

What is the Common Core

The Common Core State Standards were developed by the National Governors Association, or NGA, and the Council of Chief State School Officers, or CCSSO, to create a consistent set of stronger achievement standards for American students.

America's governors—Republicans and Democrats alike—came together with the country's leading teachers and education experts to develop common standards in math and reading/English language arts for grades K–12: the Common Core. The Common Core raises the bar for students to become active learners and independent thinkers. That's why 45 states—red, blue, and purple states—have adopted these fairer, stronger, and smarter achievement standards.

Why we need the Common Core

- + **Preparation:** Right now, too many of today's students are not prepared to take the next step with their education. Students leave grade school without the skills necessary for middle and high school, and high schools are graduating students who are not prepared for college or the workforce. Better preparation is essential for student success and to the economic growth of the country.
- + **Better Assessments:** New assessments that are aligned to the Common Core are being developed. These next-generation assessments will challenge students on the material and critical-thinking reading and math skills needed to prepare them for higher education, and will replace much of the bubble-testing our students are over-burdened with today with fairer, more consistent, and more accurate assessments that better measure student achievement and creativity. They also arm administrators, educators, and parents with the information needed to continue to improve school instruction and learning.
- + **Fairness:** We need an education system that is fair and measures student achievement with consistent benchmarks. Right now, our education system is a patchwork system where each state's set of standards is different and students are not on equal footing. We cannot continue to operate an education system where an "A" in one state is a "C" in another.

American students deserve standards that bring out their best

Across the country, too many of today's high school graduates are not ready for college or the workforce. Today, nearly every high-paying job requires some postsecondary education or training. We know we are not meeting student achievement standards that kids in other highly developed countries are meeting. In order to compete for 21st century jobs, America's students need a strong academic base that prepares them for success in the knowledge-based economy.

American students are falling behind

Students are not ready for college

One out of four high school graduates require remedial education to enroll in college courses.¹



Less than one-third of public school students are proficient in reading or math

The 2013 release of the National Assessment of Education Progress, or NAEP, found that less than one-third of U.S. public school students in the 8th grade were proficient in reading or math.²



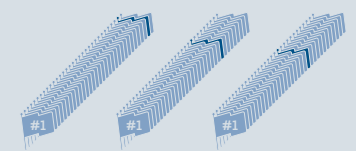
26%
Proficient in
8th grade math



31%
Proficient in
8th grade reading

The United States is falling behind other countries

The Programme for International Student Assessment, or PISA, results that were just released show that teenagers in the United States slipped from 25th to **31st in math** since 2009; from 20th to **24th in science**; and from 11th to **21st in reading**.³



MATH: 31st
SCIENCE: 24th
READING: 21st

The Common Core will help close the achievement gap

Right now, the United States has two education systems: one for the wealthy and one for the rest of the country. The Common Core will help close that achievement gap by ensuring that all students are held to the highest expectations in reading and math.

- + **The achievement gap has grown 40 percent.** A recent study found that the gap in standardized test scores between affluent and low-income students has grown by about 40 percent since the 1960s.⁴
- + **A growing achievement gap means less success in the workforce.** Another study by researchers from the University of Michigan found that the imbalance between rich and poor children in college completion—the single most important predictor of success in the workforce—has grown by about 50 percent since the late 1980s.⁵

Common Core = A growing economy

- + **Raising standards will grow the economy.** If American students performed near the top of international assessments, economists estimate the U.S. economy would grow by 1.6 percent over the next two decades, pumping hundreds of billions of dollars into the system.⁶
- + **Jobs are left empty due to a lack of qualified candidates.** There are 3 million jobs going unfilled in this country because there aren't enough qualified candidates.⁷
 - + By 2020, there will be 120 million high-skilled and high-wage jobs. If we don't have the workers to fill them, we risk our economic leadership in the world.⁸

There is broad support for the Common Core

Republicans and Democrats alike are in favor of higher education standards. Governors ranging from Pat McCrory in North Carolina, Rick Snyder in Michigan, Andrew Cuomo in New York, and Bill Haslam in Tennessee are in favor of higher standards.

State leaders support the Common Core

I think the Common Core is a really important opportunity, and I think it's a good thing... unfortunately, it's been too much about politics. Too many people in our country ... are looking to fight someone for the sake of fighting.⁹

- GOV. RICK SNYDER (R-MI)

When you come in with a big change, there's normally fits and starts, and it's a little jerky, so that's to be expected... nationwide [Common Core is] where the county's going, that's the state of the art.¹⁰

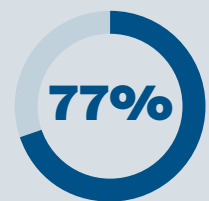
- GOV. ANDREW CUOMO (D-NY)

"The reading and math standards in Common Core are high, relevant and can be applied internationally ... yet [they] can also be applied and implemented here locally.¹¹

- GOV. PAT McCRORY (R-NC)

Teachers overwhelmingly support the goals of the Common Core

According to a 2013 survey, **77 percent of teachers** believe that the Common Core will improve students' ability to think critically.¹²



Endnotes

- 1 National Conference of State Legislatures, "Hot Topics in Higher Education: Reforming Remedial Education," available at <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/improving-college-completion-reforming-remedial.aspx> (last accessed December 2013).
- 2 National Center for Education Statistics, "What proportions of student groups are reaching Proficient?," available at http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2013/#/student-groups (last accessed December 2013).
- 3 Stephanie Banchemo, "U.S. High-School Students Slip in Global Rankings," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 3, 2013, available at <http://m.us.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304579404579234511824563116?mobile=y>.
- 4 Sean F. Reardon, "The widening academic achievement gap between the rich and the poor: New evidence and possible explanations" (Stanford: Center For Education Policy Analysis, 2011), available at <http://cepa.stanford.edu/content/widening-academic-achievement-gap-between-rich-and-poor-new-evidence-and-possible-explanations>.
- 5 Martha J. Bailey and Susan M. Dynarski, "Gains and Gaps: Changing Inequality in U.S. College Entry and Completion," Working Paper 17633 (National Bureau Of Economic Research, 2011), available at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17633.pdf>.
- 6 Eric A. Hanushek, "Teacher Deselection" (Washington: Hoover Institution, 2009), available at <http://hanushek.stanford.edu/publications/teacher-deselection>.
- 7 Thomas J. Donohue and John Engler, "Common Core Brings Benefits to Both Education & Our Economy," *McClatchy-Tribune News Service*, August 8, 2013, available at <http://businessroundtable.org/news-center/common-core-brings-benefits-to-both-education-our-economy/>.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Jonathan Oosting, "Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder backs Common Core school standards blocked in GOP budget bills," *MLive*, May 7, 2013, available at http://www.mlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/05/michigan_gov_rick_snyder_backs.html.
- 10 Karen DeWitt, "Cuomo supports Common Core standards," *New York Now*, October 24, 2013, available at <http://nynow.org/post/cuomo-supports-common-core-standards>.
- 11 Ben McNeely, "Governor, Lt. Governor differ on Common Core standards," *Capital Tonight*, August 6, 2013, available at <http://capitaltonight.news14.com/2013/08/06/governor-lt-governor-differ-on-common-core-standards/>.
- 12 Scholastic, "Primary Sources: Common Core State Standards Preview," available at <http://www.scholastic.com/primary-sources/2013preview/impact.htm> (last accessed December 2013).