CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Mark K. McQuillan, Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: Common Core State Standards

DATE: July 7, 2010

To document the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Common Core State Standards pre-adoption process, Dr. Mhora Newsom-Stewart, Director of the Center for Collaborative Evaluation and Strategic Change (CCESC) at EDUCATION CONNECTION, was contracted to analyze data related to the adoption process and to prepare this report for submission to the CSDE. The adoption process was designed to inform education stakeholders regarding the degree of alignment between Connecticut's current standards and the new Common Core standards and to obtain feedback about their appropriateness and their potential implications for Connecticut schools.

Common Core State Standards State Adoption Process

Evaluation Report

Developed for:

The Connecticut State Department of Education

By

Dr. Mhora Newsom-Stewart, Director
Center for Collaborative Evaluation and Strategic Change

Contact:

EDUCATION CONNECTION
P.O. Box 909
355 Goshen Road
Litchfield, CT 06759-0909
Phone: 860-567-0863

Contact:

Connecticut State Department of Education

Dr. Marion H. Martinez, Associate Commissioner
Division of Teaching, Learning and Instructional Leadership
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford CT 06106
Phone: (860) 713-6701

June 2010

Common Core State Standards
State Adoption Process Evaluation

Introduction

The Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) is poised to adopt and implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and mathematics published on June 2, 2010. Jointly developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Governors Association and 48 participating states, the CCSS standards establish learning expectations intended to prepare all students to pursue higher education or to enter the work force.

States competing for Race to the Top funding from the U.S. Department of Education are expected to adopt the CCSS by August 2, 2010. Adoption is defined as occurring when the standards-authorizing body within the state (in this case, the CSBE) has taken formal action to adopt the CCSS in its entirety. Connecticut's Race to the Top Phase 2 application, submitted June 1, 2010, is committed to the adoption of the Common Core State Standards.

State adoption of the CCSS will result in changes to what is taught, when it is taught and how it is taught. In preparation for these impending changes, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has developed a comprehensive plan to engage education stakeholders in reviewing CCSS standards and contributing to planning for a confident transition to implementing the new standards. Actions to date have included (i) providing feedback to CCSS developers on two drafts; (ii) collaborating with the Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers (RESC Alliance) to establish a comprehensive plan for CCSS rollout and implementation; (iii) collaborating with Achieve to conduct a comparison study of CCSS to Connecticut standards in English language arts and mathematics; and (iv) convening a Stakeholder Engagement Conference to raise awareness of the CCSS and elicit stakeholder input on the standards' quality and recommended transition supports.

To document CSDE's CCSS adoption process, Dr. Mhora Newsom-Stewart, Director of the Center for Collaborative Evaluation and Strategic Change (CCESC) at EDUCATION CONNECTION, was contracted to analyze data related to the adoption process and to prepare this report for submission to the CSDE. The adoption process was designed to inform education stakeholders regarding the degree of alignment between Connecticut's current standards and the new Common Core standards and to obtain feedback about their appropriateness and their potential implications for Connecticut schools.

Background of Common Core Standards Development

The Common Core State Standards initiative focuses on the development of state led common core standards for K-12 in English/Language Arts and Mathematics and incorporates a focus on learning expectations for students. The initiative is designed to address a variety of challenges faced nationwide in education including the existence of disparate educational standards across the states, a high degree of student mobility between and within states, the increasing pressures of global competition and a need for students to obtain the twenty first century skills needed to be successful in a twenty first century workplace. The development of Common Core State Standards is intended to prepare students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and work, to ensure consistent student expectations throughout the United States and to provide parents, students and educators with clear and focused goals for achievement. As of March, 2010, 48 states, the District of Columbia and two United States territories had committed to participation in the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

The Common Core State Standards were designed to meet specific criteria. Standards were designed to consist of fewer, clearer and high level standards; to be aligned with college and work expectations; to include rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher order thinking skills; to build upon the strengths and lessons of current state standards; to be internationally benchmarked so that all students will be prepared to succeed in our global economy; and to be based on evidence and research.

The standards were developed through an intensive process of national review and feedback at multiple levels. The initial college and career readiness standards were developed during the summer of 2009. After completion of

these standards, a series of K-12 learning progressions occurred including multiple rounds of feedback from states, teachers and feedback group and validation committees. Groups of individuals representing English language learners and students with disabilities were instrumental in developing the ELL and students with disabilities statements in the introduction to the standards. The draft standards were provided to each state for review on February 8, 2010. Consultants in the CSDE reviewed this draft version of the Common Core standards in its entirety for their respective content areas and provided a number of recommendations for improvement. In mid-March, the final draft of the Common Core Standards was released for public comment. That period ended on April 2, 2010.

