

State Leaders in Providing Common Core-Aligned Instructional Materials

Prepared for: Daria Hall and Allison Horowitz, The Education Trust

Prepared by: Cassandra Fago
Master of Public Policy Candidate
The Sanford School of Public Policy
Duke University
Faculty Advisor: Mac McCorkle

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i-ii
Introduction	p. 1-4
- Policy Questions	p. 1
- What is Common Core?	p.1
- History of the Common Core	p. 2
- Political Considerations	p. 3
- The Education Trust and Why Instructional Materials Matter	p. 4
Part 1: Leader States	p. 5-20
- Leader State Chart	p. 5
- Identifying Leader States	p. 6
- Leader States and Common Core Instructional Materials	p. 8
Part 2: Promising States and Recommendations	p. 22-28
- Promising States	p. 22
- Recommendations for Promising States	p. 23
Part 3: Conclusion	p. 30
References and State Common Core Resource Websites	
Appendix	

Executive Summary

The Education Trust (Ed Trust) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote academic achievement for all students at all levels nationwide. One of Ed Trust's six main advocacy agenda items is support for college- and career-ready education standards in all states. As part of its commitment, Ed Trust supports state adoption of the Common Core State Standards (Common Core) to raise the bar for student achievement across the nation.

Policy Questions

- (1) Which states can The Education Trust identify as leaders in providing instructional materials to support teachers in the transition to the Common Core State Standards?
- (2) What characteristics of the leader states' efforts in providing Common Core-aligned instructional materials can promising states use as they develop Common Core-aligned curricula?

Identifying Leader States

Of the 45 states which have adopted the Common Core, only some of them have developed Common Core-aligned instructional materials for teachers at the state level. Among these participating states, the threshold criterion for a "leader" state in this study is development of Common Core-aligned instructional materials and making the materials available to teachers in their states. To determine which states have made the most progress in providing instructional materials for teachers, this project examines: the range of Common Core-aligned instructional materials provided in each state, the accessibility of materials, and differentiation of the materials for such special student populations as English Language Learners. The leader states are divided into three groups:

Leader of the Pack states: New York and Tennessee

Full Steam Ahead states: Colorado, Illinois, Maryland and Massachusetts

Strong Start states: Delaware, Georgia and Kentucky

Promising States

Forty-five states have adopted the Common Core, and states are able to learn from one another during implementation. The leader states have learned valuable lessons which provide possible policies, strategies, and initiatives that "promising" states can use to support their teachers in the transition to the Common Core

A promising state is a state with the beginning resources and political will to develop Common Core-aligned instruction materials for their teachers. Promising states have indicated interest in developing Common Core resources by planning for Common Core implementation in applications for Race to the Top grants or No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waivers.

Introduction

The Education Trust (Ed Trust) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote academic achievement for all students at all levels nationwide. One of Ed Trust's six main advocacy agenda items is support for college- and career-ready education standards in all states. As part of its commitment, Ed Trust supports state adoption of the Common Core State Standards (Common Core) to raise the bar for student achievement across the nation.

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What is the Common Core?

The Common Core is a set of English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics learning standards for students in kindergarten through 12th grade (Appendix 1). The standards include expectations for the knowledge and skills students should learn in each grade. An example of a knowledge standard is: describe the causes of the American Revolution. Writing a persuasive essay is an example of a skill standard.

To be in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), states must report academic performance data for all students. Performance data is gathered through yearly standardized assessments which measure student understanding of learning standards in third through 12th grades. The 45 states which have adopted the Common Core will administer end-of-year tests aligned to the new standards. States may either make their own tests or join an assessment consortium. An assessment consortium is group of states that work together to develop and administer the same test. The two assessment consortia are Smarter Balanced (22 states)¹, and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) (17 states and the District of Columbia)². Even though states

¹ "Member States." Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. Accessed Apr 17, 2014.
<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/about/member-states/>

² "About PARCC." Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. Accessed Apr 17, 2014.
<http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc>

will be using the same standards, and some will use the same tests, each state will still determine how well students must do on their assessments to be considered proficient. Both the Smarter Balanced and PARCC assessments are currently undergoing field-testing. The assessments will be ready for full administration during the 2014-2015 school year.³

History of the Common Core

Concern about the quality of education in the United States has grown as American students have fallen behind their peers in other developed countries in academic performance.⁴⁵ As a result, policymakers had been pushing for higher national academic standards. However, standards and curriculum decisions have historically been under the control of state and local officials, and many of them have resisted the movement to create a national set of learning standards. The Common Core is a synthesis or compromise between these two camps. While the standards were developed for all states to use, states still have the choice to adopt the standards or not.

Prior to the development of the Common Core State Standards, the No Child Left Behind Act required that all 50 states have their own sets of academic standards. The only nationwide tool to compare students across states was the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP provides a snapshot of student performance in certain grades. NAEP does not provide scores for individual students or schools. The NAEP is also not a curriculum-based assessment designed to measure student mastery of the specific things they are learning in school. NAEP results instead provide a “snapshot” of student performance at grades four, eight, and 12 for the main assessments, and samples of students at ages nine, 13, or 17 years for the long-term trends assessments.⁶

The development of the Common Core grew out of concerns that the array of different standards in every state did not adequately prepare American students with the knowledge and skills needed to compete globally. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), conducted by

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Survey of Adult Skills First Results Country Note: United States.” *OECD Skills Outlook 2013*. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. <http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/Country%20note%20-%20United%20States.pdf>

⁵ Layton, Lyndsey. “U.S. students lag around average on international science, math and reading test.” *Washington Post*. Dec 2, 2013. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/us-students-lag-around-average-on-international-science-math-and-reading-test/2013/12/02/2e510f26-5b92-11e3-a49b-90a0e156254b_story.html

