

Woodbridge Board of Education  
Woodbridge Board of Education Regular  
Meeting  
Tuesday, January 18, 2011 7:00 PM

Woodbridge Board of Education January 18,  
2011 Regular Meeting 7:00 PM Library Media  
Center Beecher Road School CANCELED

## **Agenda**

- I. **Preliminary Business**
  - A. Call to Order
  - B. Salute to the Flag
  - C. Correspondence
  - D. Public Comment
- II. **Consent Agenda**
  - A. Approval of Meeting Minutes
    - 1. December 13, 2010 Special Meeting
    - 2. December 20, 2010 Regular Meeting
- III. **Reports**
  - A. Superintendent's Report
    - 1. BRS Update
      - a. BRS Monthly Enrollment Report
    - 2. Update on Mathematics
  - B. PTO Update
  - C. CAFE Liaison Report
  - D. ACES Liaison Report
- IV. **New Business**
  - A. Act on 2011/12 Calendar
  - B. Act on continued participation in Open Choice program
  - C. Act on continued participation in Wintergreen Magnet School initiative
- V. **Old Business**
- VI. **Other**
  - A. Public Comment
  - B. Executive Session, in accordance with State Statute
- VII. **Adjournment**

## MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, December 13, 2010  
Library Media Center, Beecher Road School

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. McCreven, Chair called the Public Session to order at 7:03 PM.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Sheila McCreven, Chair; Mr. David Barkin, Dr. Clotilde Dudley-Smith, Dr. Steve Fleischman, Secretary; Ms. Margaret Hamilton, Dr. Thomas Handler, Vice Chair; Mr. Mark Livesay and Dr. YanYun Wu.

**STAFF:** Dr. Guy Stella, Superintendent; Al Pullo, Director of Business Services/Operations; Dr. Len Tomasello, Intermediate Grades Interim Principal; and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Sandy Stein, BOS Liaison; Anthony Schaefer, BOF Liaison; Joe Holowienko, WEA; Larry Hurwitz, Monique MacDonald, Jean Molot, Lori Patrick, Teachers; Jacque Francois, CILU.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

### **CONTRACT EXTENSION**

Superintendent Stella apprised the Board on the experience and leadership skills Dr. Tomasello has brought to BRS and that Dr. Tomasello has agreed to stay until the end of the 2010/11 school year.

### **MOTION #1 – CONTRACT EXTENSION (TOMASELLO)**

Move that we extend the contract of Dr. Len Tomasello, in the assignment of Interim Intermediate Grades Principal, through June 30, 2011.

Dr. Fleischman  
Second by Dr. Dudley-Smith  
UNANIMOUS

Dr. Tomasello thanked the Board for their support and stated he was truly enjoying his time at Beecher.

### **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

The Board reviewed the Financial Reports through November 30, 2010. It was noted that variances are attributed to timing differences. We continue to monitor increases in unanticipated Special Education costs. At this point in time, there is a projected surplus, however, Special Education costs change monthly which could impact the projection. There were no further questions on the process procedures for cash accounts.

### **MOTION #2 - 2010/11 BOARD OF EDUCATION MONTHLY SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT**

Move that we approve the 2010/11 BOE Monthly Summary Financial Report through November 30, 2010, F1, as submitted by the Director of Business/Operations.

Dr. Fleischman  
Second by Dr. Handler  
UNANIMOUS

### **MOTION #3 - 2010/11 BOARD OF EDUCATION MONTHLY DETAIL FINANCIAL REPORT**

Move that we approve the 2010/11 BOE Monthly Detail Financial Report ending November 30, 2010, F2-5, as submitted by the Director of Business/Operations.

Dr. Handler  
Second by Mr. Livesay  
UNANIMOUS

**MOTION #4 - 2010/11 COMBINING FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Move that we approve the 2010/11 BOE Combining Financial Statements through November 30, 2010, F6-7, as submitted by the Director of Business/Operations.

Dr. Handler  
Second by Dr. Dudley-Smith  
UNANIMOUS

2011/12 Budget Update – Superintendent Stella outlined the budget development process. Budget development was quite challenging given current economic factors. The budget proposal maintains favorable class size, infuses technology into all curricula areas, highlights differentiated instruction, global understanding and interdependence in student learning and continues the focus on a balanced literacy program. The \$12,343,940 budget, represents a 2.9% increase, and is poised to increase the quality of education and student achievement while having respect for taxpayer. This budget eliminates 1.5 teaching positions (1 SpEd teacher and .5 Primary Art), 2 teacher assistants and .5 clerical. All line items have been reduced and justified. Administration has responded to the charge of the Board and followed the direction of the Town in developing this budget. The reductions made will have the least impact on programming and further staff reductions would comprise the educational program. This budget supports the district’s Strategic Plan and continues to move curriculum forward in our 21<sup>st</sup> century model.

