

# Transition to Common Core State Standards

Implications for English Language Learners



*September 8-9, 2011*

*Building Capacity  
to Implement the  
Common Core  
Standards for  
All Students*

Southwest Comprehensive Center  
at **WestEd** 

 Assessment and Accountability  
Comprehensive Center  
AACC • A WestEd and CRESST partnership

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## Supporting State Efforts to Implement Common Core State Standards

Recent federal priorities and funding opportunities, such as Race to the Top competition and School Improvement Grants, recognize the critical need of exposing all students to high-level, rigorous academic standards. Currently, 44 states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands have all adopted Common Core State Standards and are at varying levels of implementation efforts in their states. There is an overwhelming need to create and implement quality, comprehensive, strategic systems for implementing these standards fairly by providing quality training for all educators, in a manner that will support and develop teacher effectiveness. Implementation efforts must address ways to ensure that all students have access to this highly rigorous content in ways that will bring about a measurable increase in student growth. As state departments of education and stakeholder groups around the nation plan on implementation of Common Core State Standards, it is critical that they are familiar with emergent research, promising practices and strategies related to successful implementation of reform initiatives, and that they consider the implications of Common Core State Standards for their special student populations. The Southwest Comprehensive Center (SWCC) designed this workshop to provide guidance to states as they consider the implementation of Common Core State Standards.

### Purpose of this Workbook\*

The SWCC created this action-planning workbook to help states as they consider strategies to implement Common Core State Standards. Adapted from materials developed by the **National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality**, this workbook takes stakeholders through a series of discussion-based reflection, consideration and action steps that will strengthen implementation efforts in their state. Although additional steps beyond those included are crucial, this workbook can serve as a guide to help frame the workshop sessions to maximize available discussion and planning time. It provides the opportunity to:

- Reflect on session presentations and consider critical questions that should be determined before and during the implementation process;
- Share information, ideas and resources with state team members;
- Address opportunities and challenges in a supportive, transparent environment;
- Consult with state department peers in addition to relevant experts on issues of strategic implementation;
- Identify goals, priorities, plans and next steps.

*\*Adapted from materials developed by the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality*

## SECTION ONE: Workshop Presentations

### State Panel

Representatives from AZ, CO, NV, NM and UT; Thursday, September 8, 2011, 12:40 PM – 1:30 PM

Record the highlights and key ideas from state panel presentation. Note aspects of state plans you might like to investigate further.

	Arizona	Nevada	New Mexico	Colorado	Utah
Status of Current Plan					
One Success					
One Challenge					
Inter-agency coordination and collaboration					
Engagement with higher education and/or partners					
Follow-up Ideas and questions					

## Implementation Research and Transitioning to the Common Core

Mary Peterson, SWCC and REL West; Thursday, September 8, 2011, 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Discussion	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
<p><b>Session Reflection</b></p> <p>Which key ideas stood out?            Did the presentation make you think about something differently?            Was there anything that didn't make sense?            What is most relevant/ irrelevant and why?            Did you have any a-has, concerns or unanswered questions?</p>			
<p><b>Considerations</b></p> <p>Identify the implementation stage of your state's efforts. How do you know?            Where do you expect your districts to be by the end of 2011-2012?            How will implementation of CCSS with fidelity be incorporated into your state systems for evaluating educator effectiveness? For district and school improvement?            What are the consequences for not implementing CCSS with fidelity?            How might the presentation inform components of your transition plan?            (Training, communication, accountability, etc.)</p>			
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>How will you use this information when you return to your state?            What will you share with colleagues?            What is your plan to engage appropriate stakeholders?            What immediate steps need to be taken?</p>			

## Regional Research Update

Eric Haas, REL West; Thursday, September 8, 2011, 4:45 PM – 5:15 PM

Discussion	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
<p><b>Session Reflection</b></p> <p>Which key ideas stood out?            Did the presentation make you think about something differently?            Was there anything that didn't make sense?            What is most relevant/ irrelevant and why?            Did you have any a-has, concerns or unanswered questions?</p>			
<p><b>Considerations</b></p> <p>How might you use research or evaluation studies to make your transition to the CCSS more effective? (Topics and methods of interest, how studies might provide useful information on the transition itself, impact of any resulting program changes.)</p> <p>How might the presentation inform components of your transition plan? (Training, communication, accountability, etc.)</p>			
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>How will you use this information when you return to your state?            What will you share with colleagues?            What is your plan to engage appropriate stakeholders?            What immediate steps need to be taken?</p>			

