



The Education Trust—Midwest



COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Myths v. Facts

Michigan’s business leaders, educators, advocates, and parents understand that in order for students to compete in a global economy, our state needs rigorous academic standards. To that end, we proudly endorse the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) – a state-led effort that will better prepare Michigan students to succeed after high school. Sadly, misstatements and myths are being spread about the CCSS. We answer these myths with facts.

Myth #1 - Common Core is a federal mandate that threatens local control.

- Common Core was developed and voluntarily adopted by 45 states, including Michigan, to set clear, rigorous expectations in math, reading and writing.¹ The federal government did not develop these standards, and states retain full authority to implement them.
- Common Core is a set of standards, not a curriculum. The CCSS spell out what students are expected to know in each grade and subject. A curriculum is the plan developed by teachers and schools to reach those standards.²
- Under Common Core, local schools will continue to be in charge of curriculum decisions, including which texts and resources will be used. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of their students.³

Myth #2: Common Core will “dumb down” Michigan’s standards.

- Common Core standards are more rigorous than Michigan’s current standards.⁴ They also put a greater focus on students developing a deep understanding of material by emphasizing critical thinking and problem solving – the kinds of real world skills our children need after high school.⁵
- The standards are research based, benchmarked against peers and aligned with college and career readiness. This is important because Michigan students need to be prepared to compete in a global economy.

Myth #3: Common Core is “one size fits all” and is not aligned with alternative or creative education and career paths.

- Because Common Core is a set of standards, not a curriculum, local schools will continue to be in charge of designing courses – including alternative, creative and career technical courses – that meet students’ individual needs and cover the content that students are expected to know in each grade and subject.⁶
- Under Common Core, teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of their students.⁷ This may include using non-traditional courses or pathways that help students apply the CCSS in real-life or career-related situations.

Myth #4: Common Core allows the federal government to gather personal, identifiable data on individual students.

- The CCSS do not change or remove existing protections regarding the privacy of student data.
- Federal law prohibits the creation of a federal database with students’ personally identifiable information.⁸
The federal government does not have access to student-level information housed in state data systems; the feds can only collect aggregate-level student data.⁹
- States that receive federal grants are forbidden to report student-level data to the federal government in return.¹⁰
- States and districts may not sell student information to vendors or corporations.¹¹



Myth #5: Common Core will cost Michigan taxpayers millions of dollars to implement.

- Common Core is not a new or added cost to our state; rather, it will replace Michigan's current standards and eliminate the need for the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to update them.
- The CCSS allow Michigan to access standards developed by the best minds in content and instruction in the country AT NO COST to state taxpayers.¹²
- Absent implementation of the CCSS, Michigan would have to find the resources to produce or buy our own standards.¹³
- Common Core will ultimately save money because it allows teachers to pool and share high-quality education resources in math, reading and writing.¹⁴

Myth #6: Michigan voters have no authority to weigh in on future changes related to the CCSS.

- The Legislature has the authority to review the state's involvement in the CCSS at any time, just as we are currently doing.
- The job of establishing state content standards is up to the State Board of Education, a publically elected body that also has the authority to review Michigan's involvement in the CCSS at any time.¹⁵
- The CCSS was the subject of multiple public hearings in Michigan before being adopted. Any future changes will also have to be adopted by the State Board of Education¹⁶ and therefore be subject to scrutiny by Michigan voters.

¹ "NGA, CCSSO Launch Common Standards Drive," By Michele McNeil, Education Week, April 17, 2009

² "Five Myths About the Common Core State Standards," By Robert Rothman, Harvard Education Letter, Volume 27, Number 5, Sept./Oct. 2011

³ Common Core State Standards Initiative, www.corestandards.org, FAQ, p. 4

⁴ "The State of State Standards – and the Common Core – in 2010," By Sheila Byrd Carmichael, W. Stephen Wilson, Kathleen Porter-Magee, Gabrielle Martino, July 21, 2010, Thomas B. Fordham Institute study.

⁵ "Opening the Common Core: How to Bring All Students to College and Career Readiness," pages 7-8, By Carol Corbett Burriss and Delia T. Garrity, Corwin, 2012

⁶ "Five Myths About the Common Core State Standards," By Robert Rothman, Harvard Education Letter, Volume 27, Number 5, Sept./Oct. 2011

⁷ Common Core State Standards Initiative, www.corestandards.org, FAQ, p. 4

⁸ <http://dataqualitycampaign.org/files/Privacy%20Myths.pdf>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "Michigan's Common Core State Standards and Assessments: Presentation by the Michigan Department of Education." Presented to the House Education Subcommittee on Common Core Standards, July 16, 2013.

¹³ MCL 380.1278, Michigan Revised School Code, Act 451 of 1976

¹⁴ Michigan Department of Education: Common Core Standards Fact Sheet

¹⁵ MCL 380.1278

¹⁶ Ibid.