In each of the two primary focus areas, English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, a number of advances were incorporated into the Common Core State Standards. Specifically, the ELA standards devote attention both to what students read as to how students read. As students progress over time, they are expected to develop reading comprehension skills and to apply them to increasingly complex texts. The standards progress across the K-12 continuum. The progression is based on evidence and anchored in the college and career readiness (CCR) standards. The CRR standards define broad competencies while the K-12 standards increase specificity and define a developmentally appropriate progression of skills and understandings. The K-12 standards require reading in literature and discipline-specific content areas. There are, across the standards, specific content that all students must read including classic myths, stories from around the world, America's founding documents and foundational American literature. The ELA standards require that students systematically develop knowledge of literature and in other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking and listening across the content areas.

Advances in Mathematics standards were designed to focus on core conceptual understandings and procedures in the early grades. In grades K-5, students gain a foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and decimals. In the middle grades, students build upon this foundation through hands on learning in geometry, algebra, probability and statistics. The high school standards require students to apply mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges and emphasize the use of mathematical modeling.

Connecticut Adoption Process

The CSDE conducted a multi-step process to inform and engage education stakeholders. Each step of the process will be discussed separately. Objectives of the adoption process were to:

1) Through an inclusive process, obtain stakeholder feedback regarding the alignment, rigor and quality of the CCSS
2) Broaden acceptance and understanding of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in advance of implementation
3) Inform recommendations of the State of Connecticut Board of Education
4) Assist the CSDE in planning for rollout, transition support, new resources and systems.
5) Inform the educational community and ensure transparency of all CSDE activities related to the adoption of the CCSS.

Step 1-Planning

On April 15, 2010, as the first step of the process designed to facilitate the adoption of the Common Core State Standards, consultants from the CSDE met with representatives of the Alliance of Regional Education Service Centers (RESC Alliance) to discuss and co-plan activities related to the adoption process. Attendees included CSDE staff and representatives of six Connecticut Regional Education Service Centers. CSDE and RESC Alliance staff discussed upcoming activities and began to plan for co-hosting a CCSS Stakeholder Engagement Conference. The purpose of the conference was to inform education stakeholders regarding the degree of alignment between Connecticut's current standards and the new Common Core standards and to obtain feedback about the quality of the new standards and their appropriateness for Connecticut students.

Step 2-Common Core Comparison Tool

In February 2010, CSDE was invited to be one of several state education agencies to field test a Web-based program being developed by Achieve, an independent, non-profit education reform organization that is a partner in the Common Core Standards Initiative. A team of CSDE curriculum consultants met with representatives of Achieve on April 23, 2010, to learn to use the Common Core Comparison Tool (CCCT) and to suggest improvements for its further development. The tool analyzes matching judgments made by state standards experts and generates reports summarizing the percentage of match between Common Core and state standards, as well as the strength of those matches and where there are grade level differences.

Step 3-Common Core Comparison Study

On May 28th, 2010, CSDE standards experts and representatives from Achieve brought together over 50 experts in Connecticut's English language arts and mathematics standards to conduct the comparison study. Participants were recruited from RESCs and from school districts based on their deep knowledge of Connecticut standards and their ability to commit to two days' work.

The standards reviewers were divided into teams to look at standards for a gradespan: K-2, 3-5, 6-8 or 9-12. Each team consisted of 7 to 10 individuals. They received training in the use of the on-line tool which displays a Common Core standard and a list of all Connecticut standards and grade-level expectations. Standards reviewers enter the Connecticut standard or standards that are similar in their "essence" to each Common Core standard. For each Common Core standard, one of three possible judgments were made: an "Exact match", a "Collective match" or "No match". An exact match meant that the essence and the grade-level were the same. A collective match meant that parts of two or more Connecticut standards, when taken together would be similar to the Common Core standard. The closeness of each match was rated either an "Excellent match", a "Good match" or a "Weak match." The combined process allows the essence of the standard to trigger a match with a strength rating accounting for differences in verbiage, specificity or bulk conducted by Connecticut standard experts.

Results indicated that approximately 80% of the Common Core standards match the Connecticut ELA standards and 92% of the Common Core standards match the Connecticut mathematics standards. There were 200 CCSS in ELA and 40 CCSS in mathematics identified that are not currently included in the Connecticut standards.