⁶ “What NAEP Does – And Doesn’t – Report.” National Center for Education Statistics. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/>

the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), is an assessment given every three years in about 60 countries. PISA measures the academic achievement of 15-year-olds in math, reading, and science. The results of PISA's most recent administration in 2012 ranked the United States 26th among the 34 OECD countries in Math. U.S. students also ranked 17th in Reading and 21st in Science. No measurable change has occurred in U.S. students' average score since 2000.⁷ A recent OECD report also indicates that U.S. students show a particular weakness in Math tasks that require higher cognitive demands. The OECD report also examined alignment between the Common Core Math standards and PISA, and suggested that successful implementation of the Common Core would lead to significant performance gains in PISA.⁸

The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) have taken the lead in developing the Common Core. In 2009, the NGA and CCSSO formed working groups which included researchers, teachers, and representatives from K-12 and higher education to write the standards. The groups gathered input from scholars, assessment developers, professional organizations, and educators. The NGA and CCSSO released the Common Core standards in June 2010.⁹

Political Considerations

Some states are experiencing political pushback as they implement the Common Core. While state adoption is voluntary, some critics, including state lawmakers, claim that the Common Core increases federal intrusion. The federal Race to the Top (RttT) grant and state waivers from some requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law encouraged adoption of the standards. Some states may have felt virtually compelled to adopt the standards out of fear that they would not gain RttT grant money, or the flexibility offered by the NCLB waivers if they opted out of the Common Core movement.

Teachers, and teachers unions, have expressed discontent with the implementation of the standards. In February 2014, the leaders of the National Education Association (NEA) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT) reported that a majority of their members thought Common Core implementation in their school was going poorly.¹⁰ The support of teachers and teachers unions is vital

⁷ "Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Results from PISA 2012: Country Note: United States." The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2013.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "Reaching Higher: The Common Core State Standards Validation Committee." The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. June 2010.

¹⁰ "Message Guidance on Common Core State Standards." National Education Association. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. <http://www.nea.org/home/message-guidance-on-ccss.html>

to the survival and success of the Common Core. Discontent from teachers may not stall state government efforts to provide Common Core instructional materials, yet it may have serious implications for how faithfully teachers align their lessons to the new standards.

Legislators are also working to repeal their states' adoption of the Common Core. A bill to repeal the Common Core was signed into law by Indiana Governor Mike Pence in March 2014. The State Board of Education is not prohibited from readopting the Common Core. However, legislators are now pushing for the adoption of a new set of standards developed in Indiana. The new Indiana standards are a fusion of the Common Core and the previous Indiana state standards.¹¹

Ed Trust and Why Instructional Materials Matter

Ed Trust believes that states need to develop instructional materials which align with the student expectations in the Common Core. Both teachers and students will be held accountable for their performance on the Common Core through standardized state assessments at the end of each grade level. Thus Ed Trust sees the need for states to develop standards-aligned instructional materials to ensure teachers are covering what students need to learn according to the standards. Instructional materials include such resources as unit plans, daily lesson plans, student worksheets and activities, quizzes and tests, and texts for ELA.

One goal of common standards is to create an environment where educators have the opportunity to work collaboratively across schools, districts, and states. States, districts, and schools can even work together to create Common Core-aligned resources. Ed Trust seeks to identify states leaders in providing Common Core-aligned materials so that other states can borrow resources, and learn from them.

This report highlights "leader" states which have developed Common Core-aligned resources that teachers can use in their classrooms. It provides recommendations of policies, strategies, and initiatives that "promising" states can implement as they develop their own sets of Common Core-aligned instructional materials. This report will not provide information on the merits of the Common Core or the standards' effectiveness in raising student achievement.

¹¹ Ujifusa, Andrew. "Indiana Gov. Pence Voids 2010 Adoption of Common Core State Standards." *Education Week*. March 24, 2014.

Part 1: Leader States

Leader States
Group One: Leading the Pack States
New York
Tennessee
Group Two: Full Steam Ahead States
Colorado
Illinois
Maryland
Massachusetts
Group Three: Strong Start States
Delaware
Georgia
Kentucky

Part 1 of this report identifies leader states and provides information on the types of instructional materials and resources teachers have in each of the states.

Identifying Leader States

The state boards of education in 45 states and the District of Columbia have chosen to participate in the Common Core. Five states have not adopted the standards: Alaska, Minnesota, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia. Only some of the participating states have developed Common Core-aligned instructional materials for teachers at the state level.

For the purposes of this report, the threshold criterion for a leader state is that the state must have developed Common Core-aligned instructional materials and made the materials available to teachers in their states. If a state meets the threshold criterion, this report uses additional criteria to determine which states have made the most progress and established the best systems for ensuring teachers are able to effectively teach the standards. The additional criteria considered for leader states are:

- Range of Material: The instructional materials include resources for ELA and Mathematics for all grade levels. Possible resources include:
 - ❖ Curriculum maps to help teachers understand how the standards should be taught and plan an entire year of learning.
 - ❖ Unit plans which break the standards into multiple units throughout the school year.
 - ❖ Daily lesson plans
 - ❖ Classroom materials such as in-class activities, worksheets, project ideas, online resources, guides for selecting texts in ELA.
 - ❖ Assessment materials including shorter quizzes and longer unit-level tests
- Accessibility: Resources are readily available and teachers know how to access them.
- Differentiation for special populations: The instructional materials include Common Core-aligned resources for special populations like English Language Learners, students with disabilities, or schools with large populations of consistently low-performing students.

