



# COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

## Communications Toolkit

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## Introduction and How to Use this Toolkit

More than 40 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Common Core State Standards (Common Core) and are engaged in the work to implement them. Now more than ever, it is critical to deliver a clear and consistent message about the value of these college and career ready standards and share information about work in progress around assessments, curricula, professional development, and transition plans.

A clear structure for communicating the ongoing benefit of the Common Core is an essential strategy for implementation. This toolkit provides a structure and suggestions for engaging key stakeholders in support of implementation. However, since implementation will vary widely from state to state, this toolkit is designed to help states and their representatives to use their own facts to continue advocating for the standards while sharing consistent messages.

Many of these outreach tasks will be handled by different staff throughout state education agencies (SEAs). For example, your communications office will likely serve as the point of contact for press outreach, while your government relations department will likely manage outreach to legislators and other government officials. While the messengers may be different, the messages should be consistent. We recommend that you consider forming a team of SEA staff to coordinate communications around implementation of the Common Core in order to be intentional and strategic about communications coming from the state.

This toolkit includes talking points and messaging for key audiences, frequently asked questions (FAQ), draft materials such as blog posts and opinion pieces, and how-to guides for communications outreach. It is not meant to be a list of rigid requirements, but rather a menu that allows states to pick which options will be most effective with their unique target audiences. It is meant to be a plug-and-play communications guide that can be utilized and adapted to support and bolster each state's unique efforts.

## Suggested Do's and Don'ts

### Do

- Personalize communications to your state;
- Establish a Common Core implementation team including your communications staff/public information officer (PIO);
- Share your state's messages about the Common Core with all SEA staff, since everyone communicates with external stakeholders;
- Create a calendar of when and how you will communicate with different audiences about Common Core implementation;
- Identify partners in your state to help communicate your messages about the Common Core for you; and
- Target messages to specific audiences.

### Don't

- Refer to the Common Core as “curriculum” or “curriculum standards;”
- Wait until your work is finished to let stakeholders know about it – get broad input along the way, and let them know what to expect;
- Forget that communications is a two-way street;
- Assume that because it's on your website, people know about it; and
- Feel like you're repeating yourself by using the same messages over and over. The message may be new to your audience.

## Background on the Common Core State Standards

Over a year ago, governors and state commissioners of education from 48 states, 2 territories, and the District of Columbia committed to developing a set of consistent state standards for proficiency in English-language arts and mathematics for grades K-12. The Common Core State Standards were developed through a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

The standards, developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and education experts, establish clear and consistent goals for learning that will prepare our children for college and the workforce. The NGA Center and CCSSO received feedback on drafts of the standards from national organizations representing, but not limited to, teachers, postsecondary educators (including community colleges), civil rights groups, English-language learners, and students with disabilities.

An advisory group provided advice and guidance on the initiative. Members of this group include experts from Achieve, Inc., ACT, the College Board, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the State Higher Education Executive Officers.

These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education so that they graduate from high school able to succeed in college and career. States were asked to adopt the Common Core in their entirety and could include a limited number of additional standards to the core in English-language arts and mathematics.

The standards are:

- Aligned with college and workforce expectations;
- Clear, understandable, and consistent;
- Rigorous in content and the application of knowledge through higher-order skills;
- Built on strengths and lessons of previous state standards;
- Informed by standards in other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- Evidence-based.

The final standards were released in June 2010 and have since been adopted by more than 40 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

With the adoption phase largely complete, it is crucial that the standards are implemented quickly and effectively. As a fully state-led effort, there is no overarching implementation process that can be applied in all states – nor should there be. States are individually responsible for implementing the standards in whatever way best suits their unique population of students. Currently, states are at various stages of the implementation process.

Many critical components of implementation, such as curricula and assessment development, are typically lengthy and challenging processes. Fortunately, with consistent standards, states can now work together in these efforts,

making the most efficient use of time and resources, and pooling their collective expertise to create the highest possible quality products.

CCSSO convenes numerous consortia and working groups to address common issues and solve complex problems identified by states. One such consortia, the Implementing the Common Core Standards work group, is specifically designed to help states implement the standards, allow them to share best practices, and work together on developing specific tools or products for states to use.

Also, a vast majority of states have joined together in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), both of which are designing assessments, instructional materials, and professional development resources for teachers aligned to the standards. Private publishing companies and other education organizations, including teachers' unions, are also working to develop instructional material. These efforts show great promise in paving a smooth transition to the Common Core.

## Key Messages

### State-Led Effort

- The standards, which have now been adopted by more than 40 states and the District of Columbia, were developed through a state-led initiative spearheaded by governors and school chiefs.

### College and Career Readiness

- Our state’s new standards are designed to make sure that all students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college and career.

### Clear and Consistent Expectations

- The standards provide students, parents, and teachers with a clear understanding of what students are expected to learn at every grade level, and as such, serve as a roadmap to quality education. Outcomes improve when students, parents, and teachers are on the same page working together toward shared goals.
- The standards provide consistent learning goals for all students – regardless of where they live – so that when children move from one state to another, they will stay on track in school, making the transition of moving more seamless for both students and teachers.

### Local Decision-Making on Implementation

- The standards establish *what* students need to learn, but do not tell teachers *how* to teach. Teachers will continue to create lesson plans and tailor instruction to the unique needs of the students in their classroom.
- Implementation decisions will remain local. Teachers and school leaders will determine how the standards are to be taught and will establish the curriculum, just as they currently do, allowing for continued flexibility and creativity.
- There is still much work to be done to make sure that the promise of our new standards turns into a reality of success for our students. We must support educators at all levels as they work on implementation. In the coming years, we will be working with communities, teachers, principals, and parents from around the state to make key decisions about assessments, curriculum, and all of the resources needed to maximize the benefits of the new standards.

