



Common Core State Standards – Myths vs. Facts

Myth: The Common Core Standards are federal standards.

Fact: The standards were developed through a state-led initiative spearheaded by governors and state school chiefs. The federal government did not develop the standards.

Myth: The standards are federally mandated.

Fact: The standards are not federally mandated. Mississippi, along with 45 other states and the District of Columbia, voluntarily adopted the standards. The federal government didn't write them, didn't approve them, and doesn't mandate them.

Myth: The Common Core shifts control of education from local school boards to the federal government.

Fact: Local school boards retain their same level of authority as they had prior to the adoption of the standards.

Myth: The Common Core won't prepare students for college and career.

Fact: The Standards reflect the real-world expectations of what is necessary for students to succeed in higher education and the workforce, including critical-thinking, problem solving, and effective communication skills, regardless of their pathway after high school. To this end, the standards were developed using evidence that includes scholarly research; surveys on what skills are required of students entering college and workforce training programs; assessment data identifying college and career-ready performance; and comparisons to standards from high-performing states and nations, among other data. Together with highly trained, well-supported teachers, the Standards will better prepare Mississippi students for college and career.

Myth: The Common Core is not internationally benchmarked.

Fact: The Standards draw from the best existing standards in the country and are benchmarked to the top performing nations around the world, ensuring that our students are well prepared to compete with their peers abroad for the jobs of the future.

Myth: The Common Core Standards are a curriculum that tells teachers what to teach.

Fact: The Standards are not a curriculum. Rather, they represent a set of goals that outline what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade in English and math. Decisions about how to teach the standards (e.g. curriculum, tools, materials and textbooks) are left to local school districts who know their students best.

Myth: No teachers were involved in writing the standards.

Fact: The Common Core State Standards drafting process relied on teachers and standards experts from across the country. In addition, there were many state experts that came together to create the most thoughtful and transparent process of standard setting. This was only made possible by many states working together. For more information, please visit: <http://www.corestandards.org>.

Myth: Implementing the Common Core will not require any big changes in teaching or learning.

Fact: The Common Core State Standards will require new methods of teaching that lead students to become critical thinkers and problem solvers with higher levels of subject mastery. Mississippi teachers will need additional training

and time to adopt more innovative instructional methods and deepen their content knowledge.

Myth: The Common Core does not have enough emphasis on fiction and literature.

Fact: While there is a shift towards including informational text in the standards, literature is included. The Standards require certain critical content for all students, including: classic myths and stories from around the world, America's Founding Documents, foundational American literature, and Shakespeare. Appropriately, the remaining crucial decisions about what content should be taught are left to state and local determination. In addition to content coverage, the Standards require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Myth: The math standard does not address algebra until high school.

Fact: Common Core grade 8 standards include some algebraic concepts such as proportional relationships, functions, linear functions and equations, systems of linear functions. These standards also include some statistical and probability concepts traditionally taught in an Algebra I course. This collection of standards and skills taught at Grade 8 will transition students effectively into a full Algebra 1 course at the high school level. It is important to note that the Standards accommodate and prepare students for Algebra 1 in 8th grade, by including the prerequisites for this course in grades K-7. Students who master the grades K-7 material will be able to take Algebra 1 in 8th grade—if they are academically prepared to do so at the request of the school district and parents.

Myth: Common Core was developed quickly and with little public comment.

Fact: The standards were developed by a thoughtful and transparent process led by the National Governors Association and Council for Chief State School Officers. The process relied on teachers, experts from across the country and feedback from key stakeholders and the general public. NGA and CCSSO received nearly 10,000 comments in response to the draft standards, which were incorporated into the standards.

Myth: Common Core requires massive data tracking of student information.

Fact: The Common Core does not require student data collection. Mississippi only adopted content standards in mathematics and English language arts.

Myth: The standards will be implemented through NCLB – signifying the federal government will be leading them.

Fact: The Common Core State Standards initiative is a state-led effort that is not part of No Child Left Behind and adoption of the standards is in no way mandatory. States began the work to create clear, consistent standards before the Recovery Act or the Elementary and Secondary Education Act blueprint were released because this work is being driven by the needs of the states, not the federal government.

Myth: The Common Core State Standards set lower achievement goals by race.

Fact: Under a flexibility request for waivers from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, approved in 2012, the MDE has set expectations based upon students' current performance levels, while still expecting all students to meet proficiency. Achievement gaps exist among students in Mississippi as well as nationally. This has no relation to Common Core State Standards.

The annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in the flexibility request outline a six-year plan to cut the achievement gaps in half for all subgroups of students.

Consider this analogy. Students from Brandon, McComb, and Corinth are all traveling to a conference in Jackson. Each student group has two days to arrive at the meeting. The students from Brandon must travel 5 miles each day to arrive, while the students from McComb must travel 40 miles each day, and the students from Corinth must travel 120 miles each day.

The AMO table in the flexibility request simply provides a snapshot of the projected student progress academically, given each group's starting location. Again, the ultimate destination is arrival at proficiency (or arrival in Jackson), but the incremental steps are different for each group of students, just like the daily distances traveled are different for each group of students in the analogy.