All leader states meet the threshold criterion of developing a set of Common Core-aligned instructional materials. The leader states are separated into three groups based on the extent to which they meet the additional criteria.

“Leading the Pack” States

New York and Tennessee have provided the most comprehensive sets of instructional materials. The materials cover all grades and subjects, and provide a wide range of ready-to-use resources for teachers and students. The resources include completed unit and lesson plans and classroom materials that teachers can find online and use immediately in their classrooms.

“Full Steam Ahead” States

Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, and Massachusetts are well on their way to providing a comprehensive set of instructional materials. The materials currently available to teachers include curriculum maps, unit plans, and guidance on daily lesson plans. These states do not have a full set of instructional materials that include all the ready-to-use in-classroom resources in EngageNY and TN Core, yet many of those materials are in development and will be available before the 2014-2015 school year.

“Strong Start” States

The resources available to educators in Delaware, Georgia, and Kentucky provide guidance on how to assess current instructional materials for their alignment to the Common Core. The states also provide frameworks or unit plans that help teachers plan when to teach each standard.

“Leading the Pack” States

New York and Tennessee

New York: EngageNY

- Adopted Common Core: July 2010
- Member of PARCC Assessment Consortium

New York has been a leader in implementing the Common Core since states began adopting the standards in 2010. EngageNY is an online resource operated by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). EngageNY was launched during the 2011-2012 school year, and provides information and resources for all aspects of the New York State Board of Regents' education reform agenda.¹² The most important resources for teachers are the EngageNY Common Core Curriculum and Assessments which include full years of curricular materials aligned to the Common Core. The non-profit organization Common Core, Inc. helped develop many of the EngageNY instructional materials.

Range of Material: EngageNY is a Common Core-aligned curriculum created by the NYSED, and is the most comprehensive set of Common Core-aligned instructional materials. The resources include materials for prekindergarten through 12th grade in both Math and ELA. The grades 3-12 curricula include six modules. Each module covers about a quarter of the year, with the additional two modules available for teachers to utilize if/when they choose. A module is broken into several units which include daily lesson plans, guiding questions, recommended texts for ELA, scaffolding strategies, examples of proficient student work, and an end-of-module tasks teachers can use to assess student progress.

Accessibility: Education officials in New York developed EngageNY for teachers in their state. However, the resources are available for any teacher, school, or district across the country to access and adapt for their own use. The materials are accessible on a website maintained by the NYSED.¹³

Differentiation: Currently, the EngageNY instructional materials are only available in English. However, the NYSED is working toward providing resources to support English Language Learners in the top five languages spoken in New York state: Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, and Haitian Creole. NYSED is also working with the American Institute for Research (AIR) to create additional Common Core-aligned resources to support ELL and bilingual programs.

¹² Tisch, Merryl (Chancellor, New York State Board of Regents. "EngageNY is for all education reformers." Dec 19, 2011. <http://www.nyssba.org/news/2011/12/19/on-board-online-december-19-2011/engageny-is-for-all-education-reformers/>

Tennessee: TN Core

- Adopted Common Core: July 2010
- Member of PARCC Consortium

TN Core is the main resource provided by the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) for Tennessee educators, school leaders, parents, and students as the state implements the Common Core. The main purpose of TN Core is to provide teachers with Common Core-aligned instructional materials, professional development, and other resources. During the 2013-2014 school year, the TDOE released model instructional resources for Math and ELA.

Range of Material: The TN Core offers instructional units and classroom resources for all grades K-12 in both ELA and Math. Each unit includes a sequence of lessons and detailed instructional guides aligned to specific Common Core standards. In ELA, the unit plans includes suggested texts, student tasks, and a culminating assessment designed to measure student mastery of the unit's standards.

Accessibility: The TN Core is housed on a website managed by the Tennessee Department of Education. The website is only accessible to Tennessee educators. It is easy to navigate and includes all the Common Core-aligned resources developed at the state level. Tennessee has also invested in making sure teachers know how to use the materials available through TN Core. More than 700 CORE (Centers of Regional Excellence) Coaches led the state's summer Math and ELA training, delivering direct support to more than 30,000 educators in summer 2013.¹⁴

Differentiation: Some instructional materials include differentiation strategies for the classroom. However, TN Core does not include entirely differentiated materials for special students groups.

¹⁴ "Race to the Top Tennessee Report Year 3: School Year 2012-2013." U.S. Department of Education. March 2014. Page 4.

“Full Steam Ahead” States

Colorado, Illinois, Maryland and Massachusetts

Colorado: Colorado District Sample Curriculum Project and Full Instructional Units

- Adopted Common Core: August 2010
- Member of PARCC Assessment Consortium

In Colorado, the Common Core standards for math and reading, along with the state's standards for all other subjects, are known as the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS). In the fall of 2012, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) began a state-wide sample curriculum project to provide teachers with resources to implement the Colorado Academic Standards. The project has continued through three phases, each phase building on previous results.

Range of Material: The curriculum samples are general unit overviews in 10 content areas for grades kindergarten through 12th. Teachers can use the resources to determine when to teach each standard, develop evidence outcomes to determine student growth, and provide guidance on the 21st-century skills students should learn at each grade level. Each curriculum sample breaks the standards down into units (lasting four to six weeks of the school year) and describes what students should know and be able to do by the end of the unit. Teachers are also provided with lesson plan ideas, student vocabulary lists, text suggestions (for ELA), and guiding questions that can assist in daily lesson planning. All curriculum samples are organized using a template developed by the CDE. The final phase of the curriculum development project created instructional units which include learning strategies, student and teacher resources, differentiation options, and sample assessments. The full instructional units became available March 31, 2014.