## Talking Points

### The Standards

- Our new standards will provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn so that teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them.
- Consistent standards will provide appropriate academic benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live, and allow states to more effectively help all students succeed.
- With students, parents, and teachers all on the same page and working together toward shared goals, we can ensure that students make progress each year and graduate from school prepared to succeed and build a strong future for themselves, our communities, and the country.
- These new standards are designed to be relevant in the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in both college and career.
- When American students have the skills and knowledge needed in today's job market, our communities will be strong and competitive in the global economy.
- The standards incorporate the best and highest of previous state standards in the U.S. and are internationally benchmarked to the top performing nations around the world.
- The best understanding of what works in education comes from experience. That's why the standards were developed by teachers, principals, parents, and education experts, not politicians in Washington.
- The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who are in them, which is why the standards allow each teacher in each classroom to figure out what works best for his or her students.

### The Development Process

- The Common Core State Standards Initiative was a state-led effort to establish consistent and clear education standards for English-language arts and mathematics so students will be prepared for success in today's world.
- The initiative was launched by state leaders through their membership in the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center).
- The process used to write the standards was designed to ensure that the standards were informed by:
  - The best standards among states and around the globe;

- The experience of teachers, content experts, and states, and
  - Feedback from the general public.
- The development process began by working with higher education, employers, and the best research available to determine what students need to be college and career ready. Standards were then developed for each grade level to prepare students to meet those expectations by graduation.
  - CCSSO and the NGA Center received nearly 10,000 comments from the public on the standards, and experts worked to incorporate that feedback for the final release.
  - Next, CCSSO and the NGA Center worked with experts to ensure that the K-12 standards are aligned with the college and career ready standards.
  - Finally, a validation committee of experts reviewed the standards and determined that they will prepare students for college and career.
  - Each state that chose to adopt the standards did so through its own unique process of determining educational standards.

### The Mathematics Standards

- The standards stress not only procedural skills, but also conceptual understanding to make sure students are learning and absorbing the critical information they need to succeed at higher levels – rather than the current practices by which many students learn enough to get by on the next test, but forget it shortly thereafter, only to review it again the following year.
- The K-5 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 practical applications of those core math principles.
- In kindergarten, the standards follow successful international models and recommendations from the National Research Council’s Early Math Panel report by focusing kindergarten work on the number core: learning how numbers correspond to quantities, and learning how to put numbers together and take them apart (the building blocks of addition and subtraction).
- The K-5 standards build on the best state standards to provide detailed guidance to teachers on how to navigate their way through complex topics such as fractions, negative numbers, and geometry, and to do so by maintaining a continuous progression from grade to grade.
- Having built a strong K-5 foundation, students can do hands-on learning in geometry, algebra, and probability and statistics once they reach the middle school level. Students who have completed grade 7 and mastered its content and skills will be well-prepared for algebra in grade 8.
- The middle school standards are robust and provide a coherent and rich preparation for high school

mathematics.

- The high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically.
- 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.
- The high school standards emphasize mathematical modeling – the use of mathematics and statistics to analyze empirical situations – to help students better understand the concept and improve decision-making skills.

## The English-Language Arts Standards

### *Reading*

- The standards establish a “staircase” of increasing complexity 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 also require the progressive development of reading comprehension so that students advancing through the grades are able to gain more from whatever they read.
- Through reading a diverse array of classic and contemporary literature as well as challenging informational texts in a range of subjects, students are expected to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspectives. Because the standards are building blocks for successful classrooms – but recognize that teachers, school districts, and states need to decide on appropriate curriculum – they intentionally do not offer a required reading list. Instead, they offer numerous sample texts to help teachers prepare for the school year and allow parents and students to know what to expect at the beginning of the year.
- The standards mandate certain critical types of content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, foundational U.S. documents, and seminal works of literature. The standards appropriately defer the many remaining decisions about what and how to teach to states, districts, and schools.

### *Writing*

- The ability to write logical arguments based on substantive claims, sound reasoning, and relevant evidence is a cornerstone of the writing standards, with opinion writing – a basic form of argument – extending down into the earliest grades.
- Student research – both short focused projects (such as those commonly required in the workplace) and longer term in-depth research – is emphasized throughout the standards, but most prominently in the writing strand, since a written analysis and presentation of findings is a critical skill for students to master.

- Annotated samples of student writing accompany the standards and help establish adequate performance levels in writing arguments, informational/explanatory texts, and narratives in the various grades.

### *Speaking and Listening*

- The standards require that students gain, evaluate, and present increasingly complex information, ideas, and evidence through listening and speaking as well as through various media platforms.
- An important focus of the speaking and listening standards is academic discussion in one-on-one, small-group, and whole-class settings. Formal presentations are one important way these standards are put into practice, but so is the more informal discussion that takes place as students collaborate to answer questions, build understanding, and solve problems.

### *Language*

- The standards expect that students will grow their vocabularies through a mix of conversations, direct instruction, and reading. The standards will help students determine word meanings, appreciate the nuances of words, and steadily expand their repertoire of words and phrases.
- The standards help prepare students for real life experience at college and in 21st century careers. The standards recognize that students must be able to use formal English in their writing and speaking, but that they must also be able to make informed, skillful choices among the many ways to express themselves through language.
- Vocabulary and conventions are treated in their own strand not because skills in these areas should be handled in isolation, but because their use extends across reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

### *Media and Technology*

- Just as media and technology are integrated in school and life in the 21st century, skills related to media use (both critical analysis and production of media), are integrated throughout the standards.

## Implementation

- The standards do not tell teachers how to run their classrooms or principals how to run schools. They clearly lay out what students should learn, but allow schools and teachers to decide how to best help students reach their academic goals.
- The Common Core State Standards have always been, and continue to be, a state-led effort.
- The standards are being implemented by each state individually.
- The federal government did not play a role in the development of the standards, and it is not playing a role in implementation.

### *Assessments, Curricula, and Instructional Materials*

- Development of assessments, curricula, and instructional materials will be up to the states and local communities.
- The standards offer an unprecedented opportunity for states to work together to dramatically improve the quality, cost-effectiveness, and comparability of state assessments.
- States voluntarily formed two coalitions to develop assessments and curriculum resources aligned to the standards: the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Forty-four states and the District of Columbia are participating in at least one of these groups.
- The consortia are focused on developing richer, more authentic measures of student learning. The assessments will be focused on providing more precise, actionable information for teachers to use to improve learning.
- Education publishing companies and education organizations, including teachers' unions, are also leading efforts to develop curricula and instructional materials aligned to the standards.
- Working together will allow states the opportunity to share best thinking and practices as well as pool resources in their efforts to ensure that teachers have the tools they need to successfully implement these standards.
- Districts and schools will continue to choose the curriculum that meets their local needs.
- Districts and schools will have at their disposal many rich curriculum resources that may help them set their own curriculum. There will not be a single national curriculum.