## Academic Language and CCSS: Implications for ELs / Brief Review of Research on Accommodations

Edynn Sato; Friday, September 9, 2011, 8:30 – 10:15 AM

Discussion	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
<p><b>Session Reflection</b></p> <p>Which key ideas stood out?            Did the presentation make you think about something differently?            Was there anything that didn't make sense?            What is most relevant/ irrelevant and why?            Did you have any a-has concerns or unanswered questions?</p>			
<p><b>Considerations</b></p> <p>How are you addressing the needs of your ELs and SWDs in your CCSS implementation plan to best ensure their learning and achievement?            How is your state addressing the critical role of "academic language" in ensuring that all students have access and achieve rigorous content and are prepared for college and career?            How might the presentation(s) inform components of your transition plan (training, communication, accountability, etc.)?</p>			
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>How will you use this information when you return to your state?            What will you share with colleagues?            What is your plan to engage stakeholders?            What immediate steps need to be taken?</p>			

## Inclusive Assessment Practices: Facilitating the Achievement of ELs and SWDs

Edynn Sato; Friday, September 9, 2011, 1:00 PM – 1:45 PM

Discussion	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
<p><b>Session Reflection</b></p> <p>Which key ideas stood out?            Did the presentation make you think about something differently?            Was there anything that didn't make sense?            What is most relevant/ irrelevant and why?            Did you have any a-has, concerns or unanswered questions?</p>			
<p><b>Considerations</b></p> <p>What is your process for ensuring rigorous, equitable, and inclusive assessment practices that yield valid outcomes and reasonable consequences for students, teachers, and programs?            How might the presentation inform components of your transition plan (training, communication, accountability, etc.)?</p>			
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>How will you use this information when you return to your state?            What will you share with colleagues?            What is your plan to engage appropriate stakeholders?            What immediate steps need to be taken?</p>			

## **SECTION TWO: Considerations for State Transition Plans to the Common Core Standards**

### **Working Session I, II, III: Planning for Transition and Implementation**

#### **Purpose of the working sessions:**

- To share what participants learned from the presentations that might inform their state plans.
- To consult with presenters about aspects of the state plan as they visit with each team.
- To identify areas of the state plan that may need further development.
- To collaborate with colleagues to consider ways to strengthen the state's plan to implement the common core standards.

#### **Suggested Tasks:**

1. Identify key objectives and outcomes the group plans to accomplish in this two-day workshop.
2. Identify a facilitator, a spokesperson and a recorder who will take notes for the group.
3. Review the workbook and guiding questions.
4. Use the templates provided to record key ideas and actions as a result of presentations and discussions.
5. Use the guiding questions to consider to what degree the state's current transition plan addresses these components.
6. Use the planning templates to record actions needed and next steps.
7. Be prepared to report out at end of working sessions.

**Working Session I (September 8, 3:15 pm – 4:15 pm): Getting Organized; Assessing and Reviewing Plan Components**

**Working Session II (September 9, 10:30 am – 11:30 am): Continuing to Review Plan Components**

**Working Session III (September 9, 1:45 pm – 2:30 pm): Summarizing Progress Made, Developing an Action Plan based on Results and Identifying Next Steps.**

## Template One: Team Self-Assessment Activity

Use the following checklist to collectively determine the status of each of these key components of a standards transition plan. Use the results to inform priorities for the further development of state plans and the work that needs to be accomplished at this meeting.

Component Questions	Have not addressed this component; not in plan	Partially addressed this component; needs more development in plan	Fully addressed this component; well-developed in plan. Ready to implement.	Comment
1. Have the <b>goals of the state’s transition plan to the CCSS</b> been clearly defined, communicated and aligned with other educator reform initiatives?				
2. Is there a <b>strategic communication plan</b> that informs relevant stakeholders of system goals, timelines and relevant roles and responsibilities?				
3. Does the state have a <b>training plan to build the capacity of system implementers?</b>				
4. Does the state have a plan to develop and/or provide guidance for <b>the selection and use of aligned instructional materials?</b>				

5. Has the state determined appropriate and <b>sufficient accountability measures</b> to ensure equitable access to the CCSS for all students?				
6. Has a system been developed to <b>systematically evaluate the effectiveness</b> of the state's transition plan and the implementation of it?				
7. Has the state aligned the transition plan to the state's <b>"bridge" plan to the common core assessments?</b>				
8. Has the state identified the <b>resources and funding streams</b> needed for the transition plan?				