Accessibility: All curriculum samples are available for anyone to access on the Colorado Department of Education website. The samples are categorized by subject and grade level.

Differentiation: The curriculum samples and full instructional units do not include differentiated resources for special student populations.

Illinois: Mathematics Curriculum Models and Common Core Teaching and Learning

Strategies

- Adopted Common Core: June 2010
- Member of PARCC Assessment Consortium

In 2013, the Illinois General Assembly passed Public Act 097-0704.¹⁵ The legislation directed The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to develop materials for middle and high school Mathematics to aid teachers in implementing the Common Core Math standards.¹⁶ Teams of middle and high school education stakeholders developed 24 units for middle school Mathematics and 28 units for high school Math. The units were based on the PARCC Model Content Frameworks. Once the project for middle and high school Mathematics resources was completed, ISBE expanded the Model Curriculum Development Project to grades kindergarten through 5th. In ELA, the ISBE has provided teachers with a set of resources called the Common Core Teaching and Learning Strategies.

Range Of Material: The Mathematics Curriculum Models cover all math standards for kindergarten through 12th grade. The resources include unit plans for the entire school year. Each unit plan explains the standards to be taught, essential questions to guide daily lesson planning, and academic vocabulary. However, the units do not include in-class activity materials.

The Common Core Teaching and Learning Strategies for English Language Arts do not cover all ELA standards. The main standards included are reading informational texts and reading literature. However, some instructional materials are provided for each grade level. The resources include lesson suggestions for how teachers can teach a particular standard, as well as formative assessment suggestions teachers can use to determine how well students understand the concept or skill. Educators can also access graphic organizers and in-class activities materials which align to the lesson and formative assessment suggestions.

Accessibility: The Mathematics Curriculum Models and Common Core Teaching and Learning Strategies are available for anyone to access on the Illinois State Board of Education website.

¹⁵ Illinois Public Act 097-0704. Illinois General Assembly. Jan 1, 2013. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=097-0704>

¹⁶ "Illinois Common Core Standards: Mathematics Curriculum Models." Illinois State Board of Education. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. http://www.isbe.net/common_core/htmls/math-models.htm

Differentiation: The Mathematics Curriculum Models and Common Core Teaching and Learning Strategies do not include differentiated materials for special student populations.

Maryland: Common Core State Curriculum

- Adopted Common Core: June 2010
- Member of PARCC Assessment Consortium

Immediately after adopting the Common Core, the Maryland State Department of Education (MDSE) began developing Common Core-aligned materials to assist teachers in the transition to the new standards. The MD Common Core Curriculum Frameworks, developed to establish the essential knowledge and skills associated with the Common Core that students should learn in each grade, were completed in June 2011. The Frameworks became the base for the development of further instructional resources. Maryland fully implemented a Common Core-aligned curriculum during the 2013-2014 school year.

Range of Material: The Maryland Common Core State Curriculum consists of two parts: the MD Common Core Curriculum Frameworks and the State Curriculum Toolkits. The MD Curriculum Frameworks are the base of the state curriculum. The frameworks organize the Common Core standards by grade and subject, and identify the essential skills and concepts students need to know to master each standard. Maryland education officials used the frameworks to create the State Curriculum Toolkits to ensure the resources in the toolkits aligned with the Common Core and led to student mastery of the standards.

The State Curriculum Toolkits are designed to offer instructional support to teachers in Math. The toolkits are provided for grades K-8 and include the following resources: clarifications of each standard to help teachers better understand the skill or concept to be taught, lesson seeds to assist in lesson planning, Public Release items from previous state assessments, sample assessments that have not been included in previous state assessments, and differentiation resources for advanced and gifted/talented students.

Accessibility: All Common Core-aligned materials are available for anyone to access on the Maryland State Department of Education website. Maryland has also been a leader in training teachers to adjust their teaching practices to align with the Common Core State Curriculum. The state held a

series of Educator Effectiveness Academies to help teachers learn new standards and the resources available through the Maryland Department of Education.¹⁷

Differentiation: Maryland's Common Core State Curriculum does not include differentiated resources for special student populations.

¹⁷ "Educator Effectiveness Academies." Maryland State Department of Education. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. <http://mdk12.org/instruction/academies/>

Massachusetts: Model Curriculum Frameworks and Model Curriculum Units

- Adopted Common Core: July 2010
- Member of PARCC Assessment Consortium

Throughout 2012 and 2013, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) developed about 96 Model Curriculum Units (MCUs) designed to support teachers with resources in the transition to the Common Core. The ESE reports that they will be releasing an additional 80 MCUs for the Common Core subjects, as well as Science and Social Studies. Massachusetts educators from over 60 districts and charter schools participated in the development of the Model Curriculum Units. The Model Curriculum Units provide teachers with resources, including assessments, to help teachers align their instruction to the Common Core.

Range of Material: The Model Curriculum Units do not cover an entire year of learning in Math or ELA. However, they provide several complete units for prekindergarten to 12th grade which teachers can use when teaching the standards the model units cover. For example, fourth grade teachers have access to three complete ELA units they can use when teaching certain concepts. One unit is titled “Using Literary Elements to Determine Theme: Tuck Everlasting.” It includes a unit plan describing the standards addressed in the unit, goals for student understandings, essential questions, and possible assessment strategies to use at the end of the unit. The model unit includes 12 daily lesson plans with instructional resources (e.g. worksheets, in-class activities, digital resources).

Accessibility: Massachusetts’ Model Curriculum Units are available for anyone to access on the ESE website.