Of the ELA standards, 37% of standards had an "Excellent" match, 31% had a "Good" match, 12% had a "Weak" match and 20% had "No match" to the Connecticut standards. Of the mathematics standards, 47% had an "Excellent" match, 21% had a "Good" match, 24% had a "Weak" match and 8% had "No match" to the Connecticut standards

A grade-by-grade comparison of standards indicates that, for the mathematic standards, between 86-100% of standards in the CCSS match to the Connecticut Standards for each of grades K-12. For ELA, between 64% and 90% of standards are matched in grades K-8.

Step 4-CCSS Stakeholder Engagement Conference

The CCSS Stakeholder Engagement Conference was designed to share the results of the standard-to-standard comparison and to provide an opportunity for educational and other experts to provide feedback about the quality of the new standards. The event was planned for Thursday, June 17th, from 9 am until 12 noon.

One hundred and eighty one individuals were invited to attend the CCSS Stakeholder Engagement Conference. These individuals represented a broad sample of education stakeholders and included administrators, teachers and specialists from Regional Educational Service Centers and enrichment organizations. The pool of invitees was balanced among 60% certified educators and 40% representatives from parent, community, social advocacy or community-based organizations. During the conference, activities planned include the review of the gap analysis results and the completion of two feedback surveys.

An on-line invitation was sent to all invitees and included information summarizing background information regarding the Common Core Standards Initiative and an on-line individual feedback form to be completed by individuals who are not able to attend the conference.

The CCSS Stakeholder Engagement Conference included introductory remarks by Mr. Mark McQuillan, Commissioner of Education for the State of Connecticut followed by an overview of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, a description of the adoption process and implications, and results of the comparison study. Upon completion of the overview, stakeholder discussions were held and structured feedback was provided regarding the quality and rigor of the Common Core State Standards and the appropriateness of the Common Core State Standards for Connecticut students.

Group discussions were facilitated by table leaders. Stakeholders were asked to preview the CCSS in either ELA or mathematics prior to the conference and were given an Individual Feedback form with 10 prompts to guide their review. During the conference, 2 hours were provided for group discussion and feedback. Each table was asked to discuss the general impressions of the CCSS as a group. Upon completion of this discussion, each individual completed the Individual Stakeholder Feedback form and provided the completed form to their Table Leader to entry into the online Survey Monkey survey.

The second half of the group discussion consisted of the validation of the CCSS that were new to Connecticut. Each stakeholder was asked to review 20-30 standards for a grade level in either ELA or Math and to respond to two questions about each standard. Response forms were customized by grade and color-coded. Each individual reviewed the standards listed on their worksheet and entered the responses to the two prompts for each standard. A facilitated group discussion was then held regarding the appropriateness of the standards new for Connecticut. A single group consensus response to the four questions on the on-line version of the Stakeholder Group Consensus Form for ELA and math was developed and responses were entered by the Table Leader directly on line.

Instrument Development

The instrument development process was designed to encourage participation of CSDE and Regional Education Service Center (RESC) staff through each stage in the process. The process included the initial development of draft individual and group feedback forms on May 15 by CSDE and RESC Alliance representatives. After completion of the draft, the survey was provided to Dr. Mhora Newsom-Stewart, Director of the Center for Collaborative Evaluation and Strategic Change (CCESC) at EDUCATION CONNECTION for feedback and review. Dr. Newsom-Stewart provided feedback and guidance on survey questions and format to Ms. Liz Buttner, CSDE Consultant. Ms. Buttner in turn provided the feedback to additional CSDE consultants and RESC Alliance staff until agreement was reached on both questions and format. Two survey forms were developed as follows:

- *Individual Stakeholder Feedback Form*: Designed to provide individuals an opportunity to inform the CSDE and RESC Alliance of their impressions of the Common Core State Standards.
- *Group Stakeholder Consensus Feedback Forms in ELA and Mathematics*: Designed to provide small groups of individuals the opportunity to provide consensus feedback related to Common Core State Standards that do not have a match in Connecticut standards and Connecticut standards that do not have a match in the CCSS.

Survey validity is maximized when the survey addresses all key concepts related to the issue being addressed and when the conceptual framework is reviewed by a panel of experts to ensure that no key concept was missed. Validity was maximized in this activity by the development of questions linked to Common Core and Connecticut Standards and by the review of all survey categories and questions by CSDE and RESC Alliance staff. Survey validity is expected to be sufficient.

