

# ASK THE TEAM

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## Preparing Teachers for the Common Core: Aligning Preparation Program Curricula

### Question From the Field

#### How are states aligning teacher preparation program curricula to the Common Core State Standards?

Implementing new college and career readiness standards, along with readying teachers and students for new assessments, is a monumental undertaking by multiple national, state, and local education leaders and organizations. One critical policy area for states to consider is supports for educator preparation programs to ensure that new teachers entering the classroom are well prepared to help their students achieve the Common Core State Standards.

To help share information and resources across states, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders' (GTL Center's) partner, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), asked the team leads of its 30-member State Consortium on Educator Effectiveness to share how they are helping teacher preparation programs in their state align preparation program curricula to the Common Core State Standards. In addition, expert staff working with the new student assessment consortia provided examples of leading practices.

Based on the information collected, we identified four common approaches states have taken to align teacher preparation curricula to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics:

- Align teaching standards and licensure requirements to Common Core.
- Support faculty through professional development.
- Integrate Common Core into program approval and accountability requirements.
- Integrate Common Core into state teacher licensure assessments.

#### Going Deeper

In Chapter 10 of their resource, *Implementing Common Core State Standards and Assessments*, Achieve and the U.S. Education Delivery Institute offer state examples, practical exercises, and relevant questions regarding teacher preparation program alignment and the Common Core State Standards.

## 1. ALIGN TEACHING STANDARDS TO COMMON CORE

One common state approach to aligning teacher preparation curricula to the Common Core State Standards is through teaching standards. Aligning state teaching standards to the Common Core ensures that educator preparation programs develop curricula to meet those standards. This approach is further reinforced in states that focus their licensure and preservice programs on the state standards. States can align competencies, update standards, and redesign their teacher endorsement processes.

### State Spotlight

The **Arkansas** Department of Education, in collaboration with faculty from teacher preparation institutions and practicing teachers, developed **K-12 teacher licensure content competencies** that incorporate the Common Core State Standards in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Disciplinary literacy, as defined by the Common Core in ELA, also has been expanded into science and social studies content areas. Arkansas's teacher preparation institutions are required to revise their respective teacher preparation curricula to align with the new state content competencies.

Source: <http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/human-resources-educator-effectiveness-and-licensure/educator-licensure-unit/educator-preparation/educator-competencies>

### State Spotlight

**Massachusetts** is convening a task force to update its Professional Standards for Teachers by fall 2014, with full implementation (requiring full program overhaul) by 2016. These standards are the key focus for all preparation programs and are the basis for licensure and the state's preservice performance assessment. The standards under development in Massachusetts will align with the new educator evaluation standards and the Common Core State Standards.

### State Spotlight

**Washington** is redesigning its endorsement review process and will align its teacher endorsement competencies to the Common Core State Standards; however, Washington does not currently review the alignment between specific curricula and the Common Core. The state is considering a review of performance indicators such as the Washington Educator Skills Tests-Endorsements (WEST-E) content assessment and/or edTPA. If scores are outside the "range of normal," the program will be required to conduct a self-study that includes aligning the curricula and competencies.

## 2. SUPPORT FACULTY THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to prepare educator preparation program faculty for aligning their curricula to the Common Core State Standards, many states have provided various forms of professional development. Professional development activities include the following:

- Online training modules
- In-person meetings in collaboration with local school districts
- Modeling best practices

### State Spotlight

**Kentucky** created professional development modules on the Common Core State Standards for all higher education faculty. The statewide workshops feature breakout sessions on teacher education and include a one-page teacher education handout, *SB1 Responsibilities/Duties for Teacher Educators: Kentucky Association of Colleges for Teacher Education 2011*, which contextualizes the roles and responsibilities of teacher educators.

Source: <http://www.kycorestandards.org/resources.aspx>

### State Spotlight

The **North Carolina** Department of Public Instruction has provided professional development for college and university teacher preparation faculty since 2010. Professional development has focused on understanding the Common Core State Standards, the instructional shifts associated with implementing the Common Core, and the implications of the Common Core on educator preparation programs.

The training mirrors the professional development provided to school districts and charter schools to ensure college and university understanding of K-12 requirements. College and university faculty also have access to the state's online professional development resources—including modules and webinars—that are relevant to the Common Core.

