



MBAE Fact Sheet: **Common Core State Standards**

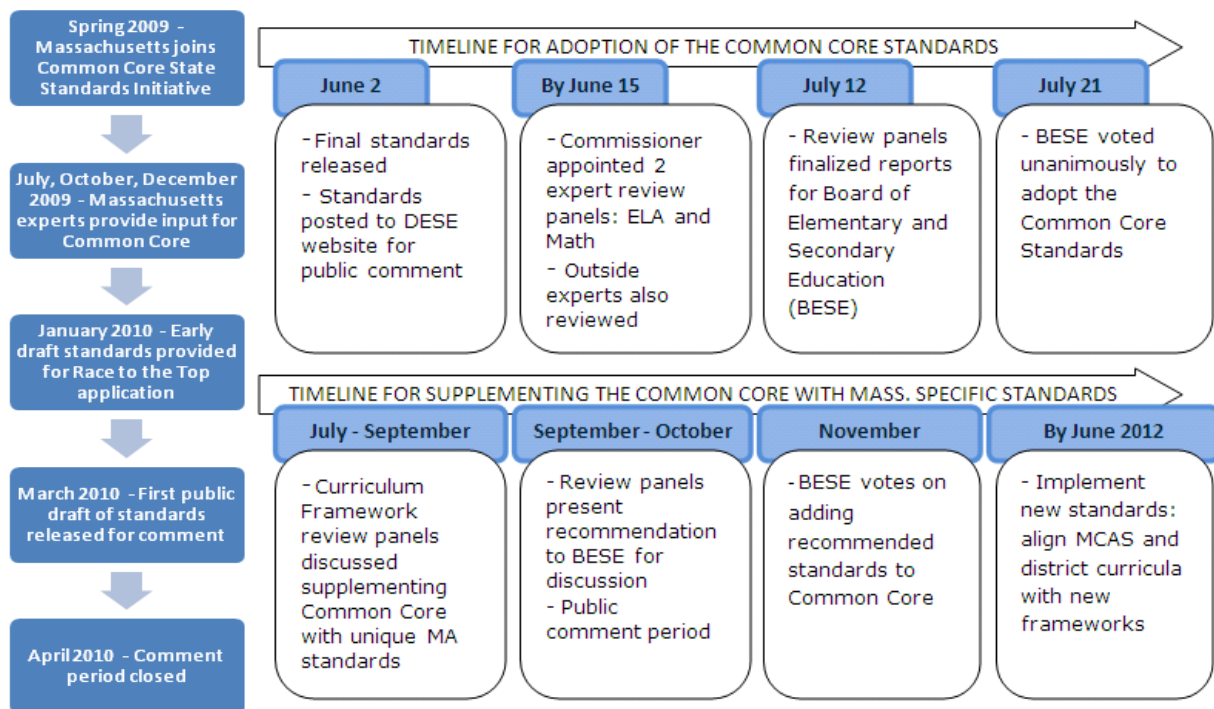
- **What are the Common Core State Standards?**

The Common Core State Standards (Common Core) are K-12 English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics standards designed, on the basis of research and evidence, to prepare students for college and career in an internationally competitive society. On July 21st, 2010, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted unanimously to adopt these standards for use in the Commonwealth.

- **What are “College and Career Readiness” Standards?**

College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards define the skills, proficiencies, and knowledge that students should be able to demonstrate by the time they graduate from high school so they are ready to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. Specific CCR standards were developed for the Common Core and then incorporated into the grade-level K-12 Standards.

- **What are the development, adoption, and supplementing processes for the Common Core in Massachusetts?**



- **Who developed the Common Core?**

The Common Core State Standards Initiative was led by the 48 participating states through their membership in the National Governor’s Association (NGA) and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). An advisory group, made up of Achieve, ACT, the College Board, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the State Higher Education

Executive Officers provided advice and guidance. Working and Feedback Groups made up of experts and educators worked closely with Massachusetts and other states to develop the standards.

- **How will the standards prepare students for college and career?**

The Common Core State Standards focus on those skills and content knowledge that students must master to be successful in either post-secondary education or employment. These are based on the best practices of our international peers, as well as research on college entrance exam requirements, a survey of college professors, and research requirements for sustainable wage jobs.

- **What is the federal government's role in the Common Core?**

Although the federal government had no role in the development of the Common Core, the administration has signaled its support for the project. First, in the Race to the Top competition, states had to commit to adopt the Common Core by August 2010 to receive full credit in the "Standards and Assessment" section. Second, the administration's blueprint for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act would require that states certify that their standards are "College and Career Ready" – adoption of the Common Core would fulfill this requirement. Further, the administration has also held a competition for consortia of states to develop common assessments which will be based on the Common Core.

- **Why did the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education support adoption of the Common Core standards?**

For more than 20 years, MBAE has advocated for the highest possible educational standards for Massachusetts students. Along with employers across the Commonwealth, our members insist on rigorous standards in order to ensure Massachusetts remains economically competitive and a global center of innovation and productivity.

MBAE's board made its decision after commissioning and reviewing an independent, non-ideological study comparing the state's K-12 English and math standards with the proposed Common Core Standards. The study, conducted by WestEd, an independent national education consultancy, found that:

- There is more in common than not between Massachusetts academic standards and the proposed Common Core; and both sets of standards are high;
- There is substantial alignment in math (96%) and English (74%) and they are comparable with regard to whether they are clear and measureable;
- In math, the two sets of standards reflect a comparable level of rigor;
- In English, the Common Core tends to have a heavier emphasis on standards that focus on strategic thinking, and those begin in earlier grades.

MBAE's Board of Directors voted on the basis of this factual and impartial analysis to recommend adoption of the Common Core educational standards and incorporate, where appropriate, Massachusetts standards not reflected in the Common Core. Five other business organizations joined us in expressing this support for adoption.