Reliability is generally maximized by the development of questions following nationally accepted standards and developed at a literacy level in line with the literacy level of the target population. Survey questions were developed using these guidelines and were reviewed by CCESC, CSDE and RESC Alliance staff prior to survey administration.

Surveys were administered online using Survey Monkey by the CSDE. The Individual Stakeholder Feedback Form was administered to all invitees. Individuals who were not attending the conference were asked to complete this form online prior to the conference. Individuals who were attending the conference, were asked to complete the survey at the conference. The Group Stakeholder Consensus Feedback Form was administered to each group attending the conference. One form was completed on hard copy per group. Data was provided to the CSDE staff and entered into the online survey by the end of the day.

A detailed description of the content and format of each data collection instrument is included below.

A. Individual Stakeholder Feedback Form:

Information collected included:

- Background Information
  - Primary Affiliation
  - Content Area Interest
- Impressions of the Common Core State Standards
  - Rigor
  - Inclusion of 21rst Century Skills
  - Clarity and ease of following
  - Progression of learning from grade to grade
  - Developmental appropriateness
  - Linkage of standards to success in college
  - Linkage of standards to success in workplace

A 4-point, forced choice, Likert-type scale was developed with 1=Strongly Disagree to 4=Strongly Agree. Individuals were also able to select "Don't Know/Need more Information" for any item. The survey provided individuals an opportunity to comment on each item.

B. Group Stakeholder Consensus Feedback Form:

Information collected included:

- Perceptions of ELA CCSS standards that are new to Connecticut
  - Degree to which standards are essential for college/career readiness
  - Degree to which standards provide reasonable expectations for the corresponding grade level
  - Resources, information and support systems needed for effective implementation
  - Additional questions
- Perceptions of mathematics CCSS standards that are new to Connecticut
  - Degree to which standards are essential for college/career readiness
  - Degree to which standards provide reasonable expectations for the corresponding grade level
  - Resources, information and support systems needed for effective implementation
  - Additional questions

For the first two questions in each area, a 3-point, scale was developed with 1= Disagree, 2=Not Sure and 3=Agree for each item. Questions for the last two bullets in each area were open-ended.

Data Analysis

Conceptual analysis of open-ended responses was used to analyze qualitative feedback results. Analysis of quantitative data occurred using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Cross-tabulations assessed

differences in responses on the individual perceptions of Common Core Standards by stakeholder group using the Pearson's Chi-Square test. Differences were compared between individuals with a primary interest in ELA or mathematics, between teachers and administrators and between individuals representing school districts, other educational organizations or "other" organizations. All statistical tests were conducted using an alpha level of $p<.05$.

Results

Individual Feedback Form

A total of 107 individuals attended the conference and 90 individuals completed the individual feedback form. Of these, 64.4% held a primary affiliation within a school district, 26.7% had a primary affiliation with another educational organization and 8.9% stated that they had "other" primary affiliation. Over half (55.6%) of respondents stated that their primary content interest was English/Language Arts. The remaining 44.4% had a primary content interest in mathematics.

Of respondents representing a school district, 71.4% identified themselves as administrators (71.4%) and 28.7% identified themselves as teachers.

Results from the individual feedback forms are summarized in Table 1. Items are listed in decreasing order of the percentage of individuals who "Agree or Strongly Agree" with each item.

Statistical analysis using cross-tabulations and the Pearson's Chi-Square test identified only one statistically significant difference between groups. Individuals from "other" organizations were more likely to disagree that *"The CCSS embed 21rst Century skills"* than individuals representing educational organizations. There were no statistically significant differences in perception between individuals with primary interests in ELA or mathematics or between administrators or teachers. It is expected that the lack of variation between groups results from the overall lack of variation in response. The high percentage of individuals who "Agree or Strongly Agree" with each item show consistency in response across all groups.