Source: <http://www.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/>

### State Spotlight

The **Tennessee** Higher Education Commission partnered with an institute located within an institution of higher education to create resources for educator preparation programs to prepare future teachers and school leaders for the Common Core State Standards. This work was led by an advisory council of deans and faculty members in public and private universities and community colleges. The faculty represented both education and arts and sciences backgrounds. Resources include full-length videos of exemplary teachers teaching to the Common Core, as well as commentary from teachers about their students and reflections on practice. Curriculum guides also were created that contain tips for using the videos in educator preparation programs, lesson plans from the teachers featured, reflections on the session, and student work samples. More than 500 faculty members have been trained so far using the new resources. The initial set of videos have proven so valuable that the work has expanded to include videos on school leadership, professional learning communities, and connecting the Common Core to the state's evaluation system. The *Common Core Video Library* is available to the public free of charge.

Source: <http://www.lipscomb.edu/ayers/invest>

In **Louisiana**, the state has set up several collaborative opportunities to provide professional development and learning opportunities to educator preparation programs. Starting with the fall 2013 semester, all Louisiana campuses integrated the Common Core State Standards into their curricula.

- **Campus Leadership Teams.** Each college and university formed a Campus Leadership Team to ensure effective implementation of the Common Core in educator preparation programs. The teams participated in webinars and in-person meetings, and they discussed their roles in preparing educators for the Common Core and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), information dissemination strategies, and expectations for high school graduates entering mathematics and English courses.
- **Leadership Summit.** The Louisiana Board of Regents hosted a **leadership summit** for college and university leaders in August 2011, during which participants discussed the state's transition to the Common Core and PARCC. The purpose of the meeting was to begin developing an **implementation plan** for the alignment of postsecondary education expectations, as well as educator and school administrator preparation programs, based on Common Core and PARCC standards.
- **Aligned Training.** The Louisiana Department of Education also conducted two-day training for faculty from all campuses during fall 2012. The program mirrored training that had been delivered by the state to its K-12 teachers.

Source: <http://regents.louisiana.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Draft-Teacher-Preparation-Transformation-2.0-2.5.14.pdf>

### 3. INTEGRATE COMMON CORE INTO PROGRAM APPROVAL AND ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

Many states align teacher preparation curricula to the Common Core State Standards through their program approval and accountability processes. Strategies include monitoring educator candidates' performance on assessments aligned to the Common Core, requiring evidence of the Common Core in preparation coursework and assessments, and developing preparation report cards that include data on candidate performance relative to the Common Core.

#### Next Generation Standards

The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) adopted new accreditation standards for education preparation programs in August 2013. The new standards include a stronger emphasis on developing a "culture of evidence." To support preparation programs in meeting the new standards, the council released its *CAEP Evidence Guide*, which explains CAEP's perspective on what a culture of evidence looks like in the use of data in educator preparation and accreditation. The guide includes protocols and instructions for collecting and analyzing data, as well as guidance on what constitutes valid evidence and suggestions for collecting evidence on the impact of graduates on student learning.

Source: <http://caepnet.org/>

 State  
Spotlight

**Utah's** accreditation policy places state staff on accrediting teams who use a desk audit process to look for evidence of the Common Core State Standards in the accreditation briefs submitted by educator preparation programs. This process includes the following:

- Reviewing syllabi to ensure that the Utah Core Standards and the Utah Effective Teaching Standards are the foundation of coursework. If staff members do not see instructional shifts that reflect the standards, they can place the university on notice that the state will no longer license its candidates.
- Conducting site visits to the program and interviews with teacher candidates to validate what is in the program's accreditation brief.
- Examining results from a statewide survey of principals of K-12 schools who have hired teacher candidates from Utah preparation programs. The survey provides data to universities on the effectiveness of their candidates in the context of the Common Core.

Utah is working with social studies and science educator preparation programs to incorporate literacy strategies in their teacher candidate preparation curricula. Content specialists at the Utah State Office of Education have been key participants in this process in cooperation with higher education colleagues.

 State  
Spotlight

In **Maryland**, educator preparation program evaluations by the state and the [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation](#) will require programs to demonstrate evidence of effective Common Core State Standards implementation. This evidence may include instructor syllabi demonstrating attention to the Common Core, candidates exhibiting attention to the Common Core in their observed instruction in professional development schools, action research projects addressing the Common Core, and candidate exit portfolios addressing the Common Core.