Questions were raised regarding the administrative reorganization, historical and projected staffing levels, special education, insurance/benefit costs, cultural programs and technology. Suggestions were made to reduce Health/PE staffing and cultural programming. Several members believed that further reductions should be made to attain a “0%” increase while others felt that the recommendation presented by the Superintendent should be the budget submitted to the Town. Further reductions could comprise educational programming. It was noted that if further reductions were made this evening, and the Town deemed it necessary to reduce the requested amount, the Board could then be in the position of reducing below “0”%. As budget development occurs quite early, administration will continue their due diligence to make savings adjustments where possible, and inform the Town accordingly. There may be opportunities to further reduce the budget between that timeframe and the Preliminary Budget Hearing April 18 and Town Meeting on May 16. Board members were reminded that the budget presentation to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance is slated for February 1.

**MOTION #5 - 2011/12 BUDGET ADOPTION**

Move that we approve the 2011/12 budget in the amount of \$12,343,940 as presented by administration.

Dr. Handler  
Second by Dr. Dudley-Smith  
IN FAVOR: Dr. Handler Messrs. Linskog, Livesay; Drs. Dudley-Smith, Fleischman, Wu,  
Ms. Hamilton and Ms. McCreven  
AGAINST: Mr. Barkin

***MOTION PASSES 7-1-0***

Discussion arose regarding the BRS Building Project as the Board has not yet endorsed the recommendation from the Building Committee. The Town Building Committee has recommended, Scheme B, for consideration. Several Board members indicated they were uncomfortable supporting the building project without additional information, and possibly, development of a different project entirely. It was noted that action by the Board of Selectmen will not occur until the Board of Education forwards their recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. If the Town Building Committee and the Board of Education do not agree on the recommendation, it is unlikely the building project will proceed. The Board agreed to hold a joint meeting with the Town Building Committee on January 10, 2011.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** (9:14 PM)  
Dr. Dudley-Smith  
Second by Dr. Fleischman  
UNANIMOUS

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board

# MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Monday, December 20, 2010  
Library Media Center, Beecher Road School

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. McCreven, Chair called the Public Session to order at 7:02 PM.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ms. Sheila McCreven, Chair; Dr. Steve Fleischman, Ms. Margaret Hamilton, Dr. Thomas Handler, Vice Chair and Mr. Carl Lindskog.

**STAFF:** Dr. Guy Stella, Superintendent; Al Pullo, Director of Business Services/Operations; Carol Bequary, Primary Grades Principal; Sheila Haverkamp, Special Services Director and Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Sandy Stein, BOS Liaison, Joe Holowienko, WEA; George Bequary, Lisa Carlson, Pua Ford, community.

**BOARD CORRESPONDENCE** – None

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### *Minutes*

#### **MOTION #1 – MINUTES, NOVEMBER 8, 2010 SPECIAL MEETING**

Move that we approve the minutes of the November 8, 2010 Special Meeting.

Dr. Handler

Second by Dr. Fleischman

IN FAVOR:

Drs. Fleischman, Handler, Ms. Hamilton, and Ms. McCreven

ABSTAIN:

Mr. Lindskog

***MOTION PASSES 4-0-1***

#### **MOTION #2 – MINUTES, NOVEMBER 15, 2010 REGULAR MEETING**

Move that we approve the minutes of the November 15, 2010 Regular Meeting.

Dr. Handler

Second by Dr. Fleischman

UNANIMOUS

## **REPORTS**

### *Superintendent's Report*

- *Beecher Road School Update* – Superintendent Stella highlighted the recent musical concert, holiday program, the children's play performed in Spanish and the TAG program audit being conducted by Jean Purcell. Mr. Pullo apprised the Board of the results on the BOWA Consortium commodity bid opening. Prices locked in at \$2.51 (Gas), \$2.61 (Oil) and \$2.74 (Diesel).

### **CABE Policy Services**

As requested at the November 15 Board meeting, Dr. Stella presented the outline of services offered by the CABE Policy Services. CABE currently services approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the districts across the state. Mr. Vin Mustaro, the director of the CABE Policy Service, will be in attendance at the February 28 meeting to provide an overview of service offerings and answer questions. Mr. Mustaro has recommended that the Board establish a subcommittee for policy review as working with nine members can prove challenging. The Board has the option of a comprehensive review at a cost of \$7,950 or an initial audit at a fee of \$1,800. There is an extensive waiting list for the initial audit and work would not commence until August. There was general consensus to proceed with the Superintendent's recommendation for a comprehensive review. It was agreed that the first payment would be made now, and the second and third assessed in June.

