

Testimony on Common Core

March 2013

The State Board of Education has the constitutional responsibility for updating Missouri's Learning Standards so that students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills they need for success in college, other postsecondary training and careers. The Missouri Learning Standards include the Common Core State Standards for English/language arts and mathematics.

Specifically, Article IX of the Missouri Constitution, in Section 2(a) indicates that "(t)he supervision of instruction in the public schools shall be vested in a state board of education..." there is nothing more fundamental to the supervision of instruction than establishing clear, rigorous expectations for the things all Missouri children are expected to know and be able to do.

In addition, state law addresses the responsibility of the state board of education to establish standards. RSMO 160.514 indicates that "...the state board of education shall adopt...academic performance standards which establish the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for students to successfully advance through the public elementary and secondary education system of this state; lead to or qualify a student for high school graduation; prepare students for postsecondary education or the workplace or both; and are necessary in this era to preserve the rights and liberties of the people."

Further, in Section 160.526 it states that "In establishing the academic standards authorized by subsection 1 of section 160.514 and the statewide assessment system authorized by subsection 1 of section 160.518, the state board of education shall consider the work that has been done by other states, recognized regional and national experts, professional education discipline-based associations and other professional education associations. Further, in establishing the academic standards and statewide assessment system, the state board of education shall adopt the work that has been done by consortia of other states and, subject to appropriations, may contract with such consortia to implement the provisions of sections 160.514 and 160.518." The process followed by the Department in determining Missouri's Learning Standards, including the Common Core, clearly follows the dictates of the statute.

Some have expressed concern about alleged data collection and reporting by the Department. First, adoption of the Common Core State Standards has not increased the reporting requirements of school districts. Missouri schools have been collecting and reporting data to the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education since 1989. These data are used for education accreditation/accountability purposes and related federal program purposes. Federal programs that require the collection of data are Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA - Special Education); Federal Title Programs; School Food Services; Migrant Education Programs; and Carl Perkins Career Technical Education.

The "Student Data Points" list that has been referenced contains 418 data items. Out of the 418 data items listed, the Department collects 61 in order to comply with Missouri statutes; federal program

standards and Missouri School Improvement Accountability. No information, with the exception of Migrant Education data, is collected at the student level and reported to the U.S. Department of Education. Student information reported to the U.S. Department of Education by the Missouri Department of Education is done only at the aggregate level and is not personally identifiable.

Finally, I would like to highlight the critical advantages the Common Core State Standards afford Missouri and our commitment to educate all children to college and career readiness. The Common Core State Standards:

1. **Were developed through a state-led effort by educators across the country.** The standards were created through a state-led initiative spearheaded by governors and state education leaders. Educators from throughout the country, including Missouri, helped develop the standards, which have been adopted by 46 states and the District of Columbia.
2. **Promote college and career readiness.** The standards are designed to make sure all students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills they need for success in college, other postsecondary training and a career. The standards were benchmarked with learning standards in other top-performing countries to ensure students in the United States are prepared to live and work in a global economy.
3. **Provide clear and consistent expectations for students.** The standards serve as a roadmap for quality education and establish consistent learning goals for all students regardless of where they live. The standards build on the strength of existing state standards. They provide students, parents, and teachers with a clear understanding of what students are expected to learn at every grade level. Learning outcomes improve when students, parents, and teachers are on the same page working together toward shared goals.
4. **Will be implemented through locally-developed curricula.** The standards establish what students need to be able to know and to do, but do not tell teachers how to teach. Local school districts and educators will decide how to implement the standards. School leaders and teachers will establish the curriculum and determine how the standards are to be taught, just as they currently do. Teachers will continue to create lesson plans and tailor instruction to the unique needs of the students in their classroom.
5. **Allow for greater collaboration among educators.** The standards provide teachers and schools with a greater opportunity to share ideas and resources, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of Missouri's education system. For the first time, textbook publishers who publish texts and other instructional materials will be aligning to the standards Missouri has, not just those of California and Texas.

Educators across the country—including in Missouri—have invested countless hours in developing learning expectations which, in our collective professional opinion, will prepare all students to be college and career ready upon graduation from high school. These standards are an important first step on the road to ensuring that Missouri is one of the nation's Top 10 performing states by the year 2020. I urge the members of the committee to support this work on behalf of the children we all serve.

Thank you.

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Commissioner of Education