### *Professional Development*

- In most schools, fully implementing the Common Core State Standards will require shifts in instructional strategies and practices.
- Educators, school leaders, and teacher preparation programs will benefit from thoughtful and embedded professional development opportunities to prepare for and navigate the transition to the standards.
- There are many groups actively engaged in this issue and professional development has been an important part of the implementation.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### The Standards

#### **What are the Common Core State Standards?**

The Common Core State Standards are a set of consistent, high quality academic benchmarks that clearly define the knowledge and skills all students should master by the end of each school year in order to be on track for success in college and career. The standards were created through a state-led initiative and have been adopted by more than 40 states.

#### **Why are the Common Core State Standards important?**

The standards are a common sense first step toward ensuring our children obtain the best possible education no matter where they live. With clear academic expectations for each grade level, teachers, parents, and students can work together toward shared goals. Furthermore, the standards draw from the best existing standards in the country and are benchmarked to top performing nations around the world, ensuring that our students are well prepared to compete not only with their peers here at home, but also with students around the world, maintaining America's competitive edge.

With consistent standards, states can also now opt to pool their collective expertise and resources in order to reduce costs for each individual state and bring the most well-informed, creative thinking to various efforts around the standards. For example, states can work together to:

- Make expectations for students as clear as possible to parents, teachers, and the general public;
- Encourage the development of textbooks, digital media, and other teaching materials aligned to the standards;
- Develop and implement high quality curricula that best enable teachers to help all students reach the standards;
- Develop and implement comprehensive assessment systems to measure student performance against the standards and replace the existing testing systems that often are inconsistent, burdensome, and confusing; and
- Evaluate and advocate for policy changes needed to help students and educators meet the standards.

#### **Will local teachers be able to decide what and how to teach with the Common Core State Standards?**

The standards simply establish a clear set of goals and expectations that will prepare students with the knowledge and skills to help them succeed. It is up to local teachers, principals, superintendents, and others to decide how the standards will be reached. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

#### **What grade levels are included in the Common Core State Standards?**

The English-language arts and mathematics standards are for grades K-12. Research from the early childhood and higher education communities also informed the development of the standards.

### **What do the standards mean for students with disabilities and English-language learners?**

The standards create consistent, high expectations for all students and provide a greater opportunity for states to share experiences and best practices that can lead to an improved ability to best serve young people with disabilities and English-language learners. The K-12 English-language arts and mathematics standards include information on application of the standards for [English-language learners](#) and [students with disabilities](#). Additionally, alternate assessments are being developed for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities, as are English-language proficiency assessments tied to the Common Core for English-language learners.

### **Why are the Common Core State Standards for just English-language arts and mathematics?**

English-language arts and mathematics were the subjects chosen for the Common Core because they teach skills upon which students build skill sets in other subject areas. Furthermore, the English-language arts standards address literacy across disciplines, including science, social studies, and technical subjects.

### **Do these standards incorporate both content and skills?**

Yes, both content and skills are important and have been incorporated in the Common Core State Standards. One of the criteria by which the standards have been evaluated is whether or not they include rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, and communications.

## The Development Process

### **Who led the effort to establish the Common Core State Standards?**

The standards were created through a state-led initiative with the goal of establishing a single set of clear educational standards for English-language arts and mathematics to be shared among states. The effort was spearheaded by governors and school chiefs through their membership in the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), respectively.

### **How were the standards created?**

Governors and schools chiefs convened a diverse team of teachers, parents, administrators, researchers, and experts in the education community to design the standards in order to ensure they reflect the best current thinking in education, the realities of the classroom, and aspirations for our children. CCSSO and the NGA Center also provided public comment periods for all stakeholders to submit feedback on the draft standards documents.

To ensure this process was open, inclusive, and rigorous, several working groups and committees were formed:

- The Standards Development Work Group was responsible for determining and writing the standards;

- The Feedback Group provided expert input on draft documents, drawing from a wealth of research-backed information; and
- The Validation Committee – comprised of independent, national education experts – reviewed the standards to ensure they met the development criteria. Its members were nominated by states and national organizations, and selected by a group of 12 governors and chiefs who held leadership positions at the NGA Center and CCSSO.

### **By what criteria were the standards developed?**

The standards were developed according to the following criteria, set by states through governors and school chiefs:

- Alignment with expectations for college and career success;
- Clarity, so that educators and parents know what they need to do to help students learn;
- Consistency, so that students are not taught to a lower standard just because of where they live;
- Inclusivity of both content and the application of knowledge through higher-order skills;
- Grounded in strengths and lessons of existing state standards;
- Benchmarked to top performing nations across the world;
- Realistic for effective use in the classroom; and
- Evidence and research-based.

### **How are educational standards determined?**

Each state has its own process for developing, adopting, and implementing standards. As a result, past academic expectations of students have varied widely from state to state. The Common Core has now established the same rigorous expectations for a majority of students; however, each state remains fully in control of its own standards and all related decisions.

### **Were teachers involved in the creation of the standards?**

Yes, teachers have been a critical voice in the development of the standards to ensure that they are practical in the classroom. The National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), among other organizations, have been instrumental in bringing together teachers to provide specific, constructive feedback on the standards.

### **Did the federal government play a role in developing these standards?**

No, the federal government was not involved in the development of the standards. This has always been, and continues to be, a state-led and driven initiative. States voluntarily adopted and are currently implementing the standards on an individual basis. These standards are in no way federally-mandated – rather, they are the standards of more than 40 individual states.

