



# Common Core Considerations

Communications to help you in the Common Core State Standards Debate

## COMMUNICATIONS TO HELP YOU IN THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS DEBATE

The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

### DEVELOP KEY MESSAGES

Staying focused on your message is critical – there's so much misinformation floating around out there. Take some time to write down and commit to what you see as the most important points for your community. Here are some things to know in a conversation:

The vast majority of states are implementing Common Core State Standards because they are more rigorous, clear, and deeper than what Wisconsin currently has. Our students must be able to compete nationally and globally.

The standards challenge students to learn at higher levels in the critical areas of reading, writing, and mathematics – the standards are a floor and can be exceeded at the local level.

Common Core State Standards are benchmarked to the highest U.S. state and international standards to ensure students are ready to succeed in college and/or careers and are aligned to the expectations of higher education and employers.

### KNOW YOUR AUDIENCES

Consider that your audience includes all staff as well as everyone in your community – and they all come at the issue from different perspectives. You'll be talking to proponents and opponents, along with a great number of people who are simply seeking information. There are some people who will not be convinced, so structure your communications in a respectful way, focusing on sharing information.

### GET YOUR MESSAGE OUT

Think through how you can get your message out to the audiences you need to reach. Don't rely on one communication or platform to tell your story – mix it up so you're reaching everyone who needs the information. Don't forget to use the tried-and-true communication vehicles, but also think outside the box. For instance:

**Invite parents** to a "Math Day" or "Math Night" to come and learn with their children.

Schedule **small-group community chats** with samples of the standards available for all to read.

Include a **question and answer** in each edition or a district or staff newsletter, to break up the information in quick easy-to-read pieces.

Use parent-teacher conferences and other parent events to show examples of the Common Core State Standards and **how they are being used locally**.

Invite residents to see the 98 standards by visiting <http://www.corestandards.org>. Post the link on your website, share it in newsletters, and keep a printed copy handy.

### STOP THE RUMOR MILL

When rumors start, it can be difficult to rein them in. Take steps now to stop rumors before they begin and be prepared to shut them down quickly when they do surface. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Shape your message – **be proactive**.

**Create and share** a question-and-answer information sheet.

Hold **small group meetings**.

Make information **easy to access**.

**Thank people** for complaints, questions, phone calls and emails, etc. These are opportunities to identify misunderstandings or to learn something new.

**Address individuals** if misunderstandings arise.

## LISTEN TO ALL VIEWPOINTS

You can better present your district's message when you take into account all viewpoints. Take time to get up-to-speed on what opponents and proponents say on the issue, and consider where your district falls in the debate.

## WHERE TO GO FOR INFORMATION

Below are researched and relevant web resources for use in your community conversations:

- Wisconsin DPI Common Core Home Page:  
<http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/>
- Wisconsin DPI Common Core Myths & Facts:  
[http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/news/common-core-team\\_0806](http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/news/common-core-team_0806)
- Wisconsin DPI: About Common Core State Standards:  
<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/ccss/about-common-core-standards>
- Official Common Core State Standards Website:  
<http://www.corestandards.org/>
- Videos about the Common Core:  
<http://www.youtube.com/user/TheHuntInstitute>
- Who are your Legislators?  
<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/pages/waml.aspx>

## TAKE ACTION

Due to the incredible amount of misinformation around CCSS, it's important to share your district's/school's experience related to more rigorous standards. Let your legislators know your investment of time (staff development, staff/community input sessions) and money (curriculum purchases). If possible, detail improved results you've seen given your more rigorous standards.

**Who are your legislators?** <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/pages/waml.aspx>

***An electronic copy of this information, plus additional Common Core Question & Answers are available on the WSPRA website.***

***[www.wspra.org](http://www.wspra.org)***

