



## Wyoming Department of Education

Dr. Jim McBride, Superintendent of Public Instruction

2020 Grand Avenue, Suite 500

Laramie, WY 82070

Phone 307-777-5296

Fax 307-777-6719

Website [www.k12.wy.us](http://www.k12.wy.us)

---

### MEMORANDUM NO. 2009-095

**TO:** School District Superintendents  
Curriculum Coordinators

**FROM:** Jim McBride, Ed.D. *JMB*

**DATE:** June 19, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Common Core Standards Project

---

### INFORMATION TO SHARE

The Wyoming Department of Education, and Governor Dave Freudenthal have agreed to Wyoming's participation in the national "common core standards" effort. This project is a cooperative effort between the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governor's Association. Wyoming is one of 49 states committed to participating in the process. Governor Freudenthal signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on May 8, 2009.

#### Summary of Issue

State education leaders are committed to ensuring all students graduate from high school ready for college, work, and success in the global economy and society. State standards provide a key foundation to drive the reform needed to accomplish that goal. Today, however, individual states' standards differ significantly in terms of the incremental content and skills expected of students. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) have been working together and with partners to create a collaborative effort of the states to develop and adopt a common core of K-12 academic standards in English language arts and mathematics. The impetus for this effort is the belief that a voluntary common core of standards developed by the states would help to increase academic rigor and relevance and will prepare all students for postsecondary education and workforce training.

It is WDE's position that Wyoming should join this project early in order to learn first-hand about it and to have a voice in the development of the Common Core Standards. In our briefing to the governor, we identified the following potential benefits and concerns.

- If the Common Core is included in our Wyoming Content and Performance Standards, these may be improved by becoming fewer, clearer, and higher.
- These standards may be aligned with college and career expectations, so that all students graduating from high school are prepared for success.
- These standards may include rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher order skills, so that all students are prepared for the 21st century.
- These standards may be internationally benchmarked, so that all students are prepared for success in our global economy and society.
- These standards will help articulate to parents, teachers, and the general public our expectations for students to be college and workforce ready.
- The development of these standards is a state-led process during which states will have ongoing input.
- The timing of the Common Core Project coordinates well with our own schedule for review and revision of our English language arts and mathematics standards scheduled for 2010-2012.
- Wyoming may benefit from common assessments which could be developed from these standards. The cost to the state of developing, administering, scoring, and reporting student results on these assessments could be significantly less.
- The MOA does not bind states to adopting the final product.
- Wyoming educators will be part of the discussion regarding this project in order to have their voices heard.

### **Concerns**

- No decision has been made as to what extent Wyoming would be committed to a common assessment developed from the project.
- The extent to which the states will be involved in the development of the final Common Core Standards is yet to be determined.

School District Superintendents  
Curriculum Coordinators  
Memorandum No. 2009-095  
June 19, 2009  
Page 3

- If Wyoming were to adopt the Common Core Standards, work would need to be done to minimize any effect on our current extended, academic standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participating in alternate assessment as well as the existing framework of our alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards.
- If Wyoming were to adopt the Common Core Standards, work would need to be done to minimize any impact on the state's current English Language Development Standards.
- Specifics on how CCS will be incorporated into NCLB.
- Specific understanding of how national standards and the eventual national assessment would impact AYP calculations.
- Specific understanding how a growth district centered growth model could be used in conjunction with NCLB to calculate AYP.

As the project moves forward, we will keep districts informed about opportunities for involvement.

If you have questions, please contact Tom Collins, Standards Team Supervisor, [tcolli@educ.state.wy.us](mailto:tcolli@educ.state.wy.us) (307)777-3493.

JM:TC:al