## Adoption

### **How did states adopt the Common Core State Standards?**

Each state adopted the standards through its own unique adoption process. Some states adopted the standards through their state boards of education, while others adopted them through their state legislatures. Since their release in June 2010, the standards have been adopted by more than 40 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## Implementation

### **What does the Common Core mean for students?**

The Common Core holds students to rigorous, yet attainable, academic benchmarks designed to ensure college and career readiness. The standards also provide important clarity for students– and their parents and teachers– about the knowledge and skills they should be learning at every step in their academic careers. Furthermore, consistent standards will allow kids to stay on track when their families move between states, rather than entering a new school behind or ahead of their peers, as was often the case when standards varied from state to state.

### **How will the standards impact teachers?**

Great educators are at the core of a great education. Teachers helped design the standards to ensure that they reflect the realities of the classroom and provide the clarity and consistency teachers need to make sure their students stay on track and are equipped with the knowledge and skills for success. The standards do not tell teachers how to teach, but rather establish what students need to learn. It is up to schools and teachers to decide how to best help students reach them.

Additionally, the standards will:

- Help colleges and professional development programs better prepare teachers;
- Provide the opportunity for teachers to be involved in the development of assessments linked to the standards;
- Allow states to develop and provide better assessments that accurately measure whether students have learned what was taught; and
- Guide educators toward curricula and teaching strategies that will give students a deep understanding of the subjects and skills they need to learn.

### **Who is in charge of implementing the standards?**

The standards are being implemented by each state individually through the collaboration of various groups including SEAs, local education authorities, institutes of higher education, state educator associations, and individual school leaders. They do not tell principals how to run their schools, and they do not tell teachers how to teach, nor do they mandate or include any accompanying assessments, curricula, or instructional materials. While states are voluntarily coming together on certain implementation-related efforts, each state is independently and solely responsible for putting the standards into practice.

**Will curricula, assessments, and instructional material aligned to the standards be developed?**

Yes, there are already state-led efforts underway to develop standards-aligned curricula, assessments, and instructional materials. CCSSO has convened a group of states to work together to address systemic approaches to managing the transition to the Common Core. It is specifically designed to help states implement the standards, allowing them to share best practices and work together on identifying and disseminating specific tools for states to use.

Forty-four states and the District of Columbia are participating in at least one of two coalitions – the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) – to develop assessment systems that will include summative tests in addition to formative measures. By collaborating, states can both conserve money and resources, and make sure that top talent from across the country has a seat at the table to create the highest quality products. Additionally, education publishing companies and other education organizations, including teacher organizations, are leading their own efforts to develop curriculum resources and instructional materials aligned to the standards.

**Is the federal government playing a role in implementation?**

No. The federal government is not implementing the standards. However, the federal government is supporting states that have adopted the standards by providing funding to the two state coalitions working on the development of assessments and curriculum resources, the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

**Will the standards be updated?**

Yes, there will be an ongoing state-led development process to continuously improve the standards.

# Stakeholder Engagement

## District Engagement

Districts play a critical role in implementing the standards, so it is important that they are well informed and prepared for the work ahead. States can offer important support to districts by maintaining a continuous, open dialogue; ensuring administrators have all of the information they need; providing districts with messaging to communicate with students, parents, and teachers; and offering ideas and resources for how to use this messaging effectively.

### Regular District Meetings and Conference Calls

In order to establish regular (monthly or quarterly) two-way communications with districts, states can set up recurring in-person meetings and conference calls with a team of district representatives, led by a representative from the SEA. Each district representative is the primary liaison between the district and the state. They are responsible for knowing and understanding the Common Core, and bringing that information to their districts. They are also able to relay messages back from the district to the SEA.

These district meetings and calls serve several purposes, including enabling:

- Districts to express concerns and questions related to the standards;
- States to inform districts about the standards;
- States to keep districts apprised of updates regarding the standards (e.g. new professional development opportunities and resources);
- States to provide training for district leads to be advocates for the standards and communicate with their colleagues and school faculty;
- States to facilitate an ongoing dialogue among districts about their experiences implementing the standards; and
- States to provide districts with ideas and resources for communicating about the standards with principals and teachers.

Lastly, these meetings will allow the state to help district leads convene a team of principals and teacher leaders within their districts, in order to serve as a liaison between the state and individual teachers. This trickle-down information system is explained further in the Teacher Engagement section of this toolkit.

### **Featured State: Kentucky**

Kentucky has successfully put this model into practice by establishing Content Leadership Networks, a tiered system of providing information and resources on the Common Core so that “every school [...] has a knowledgeable and cohesive leadership team that guides the professional learning and practice of all administrators, teachers, and staff so that every student experiences highly effective teaching, learning, and assessment practices in every classroom, every day.” In addition to empowering districts at the local level, this system is time-saving and cost-efficient.

Content Leadership Networks begin with a representative from each district, typically someone whose job involves some form of instructional work, and who attends regular meetings on the Common Core with other district leaders in the region. These meetings are an opportunity to share experiences and collaborate with others in the region, and learn about the standards in order to become a resource for other administrators and teachers in the district.

These meetings generally involve a variety of multimedia presentations that aim to provide district representatives with ideas for how they can help teachers effectively incorporate the standards into the classroom. This might entail a video of a teacher giving a lesson aligned to the standards or a PowerPoint presentation on the components of the state's accountability system. There are also hand-outs and fact sheets for attendees to take home for future reference.

Further information on the Content Leadership Networks can be found [here](#), and examples of deliverables, including videos, PowerPoints, fact sheets, and talking points, can be found [here](#).

### Communications Toolkit for Districts

A clear and concise communications toolkit for districts will be a valuable resource for administrators to communicate with their principals and teachers about the standards. The most useful toolkits will include both messaging and guidance on how that messaging should be used.

The messaging portion of the toolkit can be created by drawing directly from messaging material provided in this document – background information, talking points, FAQ, etc. State-specific information regarding standards implementation can also be added.

In addition, these toolkits can offer ideas for how districts might use the messaging to engage their principals, teachers, and constituents. Some suggestions for district administrators might include:

- Writing about the standards and developments related to implementation in district-wide newsletters;
- Developing new district- or school-specific resources for students, parents, and teachers about the standards;
- Explaining the standards and implementation efforts at administration meetings and school board meetings;
- Adding information about the standards to school websites; and
- Using any district- or school-wide events as an opportunity to further talk about the state's new standards.