Table 1: Individual Perceptions of Common Core State Standards
Percent Response

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree or Strongly Agree
1)	Students meeting these core standards will be well prepared for success in college.	0%	0%	**0%**	60.6%	39.4%	**100.0%**
2)	The CCSS format is easy to follow.	0	2.4	**2.4**	63.9	33.7	**97.6**
3)	The CCSS are as rigorous as CT standards in terms of higher order thinking skills.	2.5	0	**2.5**	60.0	37.5	**97.5**
4)	The CCSS represent a coherent progression of learning from grade-to-grade.	1.3	3.9	**5.2**	62.3	32.5	**94.8**
5)	The CCSS are as rigorous as CT standards in terms of application of knowledge.	5.1	3.8	**8.9**	50.6	40.5	**91.1**
6)	The CCSS represent learning standards that are important for all students.	3.6	6.0	**9.5**	54.8	35.7	**90.5**
7)	Students meeting these core standards will be well prepared for post-high school success in the workplace.	0	10.9	**10.9**	57.8	31.3	**89.1**
8)	The CCSS embed 21rst Century skills (i.e. communicating, collaborating, using technologies and solving problems creatively).	5.2	7.8	**13.0**	50.6	36.4	**87.0**
9)	The CCSS language is clear.	1.2	13.1	**14.3**	64.3	21.4	**85.7**
10)	The CCSS are developmentally appropriate for each grade.	0	18.1	**18.1**	65.3	16.7	**81.9**

The vast majority of respondents provided positive feedback regarding the CCSS standards. Respondents were most positive regarding the ability of the standards to prepare students for success in college, the ease of use of the CCSS format and the rigor of the CCSS in terms of higher order thinking skills. Over 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statements relating to each of these topics.

Respondents provided less positive feedback regarding the ability of the standards to prepare students for post-high school success in the workplace, the degree to which 21rst Century skills are embedded in the CCSS, the clarity of the CCSS language and the developmental appropriateness of the CCSS for each grade. Although lower, the percentage of individuals who agreed or strongly agreed with these items was still high and ranged from 80 to 90% of respondents.

Respondents provided comments relating to each item. A brief summary of comments related to each item are provided below.

- Item 1: Students meeting these core standards will be well prepared for success in college. Comments related to this item generally addressed the critical role of higher education in assessing the ability of these standards to prepare students for college. A few individuals commented on specific areas that they perceived to be either lacking or very strong in the standards. One individual expressed concern about the degree to which technology literacy is embedded in the CCSS standards at the elementary and middle school levels. A number of individuals expressed enthusiasm regarding the inclusion of both life and academic skills in the standards.

- Item 2: The CCSS format is easy to follow. The majority of comments provided expressed satisfaction with the degree to which the CCSS format is easy to follow. A few individuals provided recommendations

for improvement including clarification of enactment of the state and district levels, a need to strengthen connection to the 21rst century skills, and a need for more "fine tuning" and "details."

- Item 3: The CCSS are as rigorous as CT standards in terms of higher order thinking skills. Comments provided by respondents regarding this item were limited and generally identified a need to understand the CT standards more clearly in order to address the question. A number of respondents stated that the CCSS standards were broad as compared to the CT standards. A few respondents described the CCSS standards as expanding listening and speaking, providing appropriate evolution from grade to grade, providing greater production and performance levels, and providing a positive contribution to history, integration across curricular areas and procession from grade to grade. Challenges were described as requiring evidence of learning, engagement across subjects and a need to incorporate interpretation of poetry.

- Item 4: The CCSS represent a coherent progression of learning from grade-to-grade. The majority of comments in this area were positive with the progression described as "Great", "Easy to follow" and "Clearly articulated". A few areas of concern were identified and included grades 9-12, ELL and SPED areas, a need for greater detail and a lack of description of required foundational skills for each area.

- Item 5: The CCSS are as rigorous as CT standards in terms of application of knowledge. The majority of comments provided expressed satisfaction with the CCSS with these standards being described as more rigorous, performance-based and applied than Connecticut standards. A few individuals stated that Connecticut standards were more rigorous, in particular in the areas of ELL, interpretation of poetry and Standard 9 for writing.

- Item 6: The CCSS represent learning standards that are important for all students. The majority of comments were positive with a number of individuals identifying a need to ensure that the learning requirements of ELL and SPED students were met. Additionally, a few respondents questioned the need to teach high level mathematics concepts to all students.

- Item 7: Students meeting these core standards will be well prepared for post-high school success in the workplace. The majority of individuals provided positive feedback regarding the ability of the standards to meet the academic needs of students in the workplace. Concerns were identified in the areas of cross-cultural and international communication and collaboration, team work, interpersonal skills, problem solving, technology and interpersonal skills.

- Item 8: The CCSS embed 21rst Century skills (i.e. communicating, collaborating, using technologies and solving problems creatively). Respondents expressed satisfaction regarding the inclusion of 21rst Century skills in the CCSS. However, concerns described by respondents included a need to strengthen the areas of collaboration, technology, teamwork, communication, mathematic practice, and creativity in the CCSS standards and to, in general, to be more specific regarding what is expected in each area.