Differentiation: The Model Curriculum Units do not include differentiated materials for special student populations.

“Strong Start” States

Delaware, Georgia and Kentucky

Delaware: Teacher Toolkits

- Adopted Common Core: July 2010
- Member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) has compiled instructional materials available to educators through online Teacher Toolkits for both ELA and Math. While few of the resources were created by the DDOE, the materials include high-quality Common Core-aligned resources created by other education organizations.

Range of Materials: The Teacher Toolkits are available for all grades in both ELA and Math. The toolkits contain resources for the Smarter Balanced assessments which will be administered in Delaware, curriculum development tools, and other Common Core-aligned resources. The Toolkits also include instructional samplers designed to help teachers modify instruction and provide models for assessments. Many of the resources available were developed by the non-profit Achieve the Core and the authors of the Common Core State Standards.

Accessibility: The Teacher Toolkits are available for anyone to access on the DDOE website. The toolkits are separated by subject area.

Differentiation: The instructional materials provided by DDOE do not include differentiated materials.

Georgia: CCGPS (Common Core Georgia Performance Standards) Curriculum Frameworks

- Adopted Common Core: July 2010
- Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCTs)

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) created the CCGPS Curriculum Frameworks as “models of instruction” to guide teachers in planning what knowledge and skills can be taught at each grade level.

Range of Material: The CCGPS Curriculum Frameworks are a set of Common Core-aligned unit planning tools for grades K-12 in Math and ELA. The CCGPS Curriculum Frameworks outline an entire year of learning. The maps provide teachers with instructional units that group standards together, and build upon each other throughout the course of a school year. Each framework breaks the standards into units. The units contain suggestions for instructional strategies and student tasks, vocabulary lists, guiding questions, classroom activity resources, and guidance on how to assess student progress on the standards. However, the Frameworks do not provide ready-to-use classroom materials such as in-class activities, worksheets, or quizzes.

Accessibility: The CCGPS Curriculum Frameworks, CCGPS Teacher Guidance materials, and planning templates are accessible to anyone on the GeorgiaStandards.org website. The website is easy to navigate and teachers are able to quickly identify the resources available. Georgia also has an online resource-sharing portal called the Teacher Resource Link (TRL). The TRL is available only to Georgia educators. The GaDOE reports that resources found in TRL include Georgia Virtual School course content, GaDOE subject frameworks, and additional teacher aligned vetted digital links. Digital content is also available for most subjects in grades K-12.

Differentiation: The CCGPS Curriculum Frameworks do not include differentiated materials for special student populations.

Kentucky: Model Curriculum Framework and Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS)

- Adopted Common Core: June 2010
- Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT)

In 2009, the Kentucky Legislature passed a K-12 education reform bill called Senate Bill 1.¹⁸ The bill directed the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to transition to college- and career- ready standards (the Common Core) and develop standards-aligned curriculum resources to educators in the transition to the new standards.¹⁹ The KDE responded by developing the Kentucky Model Curriculum Framework.

Range of Material: The Framework covers both ELA and Math in grades kindergarten through 12th. It is designed to assist educators in rethinking their instruction, reviewing local curriculum for its alignment with the new standards, and provide guidance on designing new curricula. It outlines the general knowledge and skills students should be learning and explains how instruction should shift from the previous Kentucky standards to the Common Core. The Framework does not include the extensive ready-to-use classroom materials available through EngageNY or TN Core.

Accessibility: The Curriculum Frameworks are available for anyone to access on the KDE web site. In addition to the model curriculum framework, Kentucky has a resource called the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS). CIITS is only accessible to Kentucky educators and is not a comprehensive curriculum. It provides teacher- and school-created resources teachers can use in their classrooms. The resources include multi-media instructional tools, lesson planning tools, and a test item bank which can be used to create formative assessments to measure student growth on a particular standard. Educators can also share resources they have created with other Kentucky teachers.

Differentiation: The Model Curriculum Frameworks do not include differentiated instructional materials for special student populations.

¹⁸ Senate Bill 1. Kentucky Legislature. March 25, 2009. <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/record/09RS/SB1.htm>

¹⁹ "Unbridled Learning." Kentucky Department of Education. Feb 2, 2014. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. <http://education.ky.gov/comm/ul/Pages/default.aspx>

Part 2: Recommendations for Promising States

Promising States

The Common Core leader states have learned valuable lessons which provide possible policies, strategies, and initiatives that “promising” states can use to support their teachers in the transition to the common core.

A promising state is a state with the beginning resources and political will to develop Common Core-aligned instructional materials for their teachers. Promising states have indicated interest in developing Common Core resources by participating in the Race to the Top grant program and/or planning for Common Core implementation in applications for NCLB waivers.

Promising States include:

Louisiana	North Carolina	Pennsylvania
New Jersey	Ohio	Rhode Island

Part 2 of this report provides recommendations for policies, strategies, and initiatives that promising states can use to work toward providing Common Core-aligned instructional materials for teachers. Leader states are highlighted as examples of how each recommendation can be used during implementation.

Recommendations

I recommend that promising states pursue the following strategies:

- (1) Partner with curriculum creators.
- (2) Utilize additional sources of funding.
- (3) Establish “working groups” of state education experts to create instructional materials.
- (4) Create resources-sharing spaces for educators to share Common Core-aligned materials.
- (5) Build resources in stages.
- (6) Encourage teachers to use resources from other states and organizations.

Recommendations for Promising States

Recommendation 1: Partner with Curriculum Creators.