### **MOTION #3 - CABA POLICY SERVICES**

Move that we direct administration to enter into an agreement with CABA for implementation of the Customized Policy Service in the amount of \$7,950.

Dr. Handler  
Second by Dr. Fleischman  
UNANIMOUS

#### **Curriculum Review Cycle**

Dr. Stella and Ms. Bequary provided an overview of the curriculum review of programs throughout the next several years. The new *Common Core of State Standards*, recently developed by 48 states, has shifted focus, primarily in the areas of Math and Language Arts. It was noted that the CSDE mandates all content areas align and link directly to benchmarks, outcomes and assessments identified by the CSDE. This document is intended to be a template as curriculum is always changing and evolving. Charlene Tate from the CSDE will visit the district shortly to conduct observations and provide feedback from the State perspective. Discussion ensued for defining the role of the board in the curriculum review process. The Board suggested developing a framework for discussion encompassing and outline with loose talking points that could be utilized for each curricula area. Talking points could be inclusive of what and how resources are used, budget implications, compliance w/CSDE guidelines/mandates, summary of what we are doing, what is working and what are we doing if it is not working, This framework could then be modified as necessary depending on the subject area.

PTO Update – Ms. Hamilton noted the efforts for the Thanksgiving Food Drive and the Toy Drive that benefited Beecher families.

#### **Review Policies 1000 Series**

Based on the earlier action by the Board, authorizing CABA perform policy review, these policies were not reviewed. The Board agreed to assign 2-3 members to each policy area, who would comprise the subcommittee to work with CABA. Ms. McCreven suggested that Mr. Livesay chair the subcommittee.

#### **CABA Liaison Report**

Ms. McCreven attended the annual CABA meeting and highlighted the teacher contract presentation by Attorney Floyd Dugas. She urged Board members to take advantage of the webinars offered by CABA

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT** –

Lisa Carlson endorsed the curriculum review process, inquired whether any discussion had occurred regarding her request for protocol for placement on the agenda to receive a response from the Board pertaining to unanswered questions on the recent reassignment of staff. She also stated that given the sparse detail in minutes, finances should not be discussed unless there is a videotape of those proceedings.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** (8:18 PM)  
Mr. Lindskog  
Second by Dr. Fleischman  
UNANIMOUS

Recorded by Marsha DeGennaro, Clerk of the Board





# INFO *brief*

AN INFORMATION BRIEF OF ASCD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Coming to Terms with Common Core Standards

After several decades of debate and great controversy, the United States will finally have a common set of standards guiding learning across the nation. More than 35 states have chosen to voluntarily adopt common English language arts and mathematics standards developed as part of the Common Core State Standards Initiative. But what does this state-level action mean in reality? Will adopting these standards help (or even hurt) student achievement? And, how, when, and at what cost will states implement these new K-12 standards?

The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, in partnership with Achieve, ACT, and the College Board, developed the common core standards to prepare U.S. students for success in college and their careers. According to these organizations, the standards are “clear, understandable and consistent” and include “rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills.”

Dismayed at the varying quality of academic standards among states and the resulting wide disparities in student proficiency as measured under the No Child Left Behind Act and highlighted by National Assessment of Educational Progress scores, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has made adoption of the common standards a top priority. States that adopted the standards received extra points on their Race to the Top grant applications, and Duncan has dedicated \$350 million to help a consortia of states develop new state assessments aligned to the common core standards. The Obama administration's blueprint for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act would make Title I funding contingent on adoption of the standards.

ASCD is an endorsing partner of the common core initiative and believes that for the common core standards

to succeed and have maximum effect, they need to be part of a whole child approach to education that ensures students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Policies and resources should support this approach at the local and state levels.

State implementation of the common core over the next three years will be critical to the standards' success, and school leaders will have opportunities to help further shape those standards. To stay informed about the latest news on common core developments and access implementation resources, visit ASCD's common core web page at [www.ascd.org/commoncore](http://www.ascd.org/commoncore).

### Become an Advocate for Education

ASCD is working to change federal policy, and we need your help. *Infobrief* explores federal policy issues that may be considered by Congress. By joining Educator Advocates, you can make your voice heard. To learn more, visit ASCD's Action Center at [www.ascd.org/public\\_policy.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/public_policy.aspx).

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# Coming to Terms with Common Core Standards

From its inception, the Obama administration has set its sights on the unevenness of existing state standards and promoting the development, adoption, and implementation of common standards that would provide each school across the country with clearly defined markers of what students should know and be able to do at each level of their K-12 schooling.