- Item 9: The CCSS language is clear. Participants generally expressed satisfaction with the clarity and specificity of the CCSS standards. However, some respondents emphasized that the appropriateness of the clarity was dependent on the audience to whom the standards were being presented. A number of individuals stated that the clarity needed to be improved for teachers in elementary grades and for teachers that do not have a rigorous background in the subject area addressed.

- Item 10: The CCSS are developmentally appropriate for each grade. Respondents described the appropriateness of the CCSS standards as dependent on grade level with a number of individuals stating that they did not believe they could assess the appropriateness in the time allotted or based on their own experience. Individuals also stated that the "appropriateness" of the standards would depend on the implementation of the standards within the classroom setting and, to be implemented successfully, would require appropriate instructional practice within the classroom.

Stakeholders Group Consensus Form

I. Group Consensus - **English/Language Arts**:

Nine group leaders completed the group feedback form for English and Language Arts.

Of these nine group leaders, all respondents agreed that the CCSS in the area of English and Language Arts that would be new for Connecticut were essential for college and career readiness. Almost four fifths (77.8%) of respondents agreed that overall, the CCSS in ELA that would be new for Connecticut were reasonable expectations for the corresponding grade level. The remaining individuals were "not sure".

Due to the small number of respondents, all comments provided by respondents are listed below for each item. Comments were edited for spelling errors only.

Item 1: Overall, the CCSS in ELA that would be new for Connecticut are essential for college and career readiness—Comments:

- As State has evolved we have enhanced our grade levels expectations – initially this will be a stretch, but the assessment made people stretch (CMTs) until we have the assessments, we won't stretch for these Alignment with 21st century skills.
- Grades 11-12: Syntax, "artful sentences" unclear; some of the writing was a little above grade 12: "verify data with corroborating or challenging conclusions" might be too sophisticated--unsure...Is it necessary for every student, every career?
- The preponderance of the new items are essential and are already being done
- There was some discussion about college and career readiness NOT being the same. Industry may be pushing this agenda.
- We love the focus on inter-personal skills.

Item 2: Overall, the CSS in ELA that would be new for Connecticut are reasonable expectations for the corresponding grade level-Comments:

- EC: For K, children in pre-k come in with wide range of experiences since there is no universal pre-k or full K. Expectations are high given various experiences and knowledge upon entering K. Variability of developmental readiness is also a factor.
- Except for some exceptions for example, grade 9-10 first page – samples for analysis – content is more appropriate for a higher grade, expectations are reasonable for corresponding grade levels. State requirements of content by grade level may conflict.
- For some grade levels the concern is level of scaffolding accepted – are we introducing, how do you determine level of mastery expectations? Rather than using HOT talk about the levels of sophistication of text – Access to content vs. reading level
- More consensus at K-8 level; much less consensus at HS level. Not all standards were perceived as appropriate for all students, much more for higher achieving students.
- The group felt that some of the standards needed more clarification. Wasn't a consensus on what it meant.
- While the group liked the focus on rigor and student independence, some standards seem to be inappropriate for grade levels. In particular, craft and structure in reading standards for literacy in science and technical subjects seems inappropriate since
- Yes, overall. SPED and ELL are concerns. Also, some shifting of when certain skills are introduced may be necessary.

A summary of responses to open-ended questions 3 and 4 is provided below.

Item 3: What information, resources or support systems will be needed for effective transition to, and implementation of, the CCSS?

Group responses to this question identified a number of resources respondents perceived to be needed for a successful transition to and implementation of the CCSS. Necessary resources identified by respondents included:

Professional Development: Respondents identified the provision of professional development for faculty and administrators as critical to allow a bridge between standards and classroom practice to be developed. Groups emphasized a need to provide professional development on topics including the link to SRBI, the needs of Tier I students, strategies to provide alignment to Tiers II and III, differentiation, the importance of and specifics of the CCSS and how the CCSS link to Connecticut standards, strategies for scaffolding from grade to grade, integration of literacy in the content areas, developmentally appropriate practice to meet standards, and the use of technology in instruction. Stakeholders requested a variety of types of professional development including the use of on-line learning, webinars, implementation of a train-the-trainers model and the development of model lessons.