### District Listservs

Establishing a listserv that reaches all district administrators across the state is a simple way of keeping districts informed of the standards, important new developments, and upcoming events and meetings. These emails would be straightforward, designed to quickly bring school administrators up to speed. They can also link to more in-depth information, direct administrators to extensive resources, and instruct them how to voice questions and concerns (likely by contacting their district lead).

## District Communications Calendar

Once this listserv is established, a district communications calendar can be established that creates a schedule for once-a-month emails (or more frequent if necessary) on the Common Core. Each email might contain one or more of the following elements:

- An update on standards implementation (this could be an update on the assessment process, an update on new professional development opportunities, or just a digest of positive news on the effort);
- Features on what different schools are doing to implement the standards effectively; and
- A calendar for upcoming meetings or events relevant to the standards (e.g., a school board meeting about selecting instructional materials, a conference call about implementation, professional development opportunities that will include training on the Common Core).

## Weave the Common Core into Other SEA Program Work

The responsibility for implementing the Common Core does not fall only to a few individuals in a school or district. Staff across the SEA should be empowered and educated to communicate about the standards to the school and district officials with whom they interact in their program work. It is important that districts receive a clear and consistent message from everyone in the SEA about implementing the standards.

- To inform agency staff, conduct an information session about the Common Core and what the state's implementation plans include.
- As communications go out to districts about the standards, ensure that agency staff members also receive copies of these messages so they can reiterate them in their interactions with district or school officials.
- It might also be useful to provide staff with tools such as sample PowerPoint slides to incorporate into their own presentations.

## **Teacher Engagement**

Ultimately, teachers will be responsible for making sure that every student in every classroom achieves the academic benchmarks in the Common Core State Standards. In order to do this, teachers must receive the tools, information, and resources they need. States can play an important role in providing teachers with this support by developing useful informational material and establishing consistent, effective channels of communication.

## User-Friendly Fact Sheets

Consumer-friendly literature to outline the benefits of the standards to parents and teachers is a useful tool. This can take the form of fact sheets for each grade and each subject – one for parents and one for teachers.

These fact sheets can be formatted in whatever way most clearly presents the standards' benefits in any given state. For example, some state education agencies, such as those in Georgia and Utah, have produced Common Core brochures to provide introductory information on the standards. The GA brochure can be accessed by clicking [here](#) and the Utah brochure can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Some fact sheets might be organized according to the following:

- Brief introductory language about the Common Core and how it will help students to be better prepared for advancement by the end of the year might also be included;
- Summary of differences between the old standards and new; and
- A “Kids Will Know” section giving clear guidance to parents and teachers about what students in each grade will know by the end of the year. The National Parent Teacher Association’s (PTA) [Parent Guide to Student Success](#) provides grade-by-grade overviews of the Common Core in English-language arts and mathematics. The Parent Guides can be a helpful resource for producing state-specific fact sheets. To modify these guides to include your state logo, please email [parentguides@pta.org](mailto:parentguides@pta.org).

### Communicating Directly with Teachers about the Standards

As described in the previous section on District Engagement, states can establish a trickle-down distribution system based on human capital. This system will likely entail a state level representative communicating with a team of district leads. These district leads should assemble a team of principals and teacher leaders representing each school and subject area. District leads pass on important information about the standards to this team of principals and teacher leaders, who in turn relay information to individual teachers. This system can be customized to fit each state, taking into account the organization of the public school system and the state’s size, among other factors.

This system is designed to create a useful, productive information flow between the state and individual teachers. It can be used whenever new information is necessary on the standards, and kept in shape through regular contact. As described below, this means frequent updates on where implementation is in each state, as well the implementation experiences of teachers, principals, administrators, and parents from around the state.

### Teacher Communication Preferences Survey

After the distribution system is developed, execute a survey to teachers that aims to identify alternative communications channels. The survey can be distributed through district leads, or alternatively through partnerships with outside organizations that have access to the state’s teachers, such as the state teachers’ union, an ASCD state affiliate, or subject-specific professional organization. The survey should be brief and be designed to elicit the following information:

- The channels teachers utilize for information about education, including:
  - Social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.)
  - Email lists
  - Meetings
  - Conference calls
  - Blogs and other online forums
- How frequently and through what channels teachers interact with parents;
- Teachers’ comfort level with the standards; and
- Information about the standards that teachers would find helpful.

The Appendix contains sample survey questions.

## Teacher Communications Calendar

After the survey is created, each state can establish an editorial calendar that details the communications it will disseminate through the distribution channels. This may include an introductory call (or series of calls, depending on the size of the state and the number of people involved) to introduce the role of the communication system, a primer on the Common Core State Standards, their value, what they mean for the state, and a review of the key message points. There could also be a review of the type of communications that will go out (informed by the by survey findings).

After the initial call, states can establish a process for twice a month communications through the distribution channels the survey indicates will be most effective. Each communication should consider the following elements:

- An update on standards implementation (this could be an update on the assessment process, new professional development opportunities available, or just a digest of positive news on the effort);
- A discussion with an individual teacher, parent, administrator, or principal about how they are implementing/preparing for implementation of the Common Core;
- A calendar for upcoming meetings or events that either are about, or relevant to, the standards (e.g., a school board meeting about curriculum, a conference call about implementation, professional development opportunities that will include training on the Common Core); and
- If possible, digital pieces such as a two-minute video for each grade and each subject area, creatively recounting the standards' advantages for parents and teachers.

## **Higher Education Engagement**

It is important that future educators and the professors who train them are well informed about the Common Core and the benefit it will bring to teachers, parents, and students. It is also important for these individuals to understand that the effort to develop these standards was led by the states to better prepare students for college and careers. States can reach out directly to institutions of higher education to have conversations about how best to ensure that faculty and prospective teachers have the information and resources they need.

There are two basic factors regarding higher education engagement in the implementation of the Common Core. The first is to establish two-way communication with higher education leaders and faculty. The second is to ensure higher education leaders and faculty see the Common Core and the common assessments as measures of student preparedness for college. Important points to highlight with higher education officials are:

- The Common Core is defining the English-language arts and mathematics content and skills a student needs to be successful when entering college, not outlining or defining everything that makes a student college ready.
- Common assessments based on the Common Core standards will aim to inform whether a student requires remediation in English-language arts and mathematics; they are not trying to determine college entrance criteria. For science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields in particular, the base level of mathematics students need may differ depending on the major the student is pursuing.