## Component One: Specifying the Goals of the Transition Plan

Goal setting is well-recognized as an imperative, and often challenging, first component in designing a system. The establishment of explicit, well-defined goals lays a strong foundation and keeps the end in mind. There is a general tendency to oversimplify this step; however, agreement about goal selection focuses and guides all decisions throughout the design process.

Guiding Question	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
1. Have the goals and purposes of the transition plan been determined?			
2. Are the goals explicit, well-defined and clearly articulated for stakeholders?			
3. Have the goals of the transition plan been aligned to the state strategic plan and other reform initiatives?			

<p>4. Are all appropriate departments within the SEA aware of the state's transition goals and do they have an identified role?</p>			
<p>5. To what degree is coordination and collaboration occurring within the SEA?</p>			

**Additional notes/comments:**

## Component Two: Developing a Strategic Communication Plan

Early on in the process, stakeholders should consider communication needs. A strategic communication plan detailing steps to inform the broader school community about implementation efforts, results, and future plans may increase the potential for statewide adoption. Misperceptions and opposition can be minimized if the state and districts communicate a clear and consistent message. A strategic communication plan first identifies the essential messages and audiences. Potential key audiences could include pilot participants, school personnel, families, and the external community. Stakeholders would then determine the most effective channel of communication for its purpose and target audience.

Guiding Question	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
1. Does the SEA have a strategic communication plan that addresses all stakeholder groups, uses varied communication strategies, and includes plans to keep the broader community informed of progress?			
2. Have all SEA staff been informed of the state's plan and their role in it?			
3. What information needs to be communicated to stakeholders and when?			

<p>4. Will communication efforts be varied according to the target audience? (e.g., SEA staff, administrators, teachers, students, parents, community) Has the plan considered optimal timing for communication to each stakeholder group?</p>			
<p>5. Do channels of communication already exist? What are they?</p>			
<p>6. Does the state have a public communications department that could assist in marketing?</p>			
<p>7. What forms of communication will be utilized (e.g. website, emails, newsletters, public announcements, webinars, etc.)</p>			
<p>8. How will the communication change over time? What processes are in place to adapt and refine communication plans as the need arises?</p>			

## Component Three: Training / Professional Development

A key challenge for training stakeholders and in redesigning critical professional development and curriculum frameworks will be to develop educator understanding of the level of student performance expected in the new standards and the pedagogy to teach the standards in an integrated manner. Professional development must also be available to help educators prepare for the assessments of CCSS, both formative and summative, with special consideration for special student populations. Strategic decisions to leverage various funding sources that support both targeted and more general professional development for teachers and administrators, as well as to inform the broader community of stakeholders would be helpful for SEAs and LEAs alike. The following questions reference key decisions that must be made regarding roles and responsibilities for training/professional development.

Guiding Question	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
1. What is the role of the state vs. the district regarding training/guidance on the common core? Will the state provide training on CCSS? What are you expecting districts to provide?			
2. Will the SEA coordinate and collaborate on the development and delivery of training across departments (e.g. Standards, EL, SPED, Assessment, Title I)? Will multiple departments co-train? With other service agencies and organizations?			

<p>3. How will the state ensure implementation of training fidelity i.e. delivering the same message? Will common training materials be developed and accessible for multiple uses and audiences?</p>			
<p>4. How will you establish ownership across the SEA? Across all stakeholder groups?</p>			
<p>5. How will the needs of ELs and other special populations be integrated within the CCSS training and materials?</p>			

**Additional notes/comments:**

## Component Four: Instructional Materials and Support

Currently, more than 40 states have adopted CCSS, leading to the great hope that in the near future aligned instructional materials will abound, available to all teachers in all states. In the meantime, states and districts will need to determine to what degree current and existing instructional materials can be used, adapted for use, or abandoned depending upon their alignment to the new standards. Common standards provide the opportunity to share instructional/support materials across states and/or districts.

Guiding Question	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
1. What is the role of the state vs. the district regarding guidance/provision of instructional materials aligned to the common core? To what degree will existing instructional support materials provided by the state need to be revised/abandoned?			
2. Will the state identify districts that are “early adopters” whose instructional materials support might be shared with others?			