Curriculum Alignment: Respondents emphasized the importance of curriculum alignment at the district level and alignment with the ELL frameworks. A number of respondents expressed an interest in working with Achieve to conduct alignment of CSSS with curriculum at a district level.

Development of Planning, Communication and Education Tools for Standards: A range of planning, communication and education tools were identified by participants as critical for success. These tools included the development of clear expectations for districts by the CSDE including expectations for student performance, curriculum alignment and integration, student assessment, implementation timelines, integration of technology, required materials, expected resources and assessments; the development of user-friendly definitions of CSS terminology; the development and sharing of models of assessments and lesson plans; and the development and sharing of crosswalks between old and new standards. Additionally, stakeholders emphasized the importance of summarizing and communicating to districts the national and international educational context impacting the adoption of the CCSS.

Collaboration: Respondents emphasized the importance of collaboration between K-12 teachers, administrators and faculty from higher educational institutions throughout the state in the evaluation and implementation of CCSS standards.

Item 4: What additional questions do you have concerning the adoption and transition to CCSS?

Questions provided by participants were generally specific and included requests for information regarding linkages between the CCSS and the GLEs, strategies to emphasize global expectations and address the CT achievement gap, timeline and available funding to support the initiative, linkage to disciplines other than ELA and mathematics, types of assessments and existence or development of a pre-K component.

II. Group Consensus - **Mathematics**

Five group leaders completed the group feedback form for Mathematics. All respondents agreed that the CCSS in mathematics that would be new for Connecticut are essential for college and career readiness. Three fifths (60%) of respondents agreed that overall, the CCSS in mathematics that would be new for Connecticut are reasonable expectations for the corresponding grade level. The remaining individuals were "not sure".

All comments provided by respondents are listed below for each item. Comments have been edited for spelling errors only.

Item 1: Overall, the CCSS in Mathematics that would be new for Connecticut are essential for college and career readiness—Comments:

- There was some discussion of college and career readiness not being the same.
- Seems to up the level, appear rigorous, 9-12 especially rigorous
- K-8 The entire group felt all the NEW standards were essential. 9-12 – Disagreement about the first two being essential # CC.9-12 NCN 6+ How can we answer reasonable for grade level when the descriptor is 9-12. The CCSS should prioritize some of the standards – e.g., the simple equations are critical where complex numbers is not essential for college and career readiness.
- Yes - we like them
- There was general agreement that they were essential especially K-8, but there was some unease with the term "essential" at the 9-12 levels. Do ALL kids really need ALL of these? There was a hesitance to go all in with essential. How can we find the time to do all of them....

Item 2: Overall, the CSS in Mathematics that would be new for Connecticut are reasonable expectations for the corresponding grade level-Comments:

- More consensus at K-8 level; much less at HS. Not all was indicated as appropriate for all students.
- Concern if students can't meet the standards, our population especially at the low and high ends are not engaged Need to plan and have PD so teachers can meet the needs of these students
- K-8 Specificity in the elementary is confusing – teachers and districts will need to know more details regarding topics like fractions. A district cannot build an assessment based on their interpretation. 9-12 Reasonable for grade level is difficult. Just looking today, you have to discuss the standard before deciding it is reasonable or essential. These should be identified by course (Algebra, Geometry and other?) Many of these from the CCSS are common to high school courses – our CT Standards so broad. Page 57 in the CCSS – the plus means advanced courses. Many of these should be in the common courses at the core level. See specific papers.
- We had 7 or 8 standards that we feel need to be at a different grade level within the k-8 set of standards for math
- Seemed generally OK - pushing so much - there is still going to have to be picking and choosing - it will be tough to do it all. Out of context, there is nothing to prohibit it developmentally, the larger concern is how can it all be done or can all of it be done well enough for mastery in the realm of a well rounded curriculum.

A summary of responses to open-ended questions 3 and 4 are provided below.

Item 3: What information, resources or support systems will be needed for effective transition to, and implementation of, the CCSS?

Group responses to this question identified resources respondents perceived to be needed for a successful transition to and implementation of the CCSS. Resources identified by respondents included:

Professional Development: Respondents again emphasized the importance of professional development for faculty and administrators to allow a bridge between standards and classroom practice to be developed. Groups emphasized a need for content-driven professional development for math teachers, at all levels, by grade to review the new standards, match what the district resources are, and educate teachers on appropriate instructional techniques to assist students to meet standards. Professional development was highlighted as particularly important for early grade math teachers.

Curriculum Alignment: Respondents again emphasized the importance of curriculum alignment at the district level and identified a need to specify details for each grade level and integrate probability into the standards.