A brief PowerPoint presentation relating to college-readiness that might be used with higher education officials is available by clicking [here](#).

Also, a useful primer on the Common Core for higher education officials, titled “Implementing the Common Core State Standards: An Action Agenda for Higher Education,” was produced by the American Council on Education (ACE), Achieve, Inc., and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO). It is a good resource to share with higher education officials in your state and to use to get ideas for conversation starters with your institutions of higher education. The ACE/SHEEO/Achieve publication can be accessed by [clicking here](#). The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) produced a similar Common Core paper in June 2011 targeted to higher education officials in Western states, and the paper can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

### Information Sessions at Key Schools

One way to communicate directly with both teachers in training and professors of education is through organizing in-person information sessions at key education schools and institutes of higher learning. Representatives from the state education agency would be prepared to lead a discussion about the Common Core State Standards, explaining what they are and how they were developed, and dispelling any misconceptions. The teacher fact-sheets will be a useful resource for this audience. In order to further enhance these conversations, it will be useful, if possible, to bring a teacher from a school within the state to talk about how the standards are impacting his or her classroom. He or she can highlight first-hand all of the benefits the standards are bringing to schools.

### Teacher Training and Higher Education Conferences

States can keep an eye out for opportunities to participate in teacher training and higher education conferences. Speeches, workshops, and panel discussions at these events are a great way to reach large audiences of future teachers and the faculty and administration who run teaching institutes.

### Invite Teacher Preparation Instructors to Professional Development Sessions on the Common Core

Teacher preparation instructors can benefit from attending professional development sessions on the standards. They can then bring this information back to their students to help ensure that future educators enter the classroom thoroughly and accurately informed on the academic standards to which they are teaching.

### Teacher Training and Higher Education Publications and Blogs

There are often news publications and blogs geared toward future teachers and faculty at teaching schools. States should work to submit pieces to these outlets highlighting how the standards will impact classrooms and benefit teachers.

### Department of Higher Education Meetings and Conferences

It will be important to establish a strong relationship with your state's department of higher education. Contact the appropriate official in this office and ask for the opportunity to meet to learn about the standards and discuss how teacher colleges and institutes of higher education can work to ensure that all new teachers are prepared to teach the standards as soon as they enter the classroom.

## **Elected Official Engagement**

While many legislators across the country successfully completed their role of voting in favor of the standards months ago, it is important to continue engaging with these elected officials and maintain an open, running dialogue. Throughout the implementation process, state representatives should be kept up-to-speed. As crafters of education policy and decision makers, state elected officials play an important role in education issues and continued support for the standards is crucial. They are also very effective at getting press coverage, and can be useful representatives if they support the Common Core State Standards efforts. Your state may already be engaged in conversations with elected officials so any effort to contact these representatives should be coordinated through your government relations staff at the SEA.

### Reaching Out to Elected Officials

The first step in lobbying is to identify the elected officials you wish to target. You might think about targeting state legislators who have a particular interest in education issues and/or who sit on committees that deal with education (especially those in leadership positions). Before you conduct any outreach, you should do some research about officials you are contact. Find out more information about their background and specific areas of interest. If the legislature had to vote on adopting the standards, find out how each member voted.

Then, call the offices of the elected official and ask to speak with an aide who handles education issues. If the member voted in favor of adopting the standards, express thanks for his or her support. Brief the aide on the standards – explain how they came to be and touch on the many ways they will help students, parents, and teachers throughout the member's district. Also explain that now with the standards adopted, the state has to do the hard work of implementation. Inform the aide of the SEA's plan for implementing the standards quickly and effectively. Finally, ask if they would like an in-person meeting to learn more about the standards and discuss how the state senator or representative can aid implementation efforts.

### State-Specific Profiles on the Common Core State Standards

In conversations and meetings with state elected officials, it will be useful to have clear and concise state-specific data on the standards. The Alliance for Excellent Education has developed comprehensive profiles of all 50 states and the District of Columbia that serve this purpose. The Alliance captures each state's progress in adopting the Common Core, subsequent work ensuring the standards are accompanied by college- and career-ready assessments, and the potential benefits of preparing all students for success in college and career. These state profiles can be found [here](#).

## Working with Allies

Showing that the Common Core State Standards are widely supported within a given legislative district will help capture the attention of elected officials. In order to demonstrate this support, SEAs can reach out to and work with stakeholder groups outside of the traditional education space. The military and business communities are key allies to consider as collaborative partners, as they are among the most influential constituencies in states across the country, and have spoken out favorably on the standards. The [U.S. Army Accessions Command](#), the [Military Child Education Coalition](#), the [Business Roundtable](#), and a [broad business coalition](#) have all released statements of support. The full list of organizations who have spoken out in favor of the standards can be found [here](#).

## **Press Engagement**

Consistent outreach to state and local press covering education will provide a regular, public conversation about the value of the standards, while keeping key constituencies informed of progress on the initiative. Strong press outreach entails a combination of engagement with key reporters and a steady drum beat of opinion pieces placed at key times describing the value that particular developments in the standards' implementation process deliver to parents, teachers, and students.

## Statewide Opinion Pieces

Through the process of organizing teachers, parents, and administrators (detailed below), identify a few key representatives or spokespeople from across the state who can take the lead in authoring or signing opinion pieces in support of the standards. Potential key spokespeople include:

- State Teachers of the Year;
- Award-winning school leaders and principals; and
- Heads of local PTAs and parent associations.

The first piece might be a scene-setting op-ed completed either during the summer of 2011 or just before the school year, preferably signed by the state chief and the governor, focusing on the benefits of the standards to students in the state. Following that op-ed, local representatives (teachers, administrators, school leaders, or parents) can submit amplifying letters to the editor in support of implementation that recognize that while it may be a difficult process, it is necessary for the success of our kids, our schools, and our communities.

The Appendix contains scene-setting op-ed guidelines and a sample, as well as letter to the editor guidelines and samples.

