



MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Prepared by Louisiana Board of Regents Staff

Myth 1: The Common Core State Standards are national/federal standards.

The Common Core State Standards were not developed by the federal government. The development of the standards was initiated by governors and chief state school officers (e.g., state superintendents) in 48 states. They insisted, successfully, that there be no federal funds or other federal involvement in the development of the standards. The process was managed by the National Governors Association, Council of Chief State Officers, and Achieve. This occurred before the federal Race to the Top initiative.

Myth 2: The Common Core State Standards were developed without input from Louisiana educators.

Content and grade level experts from Louisiana and other states were involved in the development of the Common Core State Standards. As an example, Dr. James Madden, Co-Director of The Gordon A. Cain Center for Scientific, Technological, Engineering and Mathematical Literacy at Louisiana State University served on the Mathematics Work Team to develop the Common Core State Standards. In addition, Nancy Beben, Carolyn Sessions, and Jan Freeland from the Louisiana Department of Education served on Mathematics and English Language Arts Work Teams and Feedback Teams.

Myth 3: The Common Core State Standards serve as a national curriculum for Louisiana's schools.

The Common Core State Standards are not a curriculum. The *standards* are a set of clear *goals* and *expectations* that were adopted by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) during May 2010 to better prepare students to be college- and career-ready. As with all policies, these standards underwent public review before being adopted by BESE. The *curriculum* tells *how* the standards will be met. Local school districts in Louisiana are responsible for identifying the curriculum that will be used in their schools to meet the standards. Local school districts are responsible for identifying the lessons, textbooks, materials, etc. that will be used to provide instruction in classrooms. Thus, teachers, principals, parents, and other educators determine what will be taught in local classrooms and how students should learn.

Myth 4: The Common Core State Standards interfere with student privacy rights and will allow student data to be inappropriately tracked.

States remain in control of their students' private information, just as they are now. The federal government does not have access to individual student-level data – just aggregate information by school on how students are performing. The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Education Reform Sciences Act of 2002, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) prohibit the creation of a federal database with students' personally identifiable information.

Myth 5: The old standards are better than the Common Core State Standards.

The Common Core State Standards address knowledge and skills that the business community and higher education report as necessary for students to be college- and career-ready. Remedial education rates and feedback from businesses in Louisiana indicate that high school students are not currently exiting high schools with the knowledge and skills necessary for success. A major difference between the existing standards and Common Core State Standards is that students will develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of core concepts in order to better engage in critical-thinking and problem solving tasks. In addition, they will possess better verbal and written communication skills necessary for a highly-skilled workforce in Louisiana.

Myth 6: The Common Core State Standards include controversial curriculum for Science and Social Studies (e.g., History, Government, Geography, and Economics).

Common Core State Standards have only been developed for Mathematics and English Language Arts. The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education continues to make decisions about State standards for Science and Social Studies.

Myth 7: The Common Core State Standards will not place enough emphasis upon fiction and literature.

The Common Core State Standards provide a better balance of literature and informational text to prepare students for college- and career-ready expectations. The standards still require important content for all students which include classic myths, stories from around the world, literature, Shakespeare, poetry and other content identified by the local districts. The selection of informational texts will be determined by the local teachers, schools, parents, and districts. Examples of informational texts include historical documents, maps, charts, graphs, info-graphics, manuals, speeches, etc.

Myth 8: The Common Core State Standards will require states to spend more on teacher training.

The Common Core State Standards will require teachers to use methods that deepen student knowledge and encourage more in-depth thinking. In some cases, teachers may need to deepen their own knowledge to be able to respond to questions being asked by students. Effective teachers who are already using these methods will require less assistance than other teachers. Opportunities for professional learning will be especially important as teachers work together to develop and implement new lessons that address the Common Core State Standards. The Louisiana Department of Education has already started to support teacher leaders in schools across the state and many local school districts are now directing their existing professional learning funds to helping teachers implement the Common Core State Standards. In addition, teachers across the country are now sharing their lesson plans and resources for other teachers to adapt to meet the needs of students in their local communities.

Myth 9: Louisiana's existing assessments do not need to be changed.

LEAP tests show that almost three-fourths of 4th grade students in Louisiana are reading on grade level; however, more rigorous tests that examine students across states show that less than a fourth of 4th grade students in Louisiana are proficient in reading. Louisiana is in need of new assessments that will tell students if they are college- and career-ready and performing at a level of proficiency that is comparable to students across the country. Whether Louisiana uses existing assessments or new assessments currently being developed to examine college- and career- readiness, all will involve an expense to administer and score.

Myth 10: The new assessments are being created by the federal government.

The new assessments are being developed by partnering states. Groups of states came together to form two different partnerships to create new assessments that would be aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Louisiana chose to work with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and provided input into the development of a proposal that was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education to obtain funding for the states to develop the new assessments. Louisiana educators are now involved in developing items for the assessment. Since July 2011, two- and four-year universities in Louisiana have been formally engaged in discussions about the Common Core State Standards and the PARCC assessments. Two- and four-year colleges in Louisiana have created PARCC Campus Leadership Teams composed of College of Arts/Sciences/Humanities faculty, College of Education faculty, and K-12 partners. They have been meeting on their campuses and at statewide meetings to closely examine the Common Core State Standards for high school students and identify core competencies that high school students must exhibit to successfully complete entry-level college courses in mathematics and English. They have provided input into policies being developed by PARCC for the new assessments and compared their expectations for core competencies to descriptors for college- and career-readiness being developed for the new PARCC assessments. They have determined that high school students who meet the expectations for college- and career readiness on the new PARCC assessment will be better prepared for the entry level college mathematics and English courses than students currently exiting high schools in Louisiana. Information about the work that has occurred with the PARCC Campus Leadership Teams and other information about the Common Core State Standards and PARCC can be found at the following URL: <http://regents.la.gov/onestopshop>.