

Update on Common Core State Standards Initiative

by Jim Bohan

- On July 1, 2010, the State Board of Education unanimously adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. Under the conditions defined in the federal Race to the Top (RTTT) funding application, this adoption requires the state to adopt the CCSS as a whole as the PA Standards; it is, however, allowed that states can add standards (not to exceed 15%) to CCSS.
- Two alignment studies were completed before the adoption and it was determined that the CCSS and the PA Academic Standards were sufficiently aligned to justify adoption.
- PDE has announced that there will be a three-year transition to the CCSS. Work on the transition will begin at the end of September and will include professional development and access to professional assistance for districts during the transition.
- The contents of the Standards Aligned System (SAS) will be adapted to show the connection to the CCSS. This adaptation will be part of the transition process.
- It is anticipated that adoption of the CCSS will not affect the development of Keystone exams. In English Language Arts, the Keystone Blueprint shows strong alignment to CCSS. In Mathematics, the organization of Keystones around course descriptions, rather than grade levels, supports the alignment between CCSS and Keystones.
- PA Districts should continue to use PA Standards, Anchors, Eligible Content and Curriculum Frameworks for any curriculum projects they determine necessary. Transition to CCSS documents will be released as they are crafted throughout the transition period with direction for adjustments that may need to occur.
- In anticipation of the transition, it is recommended that educators learn more about CCSS and participate whenever possible in professional development opportunities that will be created during the transition.