## Local Opinion Pieces

After the first round of opinion activity, a series of local opinion pieces (either for local papers or blogs) authored or signed by teachers discussing how the standards are benefitting their individual classrooms can be submitted based on a calendar of opinion engagement.

The Appendix contains guidelines and samples for local op-eds and blogs.

### Information Tour of Key Press

Before the school year begins, develop a presentation detailing the benefits of the standards to the state, its classrooms, its teachers, parents, and students, and set up meetings with targeted education and political press to do desk-side briefings about the standards. The purpose is not to inspire the press to write immediately (though that may come out of it), but to provide useful background as the story progresses. For a sample PowerPoint presentation, click [here](#).

### Pitching Stories to Reporters about How the Standards are Helping Teachers and Students

Reporters like to add a local angle to stories to show what is happening in a school or classroom. Work with district leaders or principals where implementation is going well, and pitch a story to a reporter about the new, wonderful things that are happening there.

## Appendix

*Please note that this toolkit was designed for distribution to chief state school officers across the country. As such, the material is inherently broad-based. While all communications can be guided by the messaging laid out earlier in this document, in order for these communications efforts to be effective, they will need to be targeted to specific audiences in each state. The sample materials in this Appendix should be modified to reflect the unique circumstances of each state and address information that will resonate with the state's specific audience needs.*

### Contents:

- Scene-setting Op-ed
- Letters to the Editor
- Local Op-ed and Blog
- Teacher Communication Preferences Survey

## Scene-setting Op-ed

### Description

- An op-ed authored by the state school chief and governor for publication in the major state newspaper in summer 2011 or at the start of the school year that emphasizes the importance of the standards and the benefit they will bring to the state (follow-up op-eds by other key spokespeople in local papers can also follow this model).

### Guidelines

- Provide background on the standards, including descriptions of:
  - What they are, and
  - How they were developed.
- Explain the benefits of the standards:
  - Clear examples of how they are different and an improvement from the state's previous standards;
  - How they will positively impact students, parents, and teachers in the state; and
  - How they will positively impact the economy and our country as a whole.
- Explain the importance of implementing the standards fully, effectively, and quickly.
- Describe the state's efforts around implementation.

### Sample

This school year, students, parents, and teachers across the state have something great to look forward to: they will be the first to begin reaping the benefits of [state]'s new academic standards. These standards are a critical step forward in providing all of [state]'s young people with the first-rate education they deserve.

We have eagerly anticipated bringing these standards to [state]'s schools since we joined with governors and school chiefs from across the country more than two years ago with the shared goal of developing a set of clear academic benchmarks to prepare all students, no matter where they live, for success in the classroom and in the real world. These standards, known as the Common Core, reflect the collaboration and thoughtful work of teachers, researchers, and education experts, and are also informed by thousands of public comments. They are academically rigorous, draw from the best standards in the country, and are benchmarked to top performing nations around the world. The fact that more than 40 states have moved swiftly to adopt these standards is a true testament to their high quality.

In [state], these standards will set a high – yet reachable – bar for students. They will ensure that our young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in both college and career. For example, since students are often required to write, research, and analyze texts outside of literature in college and the workplace, the standards place an emphasis on developing these skills in other areas such as history and science. The standards also focus on teaching math in real world contexts, applying mathematical reasoning to questions not presented as math problems.

The positive impact of [state]'s new standards expands beyond their content. They are clear and concise, so that students, parents, and teachers all understand what should be learned at each grade level and can work together toward shared goals. They are consistent across a vast majority of states, so that students moving to or from [state]

can seamlessly transition academically. Further, the standards leave room for creativity and flexibility in instruction: teachers and schools will decide how the standards are to be taught to best meet the needs of their students.

The standards will not only improve schools and communities in [state], but also help secure our future prosperity as a nation. All young Americans, no matter where they live or where they come from, must be prepared to compete in a global economy, and studies show that education in the U.S. currently lags behind several other nations. These standards will help make sure that students enter the world prepared to succeed, and continue America's legacy as a driver of innovation and leader in the world.

While the standards hold great promise for our students, we now face the difficult task of putting them into practice. And in order to reach their full potential, the standards must be implemented fully and effectively. This means we need strong curricula and dynamic assessments, and teachers must have access to the best professional development opportunities. Fortunately, the work to develop these resources is already underway, and [state] is a part of the effort. We are working to put all of these pieces into place as quickly as we can.

All students deserve access to a great education. All parents deserve to know what their kids need to learn by the end of each school year. And all teachers deserve a set of academic standards that help do their job as effectively as possible. We are excited to implement these standards over the coming years and help transform these ideals into reality.

## Letters to the Editor

### Description

- Letters to the editor penned by local spokespeople (Teachers of the Year, PTA leaders, award-winning teachers and principals, superintendents, etc.) in response to opinion pieces that amplify support for the standards and recognize that while implementation may be a difficult process, it is necessary for the success of the state’s kids, schools, and communities.

### Guidelines

- State agreement with support for the standards expressed in opinion piece.
- Specifically explain why the standards will benefit your student, classroom, school, etc.

### Samples

#### **From parent perspective:**

Re: “[Article Title]”:

I applaud your recent article, “[title],” about [state]’s new standards and the benefits they will bring to schools across the state.

As a parent, I do all that I can to be involved in my kids’ education, and I know that this support system is crucial. I am thrilled that [state] has adopted the Common Core State Standards because they provide the clarity that I need to understand what my kids are expected to learn in every grade. I will be able to work with their teachers to make sure that they are on track and reaching their full academic potential.

While implementing these standards is no easy feat, our state must do so as quickly and effectively as possible.

#### **From teacher perspective:**

Re: “[Article Title]”:

As an [X] grade teacher in [town], I was pleased to read [Governor’s name] and [School chief’s name]’s recent piece about our state’s new academic standards.

These standards are robust, clear, and consistent. They will make sure kids go on to college and career with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. However, these standards recognize that no two classrooms are the same. They will allow me to continue tailoring instruction to best meet the needs of my students.

I am eager to begin teaching to these standards, but in order to do so, I need high quality assessments and instructional material, among other tools. Developing these resources is a challenging task; however, it is vital that we do so as soon as possible.