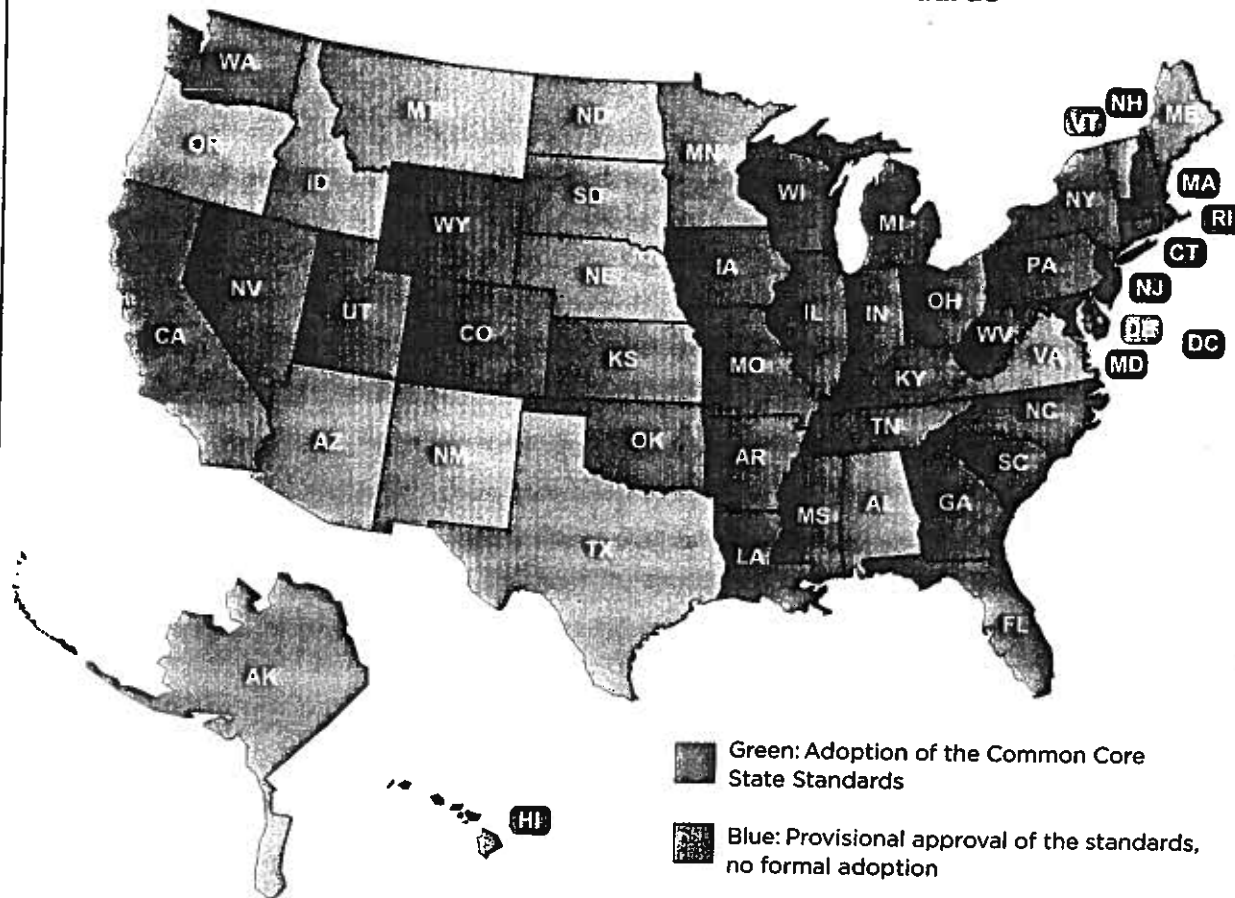
In a 2009 speech at the National Press Club, Secretary Duncan accused

states of setting the bar too low in order to comply with the regulations of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. "We want to raise the bar dramatically in terms of higher standards. What we have had as a country, I'm convinced, is what we call a race to the bottom. We have 50 different standards, 50 different goal posts. And due to political pressure, those have been dumbed down. We want to fundamentally reverse

that. We want common, career-ready internationally benchmarked standards," said Duncan (2009).

NCLB's requirement that students achieve "proficiency" on state tests by 2014 has had unintended consequences. In the Thomas B. Fordham Institute report *Stars by Which to Navigate?*, the authors state that the "hodge-podge of state standards and tests, some of them world-class rigorous, some downright

**State Adoption of Common Core Standards**



This map is current as of November 1, 2010.

embarrassing, made a mockery of NCLB's 2014 drop-dead deadline by which all American youngsters would be 'proficient' in reading and math" (Carmichael, Wilson, Finn, Winkler, & Palmieri, 2009, p. 4).