<p>3. Does the state provide an approved list of aligned programs? Will the state provide curriculum maps and sample lesson plans? If so, how will these be developed? When?</p>			
<p>4. Are there any plans to contract with a vendor OR participate in a grant program that will develop and provide instructional support materials?</p>			
<p>5. How will an instructional materials plan address the needs of EL learners and other special populations?</p>			

**Additional notes/comments:**

## Component Five: Accountability

At the core of a good accountability system is information – the right information provided to the right people at the right time. As states implement Common Core State Standards, how will they know if implementation efforts are working? Determining what information the SEA or LEA will collect, and how that information will be validated, interpreted, tracked and communicated is necessary in order to inform stakeholders, to make formative decisions, and to gauge the overall success of efforts toward full implementation.

Guiding Question	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
1. How will the state ensure the implementation of CCSS with fidelity? How will it hold districts accountable?			
2. How will implementation of CCSS with fidelity be incorporated into your state system for evaluating educator effectiveness?			
3. How will implementation of CCSS with fidelity be incorporated into your state system of support for district and school improvement?			
4. What are the consequences for not implementing the CCSS with fidelity?			

## Component Six: Evaluating the Implementation of the Plan

States need to identify factors that will determine whether their implementation plan is effective. Evaluating performance in terms of goals and results and modifying its structure, processes, or format accordingly assures system efficacy and sustainability. Researchers should work closely with stakeholders to understand the system that has been put into place, and to ensure that the design allows important questions to be answered.

Guiding Question	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
1. How will the state determine if its transition plan is achieving its desired effect?			
2. What data will the SEA need to collect to measure progress?			
3. How will the SEA make adjustments to its plan based on data?			
4. How will progress be reported to identified constituents?			
5. To whom will the results need to be reported?			

## Component Seven: Aligning the CCSS Plan to Assessment Plan

Assessments play a critical role in state education systems, providing consistent measures of whether or not students are meeting or exceeding the state’s academic standards. As states begin to move toward full implementation of Common Core, they will need to refocus their assessments to measure the essential skills and knowledge targeted by these more rigorous standards. States are advised to map out a detailed phase-in strategy and timeline that identifies key milestones for sunsetting current assessments and transitioning to full assessment of CCSS.

Guiding Question	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
1. Has the state developed a bridge plan to the CCSS aligned assessments?			
2. Does the timeline reflect a smooth transition from the current assessment to the CCSS?			
3. Has the timeline for the CCSS and assessment transition been clearly communicated to all stakeholders?			
4. Are the EL, SPED, CCSS and Assessment divisions working together to develop and communicate an aligned standards and assessment system?			

## Component Eight: Use of Resources

Any planning for a new initiative needs to take into account the needed and available resources that will support the effort. At the current time and in the current economic environment, identifying available resources may be challenging; however, implementation cannot be successful without a clear understanding of available resources: human, fiscal, etc. While staff and budgets are often limited, strategic planning can leverage existing resources. Collaboration across departments within the SEA can result in shared ownership of the CCSS effort and maximize staff participation. Both federal and state funding provides potential streams of financial support for reform efforts. These funds may be used in many circumstances to support elements of the transition plan such as professional development and the revision of instructional materials, curriculum frameworks and/or assessment models. School Improvement funds can be used as well to support efforts to strengthen instruction within identified districts and schools. Federal funding from Consolidated Administrative funds or other Title funds can potentially be considered for use if the target content areas are English Language Art and mathematics, and the funds are tracked.

Guiding Question	Notes	Needs	Next Steps
1. Has the SEA assessed its staffing needs for the transition plan and identified existing staff who can contribute to the effort?			
2. Has the SEA established a cross-agency plan that will maximize current staffing levels?			
3. Has the SEA reviewed existing funding sources to determine eligibility for common core work?			

<p>4. Has the SEA provided guidance to the LEAs regarding how existing federal and state funding sources can be used to support the common core standards and assessment transition?</p>			
<p>5. What other resources might be leveraged to support the common core?</p>			
<p>6. Has the SEA considered what partnerships, grants, foundations, etc. it may pursue to provide additional resources for this effort?</p>			

**Additional notes/comments:**

**SECTION THREE: Action Planning**

Based on the discussions in the working sessions and the needs identified, use this template to define next steps.

Action (What)	Intent (Why)	Person Responsible (Who)	Timeline (When)	Resources needed (How)

### Personal Wrap-up and Next Steps

Individually, take a few moments at the end of the final working session to write some notes and reminders that summarize outcomes and identify next steps and action items that will serve as a reference when you return to your state. What will *you* need to do?

**Outcomes:**

**Next Steps:**

**Action Items:**