 State  
Spotlight

The **North Carolina** Department of Public Instruction developed educator preparation program report cards that provide information on the effectiveness of program graduates based on teachers' annual evaluation results. Report cards will include K-12 student achievement data based on the Common Core State Standards. This data will ultimately be tied to state-level program approval decisions.

Source: <http://www.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/>

## 4. INTEGRATE COMMON CORE INTO STATE TEACHER LICENSURE ASSESSMENTS

States can help ensure that educator preparation programs align their curricula to the Common Core State Standards through teacher licensure assessments. State licensure assessments aligned to the Common Core guarantee that teacher candidates are prepared and accountable for the instructional shifts required by the new standards.

### State Spotlight

**Arizona** recently adopted new required subject-knowledge exams based on the Common Core State Standards. These include 23 National Evaluation Series (NES) Subject Knowledge exams developed by Pearson, which were adopted at the October 2012 State Board of Education meeting and became effective March 1, 2013.

Source: <http://www.azed.gov/educator-certification/az-ed-exams/>

### State Spotlight

**New York** is aligning its new teacher certification requirements and examinations to the Common Core State Standards. The new exams will reflect the Common Core instructional shifts and include more constructed-response items and a mix of informational and literary-text-based prompts.

### State Spotlight

**Oregon** requires that the state's content area teacher licensure tests are fully aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Currently, the assessments that have been aligned include the basic skills assessments, elementary multiple subjects, all language arts (middle school and high school) tests, and all mathematics (middle school and high school) tests.

### Partnership to Watch

#### Network for Transforming Educator Preparation

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) has selected seven states—Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, and Washington—to participate in the Network for Transforming Educator Preparation (NTEP), a two-year pilot focused on transforming educator preparation and entry systems into the profession. With support from 17 national organizations, NTEP is helping states take action in three key policy areas: licensure, program approval, and analyzing and reporting information to improve preparation programs (CCSSO, 2013).

The NTEP pilot builds on policy recommendations developed by CCSSO's Task Force on Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession, which included nine state chiefs and members from the National Governors Association

and the National Association of School Boards of Education. With the adoption of the more rigorous Common Core learning standards, the chiefs recognized their responsibility to examine and transform how we prepare teachers and principals so that they can provide instruction and organize learning environments to help students reach these heightened expectations. The recommendations outline actions that states should take to improve the rigor of educator preparation program approval, including aligning program approval and program content standards to the Common Core, and to better support preparation programs in collecting data through multiple measures of program quality and effectiveness.



## I WANT TO KNOW MORE!

### Resources

Achieve. (2012). *Implementing Common Core State Standards and assessments: A workbook for state and district leaders, Chapter 10*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.achieve.org/files/Chapter-10-Feb29.pdf>

American Federation of Teachers. (2012). *Raising the bar: Aligning and evaluating teacher preparation and the teaching profession*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.aft.org/pdfs/highered/raisingthebar2012.pdf>

Council of Chief State School Officers. (2013, October 23). *Seven states selected to join Network for Transforming Educator Preparation* [Press release]. Retrieved from [http://www.ccsso.org/News\\_and\\_Events/Press\\_Releases/Seven\\_States\\_Selected\\_to\\_Join\\_Network\\_for\\_Transforming\\_Educator\\_Preparation.html](http://www.ccsso.org/News_and_Events/Press_Releases/Seven_States_Selected_to_Join_Network_for_Transforming_Educator_Preparation.html)

National Governors Association. (n.d.) *Trends in state implementation of the Common Core State Standards: Educator effectiveness* (Issue Brief). Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-publications/page-edu-publications/col2-content/main-content-list/trends-in-state-implementation-o.html>

Science and Mathematics Teacher Imperative, & The Leadership Collaborative. (n.d.). *The Common Core State Standards and teacher preparation: The role of higher education* (Discussion Paper). New York: Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities. Retrieved from <http://www.aplu.org/document.doc?id=3482>

**For more strategies, examples, or information** on this topic, please e-mail [gtlcenter@air.org](mailto:gtlcenter@air.org).

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