Duncan (2009) added, "When children are told they are 'meeting a state standard,' the logical assumption for that child or for that parent is to think they are on-track to be successful. But because these standards have been dummed down and lowered so much in so many places, when a child is 'meeting the state standard' they are in fact barely able to graduate from high school. And they are absolutely inadequately prepared to go to a competitive university, let alone graduate."

For a variety of reasons, many business leaders, policymakers, educators, parents, and other individuals see the creation of common standards as key to improving student achievement, closing equity gaps in the nation, and regaining the United States's prominence as a global education leader. Conversely, critics of national or common standards worry that the federal government plans to commandeer what has traditionally been a locally controlled education system. Opponents fear that teachers across the nation will be forced to teach exactly the same curriculum, using the same texts and instructional strategies, at the same time.

One thing, however, many supporters and opponents both applaud is the fact that the common standards project is led by states rather than at the federal level.

With the majority of states committing to implementing these new standards, many stakeholders have

## How Did We Get Here?

The push for national or common academic standards is not new. For at least the last several decades, educators, parents, policymakers, and other stakeholders have debated whether students would benefit from having a set of clearly articulated, ambitious common standards that outline what all students across the nation should know and be able to do at each level.

In 1959, President Dwight D. Eisenhower discussed the creation of national goals for education that would enable the next generation of Americans to be more competitive against other nations.

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* raised a red flag, stating students needed higher standards to compete at the level of young people in other countries.

In 1988, Senator Edward M. Kennedy and President Ronald Reagan collaborated on the "reinvention of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), complete with state-by-state comparisons of student achievement and what became known as 'achievement levels' by which NAEP data are now reported, a close relative of national standards" (Carmichael, Wilson, Finn, Winkler, & Palmieri, 2009, p. 4).

In 1989, President George H. W. Bush oversaw the development of "voluntary national standards" in core subjects, but the initiative died when the Senate gave a thumbs down to the draft version of the U.S. history standards (Carmichael et al., 2009, p. 4).

That same year, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics published a set of standards for teaching mathematics, based on consensus from teachers and experts. These standards have been adopted or adapted by many states, districts, and schools.

In the 1980s and 1990s, several other major organizations produced their own standards, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, National Research Council, and National Council of Teachers of English.

The Clinton administration proposed to expand the NAEP to voluntary national testing in grades 4 and 8 in reading and math and an accompanying framework, but the idea stalled because of Republican opposition in the House of Representatives stemming from concerns about federal involvement in education.

State standards were the foundation for the assessments and accountability requirement of the controversial No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, an approach that generated mixed results. Its unevenness is often cited by Secretary Duncan as a primary reason for needing higher, uniform standards.



important questions regarding how states will make common core standards a reality in the classroom.

## What Are the Common Core Standards?

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is coordinated by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The common core state standards were released in draft form in 2009. The standards are internationally benchmarked and backed by evidence showing that students' mastery of them leads to preparedness for higher education and the workforce. The initiative defines college and career readiness as the ability "to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce-training programs" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

The NGA and the CCSSO say the standards were developed with input from teachers, school administrators, and experts. The groups also received nearly 10,000 comments providing insight that shaped the final drafts of the English language arts and mathematics standards released in June 2010.

"The standards are informed by the highest, most effective models from states across the country and countries around the world, and provide teachers and parents with a common understanding of what students are expected to learn. Consistent standards will provide appropriate benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live," say the NGA and CCSSO (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

In a statement on the standards, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2010) says, "The [common core standards] will help teachers, students and parents know what is needed for students to succeed in college and careers, and will enable states, school districts and teachers to more effectively collaborate to accelerate learning and close achievement gaps nationwide."

Duncan sees the common core standards as the key to President Obama's goal of raising the percentage of U.S. college graduates (with two- or four-year degrees) to 60 percent of the population from the current 39 percent by 2020.

in what students must be able to read so that all students are ready for the demands of college- and career-level reading no later than the end of high school.

The standards mandate "certain critical types of content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, foundational U.S. documents, seminal works of American literature, and the writings of Shakespeare," say the NGA and the CCSSO on the initiative's website (2010), but states, districts, and schools make the remaining content decisions.

The common core standards for writing say that students must achieve

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**"Consistent standards will provide appropriate benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live."**

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According to the common core initiative's website (2010), the common core standards

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Are clear, understandable, and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Are informed by other top-performing countries so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- Are evidence-based.

In the area of reading, the common core standards are meant to "establish a 'staircase' of increasing complexity

the ability to "write logical arguments based on substantive claims, sound reasoning, and relevant evidence." The standards also focus on students' mastery of research, opinion writing, analytical, and presentation skills.

The speaking and listening standards require students to "gain, evaluate, and present increasingly complex information, ideas, and evidence." Use and understanding of media and technology are also required.