Most state departments of education do not have the capacity, expertise, or time to create a comprehensive new curriculum by the time teachers and students will be held accountable for their performance on the Common Core. States are field-testing the PARCC and Smarter Balanced assessments during the 2013-2014 school year. State will then fully implement the tests during the 2014-2015 school year, and teachers will be held accountable for their students' performance on the tests. Due to time constraints, teachers need instructional materials as soon as possible to effectively prepare their students for the new tests. In the past, most districts have purchased instructional materials from independent, private companies who specialize in curriculum creation. States can modify this practice by partnering with curriculum companies or non-profit education organizations to develop Common Core-aligned instructional materials. New York used this strategy to create the EngageNY curriculum.

Example: New York

Common Core, Inc., a non-profit organization founded in 2007, created the math components included in EngageNY. In 2009, Common Core, Inc. received its initial funding to start creating Common Core-aligned instructional materials from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.²⁰ Staff members worked with education officials from NYSED to create the initial curriculum maps which are used to guide educators in Common Core-aligned instruction. Following the initial partnership to create the curriculum maps, NYSED awarded Common Core, Inc. a series of three grants to create a more comprehensive set of resources.²¹ These resources now include unit plans, daily lesson plans, classroom materials and activities, and assessments. New York has also partnered with the American Institute for Research (AIR) to create Common Core-aligned resources to support ELL and bilingual programs.

²⁰ "Awarded Grants: Common Core, Inc." Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Accessed Apr 17 2014. <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database/Grants/2009/12/OPP1011748>

²¹ "Common Core: Our Story." Common Core, Inc. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. <http://commoncore.org/our-story>

Recommendation 2: Utilize additional sources of funding.

Limited financial resources is a significant barrier for states working to create Common Core-aligned instructional materials.²² Most states are facing tightened budgets and political debate about where public money should be spent. Unfortunately, education is often an area targeted for funding cuts, leaving little resources for departments of education to fund such resource-consuming initiatives as creation of a state curriculum. Fortunately, education is an area of emphasis for foundations looking to fund projects. Kentucky is an example of a state that accessed grant money to fund their Common Core curriculum efforts.

Example: Kentucky

Kentucky has funded Common Core implementation in several ways. First, as a Race to the Top winner, the state used federal funds to begin the process of creating curriculum development tools for districts, schools, and teachers. Second, the state won additional funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.²³ The grant was given to the KDOE to support the implementation of the Common Core. The grant money has been used for a number of Common Core projects, including the development of the Model Curriculum Framework.

²² "States' Progress and Challenges In Implementing Common Core State Standards." Center on Education Policy. January 2011

²³ "Awarded Grants: Kentucky Department of Education." Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Accessed Apr 17 2014. <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database#q/k=Kentucky%20Department%20of%20Education>

Recommendation 3: Establish “working groups” of education experts within a state to create instructional materials.

Within every state, a group of experienced and knowledgeable educators can work together to develop instructional materials aligned to the Common Core. State-wide efforts to develop a Common Core-aligned curriculum can include teachers, administrators, and other education professionals who combine their knowledge of the standards, the needs of their students, and their instructional expertise.

Example: Colorado

The Colorado District Sample Curriculum Project brought together 500 Colorado educators to create more than 700 curriculum samples aligned to the Common Core.²⁴ The educators participating in the project attended workshops over the course of several months to combine their respective expertise and create instructional materials for all content areas in grades K-12. Colorado’s curriculum project has developed through several phases. Educators created the instructional materials, and were given multiple opportunities to provide constructive feedback on the accomplishments of the project and future plans.

Example: Maryland

The Maryland State Department of Education brought together hundreds of classroom teachers, instructional leaders, administrators, and higher education representatives to help create the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum. The educators created the Common Core Curriculum Frameworks and the Teacher Toolkits which provide Maryland educators with standards-aligned instructional materials created by education professionals familiar with the needs of Maryland students. Maryland is also leading professional development sessions with over 6,000 educators from across the state. Every school in the state sends representatives to participate in the professional development designed to train teachers on Common Core-aligned instruction. The attendees then share what they learned with the other teachers at their schools.²⁵

²⁴ “Colorado’s District Sample Curriculum Project: Teacher Created Curriculum Samples.” Colorado Department of Education. Accessed Apr 17 2014. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/samplecurriculumproject>

²⁵ “Maryland’s New State Curriculum.” Maryland State Department of Education. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. <http://mdk12.org/instruction/commoncore/>

Example: Kentucky

Kentucky has consistently engaged its educators throughout implementation of the Common Core and development of Common Core-aligned instructional materials. The Kentucky State Department of Education created leadership groups which include teacher leaders, school leaders, and district leaders who meet throughout the year to participate in training and collaboration. The leadership groups then share what they have learned with their colleagues and lead instructional efforts in their schools.

Recommendation 4: Create teacher-sharing spaces for educators to share Common Core-aligned materials.

As already described, a benefit of the Common Core is that teachers are able to share resources across schools, districts, and states, because they are teaching the same skills and concepts. States can encourage the practice of sharing Common Core-aligned materials by creating online spaces for teachers to post and search for ready-to-use instructional resources created by their colleagues. Georgia and Kentucky have both created online spaces for teachers to share materials.

Example: Georgia

Georgia educators have access to an online instructional material-sharing resource called the Teacher Resource Link (TRL). To ensure that the materials are high quality, each resource available on TRL is vetted for alignment to the Georgia standards. The resources are separated into student and teacher materials. Teachers are able to search for materials by the standards they plan to teach. TRL is interactive and user-monitored because educators are able to rate, recommend, and save the resources they use. TRL includes materials created by Georgia educators, as well as additional digital resources provided by the Georgia Department of Education including Georgia Virtual School course content and the GaDOE subject frameworks.