## Local Op-ed and Blog

### Description

- Op-eds in local newspapers and blogs authored by teachers published steadily throughout school year explaining how the standards are benefitting their individual classrooms and pressing for timely implementation.

### Guidelines

- Provide background on the standards, how they came to be, what they entail.
- Describe the standards' overall benefits.
- Provide an anecdote or a specific example from the classroom demonstrating the positive impact the standards will have.
- Call for the standards' full and timely implementation.

### Sample Op-ed

There are many ways to make the world a better place, and I like to start from the ground up. As a public school teacher, I've witnessed quite a few successes in my [X] years working with students, and they've taught me quite a lot about the ways of the world. But if there's one thing I know for sure after all these years, it's that the school system has room for improvement.

At this moment, [state] has joined with over 40 other states in an effort to move forward and make education better together. Last year, our state adopted a set of robust academic standards through a state-led initiative, spearheaded by governors and chief state school officers across the country. These standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and education experts to establish clear and consistent goals that will prepare the next generation for success.

When it comes to education, the future of our state and our nation are at stake. That's why it's crucial to implement these standards efficiently and soon.

When it comes down to it, these standards are a common-sense step toward a better education system. They will help teachers plan better lessons; parents will have clearer expectations about what their children will accomplish in a given year; and students will have a clear roadmap for success. I know the standards will be a great asset to me and my colleagues across the state because they were designed in large part by teachers themselves. Once they're implemented, states and teachers will be able to work together and share best practices. When families move between states, kids will be able to stay on track with the rest of their classmates. What's more, the clarity of the standards will allow students, parents, and teachers to work together toward shared goals.

The core standards are built to provide students with what they need to know and do to be successful in college and careers, making them not only rigorous, but relevant to the real world. In my classroom, I look forward to teaching material that will truly instill my students with skills that will help them conduct major research projects in college, develop cutting-edge technologies, and compete in a global workforce. For example, whereas I used to focus on [X], I now emphasize [X], a tool that will be useful for my students in the next grade level, their post-secondary education, and possibly even their eventual careers.

This bipartisan initiative developed by the states will also be implemented by the states, allowing [state] to decide how the standards can be implemented most successfully for the students in our schools. Across the board, the consistency they provide will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students and give them the tools they need to succeed.

The quality of our education system will continue to impact everything from each individual student's success to the economic future of our nation. While America's confidence in its economic future has rarely been lower than it is today, we should recognize these standards as a wake-up call and open our eyes to the opportunity they unleash.

Teachers, experts, parents, and students in states across America have come together around a set of core standards that have the potential to empower America to regain the title of world's best education system. It's time to engage the core standards in our state too, and in doing so, move our next generation forward — together.

### Sample Blog

As a [X] grade teacher in [state], I constantly strive to prepare my students to succeed not only in the next grade level, but also when they enter the world. My greatest satisfaction is seeing my students move on to reach their full potential both inside the classroom and in their future careers. This is why I was thrilled to learn [X] months ago that our state adopted a new set of clear, high quality academic standards, along with more than 40 other states.

These standards, developed through a state-led effort, are rigorous in content and relevant to the real world. They also provide crucial clarity around academic expectations at each grade level so that my students, their parents, and I can all work together toward shared goals. I know the standards will be a great asset to me and my colleagues across the state because they were designed in large part by teachers themselves, who truly understand the realities of the classroom. And while they establish what students need to know, they do not tell teachers how to teach. I will continue making decisions in my classroom based on the unique needs of my students.

However, what I am most excited about is the standards' consistency – the fact that millions of students in more than 40 states across the country will all be working toward the same high academic goals. This means that when families move from state to state, kids will have virtually no disruption in their education. Almost every year, I have new students in my class who, by no fault of their own, are significantly behind their peers because they had previously been learning to academic standards vastly different from those in [state]. It is challenging to bring these students up to speed without impacting the rest of the class members who have been on the same academic track for years. It is also challenging for these students, who, in addition to making new friends and getting used to a brand new place, also have to work twice as hard as their peers just to get on track academically. With these new standards, all of the students in my classroom will be on the same page from day one, so I can hit the ground running and focus my full attention on teaching them everything they need to learn.

In order to begin reaping the full benefits of the standards, it is critical that we implement them fully and effectively, as soon as possible. Beyond raising awareness, teachers will need tools and resources to put them into practice, including professional development, curricula, instructional materials, and assessments. Fortunately, [state] belongs to one of two state-led consortia that are in the process of developing assessments and curriculum resources, and several other private efforts to develop related materials are underway. As these important tools become available, our state must begin using them immediately.

As a citizen who believes all young Americans are entitled to a high quality education that prepares them to compete in a global economy, it is critical that [state] and all other states put the standards into effect as soon as possible. And as a teacher who cares deeply and personally about my students' futures, I can't wait to start teaching to these standards once they are fully implemented.

## Teacher Communication Preferences Survey

### Description

- Survey for teachers to determine most effective alternative communications channels to stay informed about the Common Core.
- Most questions were designed to gain qualitative feedback.

### Sample Questions

1. Which of the following channels do you use regularly for information about education in [state]? (By regularly, we mean at least once or twice a month.)
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - YouTube
  - Email distribution lists and/or listservs
  - School meetings
  - District meetings
  - Conference calls
  - Blogs and other online tools
2. Please expand on your answer to the above. How do you get the latest information about education issues in [state]? As you think about your response, consider the people you speak with, the events you attend, and the websites/blogs/social media websites you visit.
3. How do you communicate with the district and/or state school board if at all? If you had a question for the district and/or state school board, how would you go about vocalizing it and/or getting an answer?
4. How do you usually communicate and interact with parents? What channels do you use and how often?
5. How comfortable are you with [state]'s new standards?
  - Very comfortable
  - Somewhat comfortable
  - Not very comfortable
  - Not comfortable at all
6. Please expand on your answer to the above. What makes you comfortable/not comfortable with the new standards in [state]?

7. What information about the new standards would you find most useful/helpful? If you could ask for any materials and/or information to help you implement the new standards, what would they be?
8. We are asking these questions so we can better communicate with you about the new standards, and about education in the state more broadly. Is there anything else you would like to share?