At the K-5 level, the mathematics standards provide students with a "solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and decimals— which help young students build the foundation to successfully apply more demanding math concepts

and procedures, and move into applications,” say the NGA and CCSO.

The standards “stress not only procedural skill but also conceptual understanding,” with an aim to develop students’ skills more deeply in

this subject area. The middle school standards are intended to better prepare students for rigorous math courses at the high school level.

At the high school level, the standards “call on students to *practice applying mathematical ways of thinking*

*to real world issues and challenges.*” The high school standards “set a *rigorous definition of college and career readiness*, by helping students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do,” say the standards developers.

Curriculum issues pose one of the biggest unknowns for educators, with some advocating for a stronger curricular framework, curriculum guides, or just more guidance, while others think the standards should stand alone, leaving educators to make appropriate curricular decisions for their students.

The common core standards are decidedly not a curriculum, say the NGA and CCSO. “They are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others will decide *how* the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms,” states the common core initiative website (2010).

Furthermore, although standards in science and social science are being considered, the common core standards currently address only English language arts and mathematics. Effectively integrating all content areas into instruction is essential for students to receive a comprehensive education.

## Compared to What?

While the majority of states have adopted the standards, approval has not been without controversy. (See sidebar.) Kentucky and Hawaii adopted the standards before they

## State Responses to Common Core Adoption

For years, a debate has raged over what education standards to hold students to and how to accurately assess them. After all of this controversy, the adoption of the common core state standards by more than 35 states might be the first step toward accurate assessments and closing the learning gaps among states. Under these new standards, educators across the country will all be working under the same guidelines for what to teach students.

Over the next several years, states will be fine-tuning the adoption of these standards and developing assessments as the United States takes a leap toward common standards. These standards are designed to better prepare students for a changing workforce and an easier transition into higher education.

Missouri, one of the first states to adopt the standards, hopes to implement them by the 2012–13 school year. Implementing these standards did raise concerns among educators, but Amy Youngblood, Missouri ASCD president and executive director of SuccessLink, feels her state’s education system will be able to handle the changes smoothly.

“I think it’s a mixed bag,” Youngblood says about teachers’ concerns. “It’s not going to be where we have to throw everything out and start all over again. Missouri is in pretty good shape, and I think mostly what you hear are concerns and fears from teachers because they don’t know quite know what’s happening yet.”

Youngblood says many of the common core standards are similar to ones in Missouri’s current system, so changes may not be as dramatic as some think. If there are major changes, curriculum teams and other support tools are available to help.

“I think overall, nationwide, it will end up improving our education system,” says Youngblood about the standards’ effects. “I think it will get us more in line with each other from state to state. . . . I really see it as a win.”

—MATT SWIFT

To read the full sidebar, visit [www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/infobrief/vol16/issue4/toc.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/infobrief/vol16/issue4/toc.aspx).



were finalized (or, in Kentucky's case, before they were publicly released). States like Virginia and Texas have decided that their own standards are preferable. In Massachusetts, home to what were widely considered the highest standards in the country, the

*Common Core's Standards Still Don't Make the Grade* (Stotsky & Wurman, 2010). The report looked at whether final common core standards would provide a "stronger and more challenging framework for mathematics and [English language arts] curricula

voluntary adoption guidelines allows states to supplement the common core standards with state-specific standards, up to an additional 15 percent.

## Now, What?

Since so many states have signed on to the common core standards, leaders and educators are collectively wondering how to make these standards a reality quickly, efficiently, and effectively. The Obama administration's blueprint makes Title I funds contingent on state adoption by 2015. But what is needed for successful implementation? Nothing short of maximum effort from every educator, administrator, and policymaker at every level.

First, successful implementation of the common core standards requires intensive capacity building, professional development, and training for teachers, principals, and district- and state-level staff.

Strong leadership will be key to implementing the standards. Many educators strongly support the adoption of the common core standards and anticipate significant benefits for their students; leaders should build on this enthusiasm to motivate their colleagues.

Smooth implementation requires clear communication and open discussions between policymakers, education leaders, teachers, staff, parents, and students. Schools need to be prepared to answer questions by stakeholders, and teachers should know how these standards will help each of their students. Also, collaborative teams, cooperative learning groups, learning communities, and other groups will be needed to help stakeholders at all levels build and discuss

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## Many educators strongly support the adoption of the common core standards and anticipate significant benefits for their students.

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adoption process generated heated debate.

But to those who worry that adopting common standards "will bring all states' standards down to the lowest common denominator," the NGA and CCSSO say, "the Standards are designed to build upon the most advanced current thinking about preparing all students for success in college and their careers. This will result in moving even the best state standards to the next level. In fact, since this work began, there has been an explicit agreement that no state would lower its standards."