Example: Kentucky

Kentucky maintains an online resource called the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS). CIITS has several functions that Kentucky educators use, including a portal for educators to share and search for teacher-created Common Core-aligned instructional materials. Teachers can also use CIITS to create formative assessments. CIITS includes a test item bank of questions aligned to the state standards, which teachers can compile and administer to check student progress in a specific area.

Recommendation 5: Build resources in stages.

Almost every state included in this report developed a pool of instructional materials over time, building on previously created resources to ensure alignment of all new materials to the Common Core. Maryland and Colorado are examples of states that used this strategy to develop their resources.

Example: Colorado

Colorado used purposeful planning to create their Common Core-aligned instructional materials. The District Sample Curriculum Project was completed over three phases.²⁶ Phase I began in Fall 2012. The Colorado Department of Education brought together teams of Colorado educators to create the curriculum overview samples. The Curriculum Overview Samples translated the Common Core standards into curriculum maps which teachers use to plan when they will teach each standard, how students will be assessed (evidence outcomes), and the 21st century skills students should learn at each level. In Spring 2013, Phase II of the Curriculum Project brought together more educators from around the state to participate in Refining Workshops designed to provide feedback on the overall project, the Curriculum Overview Samples, and the work CDE had planned moving forward. Phase III occurred between Fall 2013 and Winter 2014. Colorado educators created Instructional Unit Samples in all subjects for grades prekindergarten through 12th.

Example: Maryland

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) began the development of a new state Common Core-aligned curriculum by creating the Common Core State Curriculum Frameworks. The Frameworks were created by educators from across Maryland, and delineate the essential knowledge and skills associated with each standard for all grades in Math and ELA. MSDE's second Common Core materials project was the creation of Curriculum Toolkits which provide teachers with more ready-to-use Common Core-aligned instructional materials such as lesson plans, sample assessments, and suggestions for including technology in the classroom. MSDE used the initial Curriculum Frameworks to ensure all the materials in the Toolkits were aligned to the appropriate standards and led students to mastery of the corresponding essential knowledge and skills.

²⁶ "Colorado's District Sample Curriculum Project: Teacher Created Curriculum Samples." Colorado Department of Education. Accessed Apr 17 2014. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/samplecurriculumproject>

Recommendation 6: Encourage teachers to use resources from other states and organizations.

Some state departments of education have not developed their own sets of Common Core-aligned resources because they lack the resources or are traditionally local-control states. However, states can still take advantage of the common nature of the Common Core by utilizing quality standards-aligned materials created by other states or organizations. Delaware is an example of a state that has directed states toward Common Core-aligned materials created by other states and organizations.

Example: Delaware

Delaware encourages teachers to access instructional materials created by other states and independent organizations. The Delaware Department of Education maintains a webpage with descriptions of and links to Common Core-aligned curricular resources. One of the major resources included is Achieve the Core. Achieve the Core is an online resource, available to anyone, which includes Common Core-aligned lesson plans, student writing samples, practice assessment questions, curricular tools, differentiated materials for struggling readers and English Language Learners, and professional development resources.²⁷ The resources are available in both ELA and Math for grades K-12.

²⁷ Achieve The Core. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. <http://achievethecore.org/>

Part 3: Conclusion

Some states have developed useful Common Core-aligned instructional materials to support teachers in the transition to the Common Core, yet many states are still leaving major curricular decisions up to districts and schools. Creating or purchasing new instructional materials can be nearly impossible for districts and schools that don't have the financial resources. It is important that states continue to share resources and strategies for providing teachers support in the transition to the Common Core to achieve the benefits of common standards.

New York and Tennessee are leading the way in providing Common Core-aligned instructional materials for teachers to use as states transition to the new standards. The resources available in these states cover ELA and Math in all grades. Both states provide extensive materials: unit and lesson plans, assessments, suggestions for texts, and ready-to-use materials for the classroom.

Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, and Massachusetts have made substantial progress in developing instructional materials. These states have taken steps to provide teachers with resources to help them understand the new standards, plan a year's worth of learning according to the standards, and provide guidance on daily lesson plans. These states have also begun to develop some ready-to-use classroom materials. More complete sets of instructional materials will be available during the next few school years.

Delaware, Georgia, and Kentucky are also on their way to providing Common Core-aligned materials for instruction. While these states are still leaving many decisions up to districts, they have provided structure and guidance through model curriculum units and frameworks to assist teachers in planning instruction. Both Georgia and Kentucky have also created online spaces for educators to access and share Common Core-aligned materials.

It is important to note that while some states offer suggestions for differentiation strategies, few states have developed Common Core-aligned materials differentiated for specific student populations like English Language Learners and students with special needs. These students will need additional support as states transition to higher standards with the Common Core.

A main benefit of the Common Core is the opportunity for states to learn from each other during implementation. Leader states have provided lessons learned and strategies to solve challenges

as promising states work toward providing Common Core-aligned instructional materials for teachers to use as they transition to the new standards. Promising states should look for partnerships with other organizations to develop instructional materials. Foundations can provide financial resources to fund Common Core implementation. States should also use their internal resources, such as classroom teachers, administrators, and higher education representatives, to create instructional materials and then continuously build on those resources. Promising states can also direct teachers to high-quality resources made available by other states and organizations, and create opportunities for educators to share Common Core-aligned instructional materials they have found or created themselves.

References and Common Core State Resource Websites

References

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- "Reaching Higher: The Common Core State Standards Validation Committee." The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. June 2010.

