standards. Educators learned how standards implementation fits within the state's broader education reform agenda and within the context of Colorado's whole child approach to education. Colorado Department of Education officials will use input gathered from educators at the summit to inform the agenda for future summer symposia.

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, Renata Lewis, and Katey McGettrick

**Featured in this newsletter:**

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**Superintendent Bennett and Commissioner Chester respond to Brookings Institution Report**

[A recent post on the \*National Journal Education Experts\* blog](#) that discussed recent Common Core news, including the recently published Brookings Institution report by Tom Loveless, has generated several responses, including one jointly authored by Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Tony Bennett and Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Dr. Mitchell Chester. In the piece, they argue that Loveless' assertion that the Common Core State Standards will have no effect on student achievement "fail[s] to acknowledge or recognize the full range of efforts happening in states to support the new standards." They go on to note the implementation efforts in their respective states and assert that "[i]n today's world, where state and national boundaries are increasingly irrelevant to economic opportunity, it makes great sense for the 50 states to collectively define the knowledge and skills that are core to opportunity and success in the 21st Century." The piece also recognizes the work of the ICCS collaborative that meets regularly to share resources and effective strategies for making the Common Core work for our schools and students. You may read the entire post and guest responses to the blog by visiting the National Journal Education Experts blog.

**New Mexico launches Common Core website**

As mentioned in the opening to the newsletter, the New Mexico Public Education Department [launched a new Common Core website](#) at the state summit held at the beginning of this month. The website has information for students, parents, teachers, and administrators, as well as the state's implementation timeline, guiding principles for implementation, and a section of frequently asked questions. The department has also [posted the video recordings from its summit and the associated materials](#) to this website.

### **New rubric to help states assess implementation plans**

Education First and Achieve have jointly published a self-assessment tool that states can use to assess their implementation plans. The tool identifies 16 different implementation elements that should be addressed in a comprehensive, coherent state implementation plan, which are then clustered into five main categories: educator supports; student supports; system alignment; infrastructure; and outreach. The tool outlines what a strong state role looks like in each element, as well as specifies what inadequate, emerging and exemplary actions look like in each element. It also provides specific state examples in two elements - teacher professional development and curricular resources and instructional materials—to share what leading PARCC states are doing that exemplify aspects of the strong rubric categories. [The rubric is available online on Achieve's website.](#)

### **Teacher voice on the Common Core**

In a March 6 commentary published by the Hechinger Report, Boston Teacher Darren Burris provides his view on the Common Core as an educator. He sees the Common Core as an “empowering opportunity for teachers to collaborate, exchange best practices and share differing curricula—because a common set of standards is not the same thing as a common curriculum.” Because teachers will build lessons around the same standards, he believes it creates an unprecedented opportunity to collaborate and share best practices by examining different lesson plans and seeing what works and what does not. [The full commentary is available online on the Hechinger Report's website.](#)

### **Last chance savings deadline for ASCD Annual Conference is March 13**

The last chance savings deadline for the ASCD Annual Conference is March 13. The conference will be held March 24-26 in Philadelphia at the Pennsylvania Convention Center and will explore what committed educators are doing to create a better tomorrow for students of all ages. [For more information or to register for the conference, please visit](#)

[ASCD's website.](#)

### **CCSSO quick guide to the standards now available**

CCSSO has put together [a quick guide to understanding the standards](#). This guide provides a brief synopsis of the information presented in the introductions to the ELA and Math standards into one, easy-to-read document. States should feel free to distribute or post the document on their websites.

### **Past and Upcoming Events**

- In February, TaskStream hosted a webinar on "How the Common Core Will Impact College Readiness and Teacher Education." Dr. Janice Poda, Strategic Initiative Director, Education Workforce, Council of Chief State School Officers, was one of the presenters. The [recording](#) and [powerpoint](#) are now available.
- On March 1, the Alliance for Excellent Education hosted a webinar discussion with the leaders of the two assessment consortia, SBAC and PARCC, that provided an update on each consortium's activities. Leaders of the two consortia shared 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, also participated in the conversation. [The recording and materials are now available online.](#)
- March 22, 2 p.m. EDT: Engaging Higher Education in Common Core Implementation. CCSSO will host a webinar on engaging higher education in Common Core Implementation. This webinar will include the release of a new rubric for states to evaluate their engagement with local institutions of higher education and reflections from Sharmila Basu Conger from the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO). This event is open to all. [Register for this event.](#)
- March 29, 10 a.m. EDT: Schools Moving Up Webinar on Designing Quality Units Aligned to the ELA Common Core State Standards. Kathy Glass, President of Glass Educational Consulting, will present on a process for using sample ELA Common Core standards to map comprehensive units of study and design effective summative assessments. SchoolsMovingUp is a [WestEd](#) initiative to connect schools

and districts with experts, resources, and each other on topics related to improving student outcomes. [Register for this event.](#)

- April 26, 1:30 p.m. EDT: Schools Moving Up Webinar on A Case Study of Online Professional Development at the State Level to Support the Common Core. Brenda Wright and Sarah Galetti from the Arizona Department of Education will discuss the e-Learning for Educators Consortium as their solution in meeting Common Core training needs for Arizona teachers. [Register for this event.](#)