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute's review of the standards (Carmichael, Martino, Porter-Magee, & Wilson, 2010) gives the English language arts standards a *B+* and the mathematics standards an *A-*, saying the standards in these areas are far better than those of most states.

However, despite the praise for the standards, some critics question whether they go deep enough or provide ample direction for educators. In July 2010, the Pioneer Institute, a Massachusetts-based think tank, voiced its dissent in the white paper

than do California's current standards and Massachusetts' current (2001) and revised draft (2010) standards" (Executive Summary).

Stotsky and Wurman determined that the "Common Core's literature and reading standards in grades 9–12 do not prepare students for college and career better than those in California and Massachusetts. Common Core's high school standards fall well short of those in California and in Massachusetts 2001 and 2010 in specificity of literary and cultural content. By adopting Common Core's standards for their own, California and Massachusetts significantly weaken the intellectual demands on students in the areas of language and literature. They also weaken the base of literary and cultural knowledge needed for actual college-level work now implied by each state's current or draft standards" (2010, Executive Summary). However, after thorough comparisons of their state standards with the common core's, both California's and Massachusetts's state boards of education opted in.

To allow for some state-level customization, a provision in the

implementation plans before, during, and after the process.

Implementation, says Stephen Sawchuk (2010), will require stakeholders to “be engaged in attempts to reshape teacher training, craft new curricular materials, devise methods of gauging student progress toward any new standards, and audit classrooms to ensure that instruction is aligned with them. None of these conversations will be easy, they say. But without such efforts, a set of common standards will risk becoming the educational equivalent of bric-a-brac— attractive but useless.”

Supporters of the common core standards stress that their formation and adoption is just the beginning of a long journey toward higher levels of student achievement. There are dozens of unanswered questions regarding how these standards will be maintained, updated, and assessed. Some of the pressing questions regarding next steps include

- What guidance, training, funding, resources, and information should the federal government provide to assist with aligning, implementing, and assessing these common standards?
- What protocols and processes do the NGA and CCSSO recommend for successful implementation, maintenance, and oversight of the standards?
- What should schools do about their current standards while aligning and implementing the new standards?
- How will the standards be incorporated into the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act?
- How will the standards affect accountability policies?

■ Will higher education admission criteria have to be aligned with the standards?

■ What role would the National Assessment of Educational Progress continue to play?

■ What kind of state-level assessments are needed?

■ Who will develop the assessments?

■ Who will determine what “passing” scores will be?

■ How should special populations be taken into account?

■ How should schools apply standards to students of different skill levels?

■ How will the adoption of the standards affect the content and design of textbooks?

■ What are the implications for teacher training programs?

Another important issue that will prove challenging in this mad dash toward alignment will be determining which vendors schools can trust. In a post on the Curriculum Matters blog, Catherine Gewertz (2010) states, “It won’t be easy for states and districts to sort out the competing alignment claims. And common-standards insiders are grappling with how to manage the Alignment Rush. This will be interesting stuff, with huge profits hanging in the balance.”

## Moving Forward

ASCD is an endorsing partner of the common core initiative. “Creating such high standards is the first step in transforming our education system,” says ASCD Executive Director Gene Carter (2010). “Just as important is helping educators understand the new standards and how to implement

them in their schools and classrooms. The common core standards effort—and the hard work of CCSSO, NGA, and their partners—won’t bring about positive, meaningful change for students unless we translate the standards from words on a page to tangible improvements in learning and teaching.”

ASCD supports high standards for student learning and achievement that are the result of a development process that is state-led, transparent, and implemented under the following principles:

- Educates the whole child through a broad and rich curriculum;
- Contains global competencies that develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to work effectively in an increasingly interdependent world;
- Provides equity in learning conditions for all students;
- Ensures effective instruction that results in increased learning for all students;
- Expands assessment options in measuring progress toward attaining the standards while maintaining accountability for results;
- Relies on multiple indicators for assessing student performance and achievement;
- Develops coherent policies that support and align teacher preparation, licensure, and ongoing professional development requirements and activities;
- Includes representation of educators at all levels and incorporates their input throughout the development, implementation, and evaluation process; and
- Maintains ongoing support among policymakers, educators, parents, and communities to secure





1703 North Beauregard Street  
Alexandria, VA 22311-1714 USA

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necessary resources for the standards and their successful implementation.

The National Center for Educational Achievement and ACT (Montgomery & Mercado, 2010) suggest what it will take for the common core standards to succeed: "Belief that all students can reach the standards and the educator behaviors to support it. Coherent support structures from state-level down to classroom-level. Willingness and awareness that this is just the first and necessary step . . . the key is in the implementation."