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“What NAEP Does – And Doesn’t – Report.” National Center for Education Statistics. Accessed Apr 17, 2014. <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/>

Common Core State Resource Websites

New York

New York State Education Department	http://www.nysed.gov/
EngageNY: Common Core Curriculum and Assessments	http://www.engageny.org/common-core-curriculum-assessments
EngageNY: New York State ELA Curriculum	http://www.engageny.org/english-language-arts
EngageNY: New York State Mathematics Curriculum Modules for Grades P-12	http://www.engageny.org/mathematics

Tennessee

Tennessee Department of Education	http://www.state.tn.us/education/
TNCore: ELA Curricular Resources (password protected)	http://www.tncore.org/english_language_arts/curricular_resources.aspx
TNCore: Math Curricular Resources (password protected)	http://www.tncore.org/math/curricular_resources.aspx

Colorado

Colorado Department of Education	http://www.cde.state.co.us/
CO District Sample Curriculum Project: Intro	http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/samplecurriculumproject
CO Curriculum Overview Samples	http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/curriculumoverviews
CO Math Curriculum Overview Samples	http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/curriculumoverviews/mathematics
CO ELA Curriculum Overview Samples	http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/curriculumoverviews/readingwritingcommunicating

Illinois

Illinois State Board of Education	http://www.isbe.state.il.us/
IL Math Curriculum Models	http://www.isbe.net/common_core/htmls/math-models.htm
IL Common Core Teaching and Learning Strategies for ELA	http://www.isbe.net/common_core/htmls/resources.htm

Maryland

Maryland State Department of Education	http://marylandpublicschools.org/
Maryland Common Core Curriculum Frameworks	http://mdk12.org/instruction/commoncore/
Maryland ELA Common Core Curriculum Frameworks	http://mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum/reading/index.html
Maryland Math Common Core Curriculum Frameworks	http://mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum/mathematics/index.html
Maryland Math State Curriculum Toolkit	http://mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum/mathematics/vsc_toolkit.html

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Department of Education	http://www.doe.mass.edu/
MA Curriculum and Instruction: Common Core State Standards Initiative	http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/commoncore/
MA Curriculum Framework for ELA and Literacy	http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/0311.pdf
MA Curriculum Framework for Mathematics	http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/math/0311.pdf
MA Curriculum and Instruction Files	http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/files.html

Delaware

Delaware Department of Education	http://www.doe.k12.de.us/
DE Math Teacher Toolkit	http://www.doe.k12.de.us/commoncore/math/teachertoolkit/curdevtools.shtml
DE ELA Teacher Toolkit: Curriculum Development Tools	http://www.doe.k12.de.us/commoncore/ela/teachertoolkit/curdevtools.shtml
DE ELA Teacher Toolkit: Resources for Common Core State Standards	http://www.doe.k12.de.us/commoncore/ela/teachertoolkit/resource_pages/genccresources.shtml

Georgia

Georgia Department of Education	http://www.gadoe.org/Pages/Home.aspx
Georgia Teacher Resource Link (TRL)	http://www.gadoe.org/Technology-Services/SLDS/Pages/Teacher-Resource-Link.aspx
GA Content Area Frameworks	https://www.georgiastandards.org/Frameworks/Pages/BrowseFrameworks/Frameworks.aspx
GA Content Area Frameworks for ELA (grades K-5)	https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA-K-5.aspx
GA Content Area Frameworks for ELA (grades 6-8)	https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA-6-8.aspx
GA Content Area Frameworks for ELA (grades 9-12)	https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA-9-12.aspx
GA Content Area Frameworks for Math (grades K-5)	https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/Math-K-5.aspx
GA Content Area Frameworks for Math (grades 6-8)	https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/Math-6-8.aspx
GA Content Area Frameworks for Math (grades 9-12)	https://www.georgiastandards.org/Frameworks/Pages/BrowseFrameworks/math9-12.aspx

Kentucky

Kentucky Department of Education	http://education.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx
KY Continuous Instructional Improvement System	http://education.ky.gov/districts/tech/ciits/Pages/Continuous-Instructional-Improvement-Technology-System.aspx
KY Model Curriculum Framework	http://education.ky.gov/curriculum/docs/pages/ky-model-curriculum-framework.aspx

Appendix 1: Examples of Common Core State Standards

Below are six Common Core standards. These standards cover the Grade 4 Mathematics “Number & Operations in Base Ten” domain. Grade 4 Mathematics has five domains in total. Each domain includes 4-7 standards.

Generalize place value understanding for multi-digit whole numbers.

CCSS.Math.Content.4.NBT.A.1

Recognize that in a multi-digit whole number, a digit in one place represents ten times what it represents in the place to its right. *For example, recognize that $700 \div 70 = 10$ by applying concepts of place value and division.*

CCSS.Math.Content.4.NBT.A.2

Read and write multi-digit whole numbers using base-ten numerals, number names, and expanded form. Compare two multi-digit numbers based on meanings of the digits in each place, using $>$, $=$, and $<$ symbols to record the results of comparisons.

CCSS.Math.Content.4.NBT.A.3

Use place value understanding to round multi-digit whole numbers to any place.

Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic.

CCSS.Math.Content.4.NBT.B.4

Fluently add and subtract multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm.

CCSS.Math.Content.4.NBT.B.5

Multiply a whole number of up to four digits by a one-digit whole number, and multiply two two-digit numbers, using strategies based on place value and the properties of operations. Illustrate and explain the calculation by using equations, rectangular arrays, and/or area models.

CCSS.Math.Content.4.NBT.B.6

Find whole-number quotients and remainders with up to four-digit dividends and one-digit divisors, using strategies based on place value, the properties of operations, and/or the relationship between multiplication and division. Illustrate and explain the calculation by using equations, rectangular arrays, and/or area models.