

What are Common Core State Standards?

These academic standards are shared nationally among participating states, including Oregon, to ensure that all students are college- and career-ready by high school graduation. Adoption of the standards is designed to provide benefits such as:

- Allowing teachers to focus on high-quality instruction by encouraging them to align and share lessons, effective teaching strategies and assessments. Proficiency-based teaching and learning can also be supported by the rigorous real-life expectations contained in the Common Core State Standards.
- Developing skills for 21st century jobs, since the standards integrate literacy into multiple subjects. In addition to English and math, the standards integrate literacy into science, social studies and technical subjects – better preparing students for college and careers.
- Providing consistency nationally so that students who move from state to state will transition more easily and require less remediation.

How did Common Core State Standards come to Oregon?

Common Core State Standards stem from a 2009 partnership of the National Governors Association for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Forty-eight states, including Oregon, agreed to help develop national standards for college and career readiness, and set a series of grade-level standards tied to that end goal. Development of the standards was a voluntary effort involving parents, teachers and school administrators – more than 10,000 public comments were weighed during the process. Oregon has been involved since inception: the state's Department of Education and Oregon educational professionals reviewed drafts and provided feedback throughout.

In October 2010, the state Board of Education adopted Common Core State Standards for: 1) English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects and 2) Mathematics. That action made those standards the foundation of the K-12 Oregon Diploma.

The state Board of Education is the public body that establishes policy for elementary, secondary and community colleges (ORS 326.011). The state Board of Education is also responsible for establishing state standards for public kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools (ORS 326.051).

What is a local school board's responsibility?

Local school boards do not adopt the Common Core State Standards. A local board is responsible for the adoption of policies (required by the Division 22 standards) that ensure the district implements state-adopted academic standards. Local boards are held accountable through the annual signing of assurance to the Division 22 standards submitted to the Oregon Department of Education.

What happens if a district doesn't adopt the Common Core State Standards?

As stated above, the state Board of Education has the authority and responsibility to adopt state standards for public K-12 education. The state has already begun applying the Common Core standards, with an expectation for complete implementation by the 2014-2015 school year.

Noncompliance with state guidelines can result in the withholding of school funds. Oregon law (ORS 327.103(1)) provides that "all school districts are presumed to maintain a standard school district until the school district has been found to be deficient by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, pursuant to standards and rules of the state Board of Education." Under ORS 327.103(2), if the Superintendent of Public Instruction finds that a school district is deficient, and corrective action is not taken or an extension granted by the beginning of the following school year, then portions of the State School Fund may be withheld until the deficiencies are corrected.

Additionally, a school district found to be out of compliance must submit a corrective plan within 90 days that is acceptable to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Otherwise (barring natural disaster), further State School Funds may be withheld until an acceptable corrective plan is submitted.

Practically speaking, failure to implement the Common Core State Standards adopted by the state Board of Education could have significant financial repercussions, since districts receive the majority of their funding from the State School Fund. A district could also face losing federal funding, since academic content standards are a requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act and Oregon's waiver under the legislation.

Resources

Additional information on Common Core and student achievement can be found on OSBA's website at <http://bit.ly/1aOw9mq>.

The Alliance for Excellent Education has created a comprehensive background document called Common Core State Standards 101, which can be found at <http://bit.ly/17L45tW>.