Standards alone don't address the in-school and out-of-school influences that affect student achievement, but they do help provide guidance about where students should be in their skills and knowledge development. The common core standards are just the beginning of a brighter future for the nation's youth.

—WILLONA SLOAN

*For a list of references for this issue of Infobrief, check out the issue online at [www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/infobrief/vol16/issue4/toc.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/infobrief/vol16/issue4/toc.aspx). For a complete list of ASCD resources and services related to the common core state standards, visit [www.ascd.org/commoncore](http://www.ascd.org/commoncore).*

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**ASCD**  
1703 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria, VA 22311-1714 USA  
Telephone: 1-703-578-9600 or 1-800-933-2723 Fax: 1-703-575-5400

ASCD is a membership organization that develops programs, products, and services essential to the way educators learn, teach, and lead.

**Carole C. Hayward, Editor; Gary Bloom, Managing Director, Design and Production Services; Mike Kalyan, Production Manager; Sarah Plumb, Production Specialist; Mary Beth Nielsen, Manager, Editorial Services; Christy Sadler, Sr. Associate Editor**

**ASCD EXECUTIVE STAFF**

**Gene R. Carter, Executive Director; Eric Bellamy, Deputy Executive Director; Judy Seltz, Deputy Executive Director; Judy Zimny, Chief Program Development Officer**

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**WOODBRIIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
2011/12 STUDENT CALENDAR**

**DRAFT**

JULY				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
				1
<b>X4</b>	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

AUGUST (2)				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	<b>*23</b>	<b>*24</b>	<b>*25</b>	26
29	<b>30</b>	31		

SEPTEMBER (20)				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
			1	2
<b>X5</b>	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	<b>29</b>	30

OCTOBER (20)				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
3	4	5	6	7
<b>X10</b>	11	12	13	14
17	<b>(18)</b>	19	<b>(20)</b>	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

NOVEMBER (18)				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
	1	2	3	4
7	<b>*8</b>	9	10	<b>X11</b>
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	<b>(23)</b>	<b>X24</b>	<b>X25</b>
28	29	30		

DECEMBER (17)				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	<b>(23)</b>
<b>X26</b>	<b>X27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>

JANUARY (20)				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
<b>X2</b>	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
<b>X16</b>	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

FEBRUARY (16)				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
<b>X20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
27	28	29		

MARCH (21)				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	<b>*30</b>

APRIL (15)				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2	3	4	5	<b>X6</b>
<b>(9)</b>	10	<b>(11)</b>	12	13
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
23	24	25	26	27
30				

MAY (22)				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
<b>X28</b>	29	30	31	

JUNE (11)				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	<b>(15)</b>
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

NO SCHOOL BUILDING CLOSED	X
Jul. 4	Independence Day
Sep. 5	Labor Day
Sep. 29	Rosh Hashanah
Oct. 10	Columbus Day
Nov. 8	Teacher Workshop
Nov. 11	Veteran's Day
Nov. 24-25	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec. 26-Jan. 2	Holiday Recess
Dec. 26	Christmas Eve Holiday
Dec. 27	Christmas Day Holiday
Jan. 2	New Year's Day Holiday
Jan. 16	Martin Luther King Day
Feb. 20	Presidents' Day
Feb. 20-24	Winter Vacation
Mar. 30	Teacher Workshop
Apr. 6	Good Friday
Apr. 16-20	Spring Vacation
May 28	Memorial Day

ABBREVIATED DAYS	
Aug. 30	First Day for Students
Oct. 18	Parent/Teacher Conference
Oct. 20	Parent/Teacher Conference
Nov. 23	Thanksgiving Recess
Dec. 23	Holiday Recess
Apr. 9	Parent/Teacher Conference
Apr. 11	Parent/Teacher Conference
Jun. 15	Last Day for Students
<b>Dismissal Time 1:10 PM</b>	

SNOW DAYS MAKE-UP
June 18-30 Additional Days Starting April 16

WORKSHOP DAYS (*)
Aug. 23, 24, 25 Nov. 8, Mar. 30

BOARD OF ED. MEETINGS	
July 18	Jan. 17
Aug. 15	Feb. 27
Sep. 19	Mar. 19
Oct. 17	Apr. 23
Nov. 21	May 21
Dec. 19	June 18

OPEN HOUSES	
Sept. 7	Ice Cream Social
Sept. 8	Grades 5/6
Sept. 13	Grades 3/4/MAG
Sept. 21	K, 1, 2

Report Card Distribution    Dec. 9, Mar. 16 and June 15

Kdg. Bus Ride/Safety Demo	Aug. 18
Kindergarten Visitation	Aug. 30

New Staff Orientation Aug. 17 & 18