Development of Planning, Communication and Education Tools for Standards: A range of planning, communication and education tools were again identified to be critical for success. Ideas provided by stakeholders include incorporation of a mandatory 4 years of mathematics in the high school curriculum, the development of resources for students with special needs including gifted students and students in Tiers I, II and

III, development of a strategy to work with districts to develop an action plan to implement CCSS, development of a clear direction from the CSDE regarding implementation timelines, integration of technology, materials and resources and assessments for each grade level; the development of user-friendly definitions of CSS terminology—in particular for teachers at the early grade levels and the development and sharing of models of lesson plans.

Additional Resources: Additional resources mentioned by respondents included financial resources, encouragement provided to schools and districts to upgrade text books and supplies, the use of Achieve's comparison tool for completion of district alignment studies, and the provision of adequate technology to schools and districts to facilitate instruction necessary to implement the standards.

Item 4: What additional questions do you have concerning the adoption and transition to CCSS?

Questions provided by participants focused on the appropriate timeline and materials necessary to implement the CCSS and the relationship between the CT standards, the current model mathematics curriculum, the GLEs not included in the CCSS, and strategies to adapt the current curricula to meet the new standards. Respondents also asked for information regarding the involvement of higher education in the implementation of the standards and how to work with standards currently in the CT standards but not on the CCSS. Clarification was also requested regarding the level of skill or mastery needed at each level.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Data indicate that the Common Core State Standards Stakeholder Engagement Conference was successful in achieving desired goals and objectives. Specifically:

- Objective 1: Through an inclusive process, obtain stakeholder feedback regarding the alignment, rigor and quality of the CCSS.

90 individuals attended the Engagement conference with approximately two out of three individuals representing school districts, and the remaining participants representing other educational organizations. Representatives included teachers and administrators and content area experts in ELA and mathematics in relatively equal numbers. A wide range of feed back was received regarding alignment, rigor and quality of the CCSS. Feedback from both individual and group data collection processes was clear and informative and provides excellent data regarding stakeholder perceptions of the CCSS.

- Objective 2: Broaden acceptance and understanding of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in advance of implementation

Individual and group feedback indicates awareness and acceptance of the Common Core State Standards by the majority of stakeholders. Individual feedback forms completed by participants indicate that over 80% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with ten positive items related to clarity, ease of use, rigor, appropriateness, progression of the CCSS standards and the ability of standards to successfully prepare students for college and career. Data indicate that group feedback and related feedback forms were successful in providing opportunities for stakeholders to thoroughly review standards and provide descriptive and in-depth feedback to the CSDE.

- Objective 3: Inform recommendations of the State of Connecticut Board of Education

Participants provided a range of feedback to the CSDE related to rigor and appropriateness of the CCSS, concerns related to the use of the standards, and recommendations for successful implementation of the standards within Connecticut school districts. These recommendations will be useful to inform future recommendations provided by the CSDE.

- Objective 4: Assist the CSDE in planning for rollout, transition support, new resources and systems.

Ideas and suggestions provided by respondents should be invaluable to the CSDE while planning for rollout, transition support, new resources and systems. Additionally, data indicate that the adoption process was highly successful at informing and educating stakeholders regarding the CCSS and should provide the CSDE with a core group of informed individuals to serve as a basis for rollout and transition support.

- Objective 5: Inform the educational community and ensure transparency of all CSDE activities related to the adoption of the CCSS.

Data were shared with and input received from a broad spectrum of the educational community during each of the four steps of the adoption process. Stakeholder feedback and input was received from representatives of school districts and regional education service centers, higher education faculty, non-profit organizations, teachers, administrators and other key stakeholders. Participation and feedback collected during the pre-adoption process indicate that CSDE's approach to CCSS initiative thus far has been inclusive, collaborative, and data-based. Going forward, CSDE plans to continue and expand collaborations with the education community, business and industry leaders, family and social advocacy groups.

Recommendations: Participants provided a number of recommendations for the consideration of the CSDE. These recommendations include the following:

- Develop and communicate clear and consistent expectations for school districts regarding the implementation of the CCSS standards. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of including expectations on timeline, student performance, curriculum alignment and integration, student assessment, integration of technology, required materials, expected resources and assessments.
- Develop clear and simple descriptions of the standards for sharing throughout the school community. It was recommended that these descriptions be written in simple language to allow all educators to easily comprehend the standards.
- Develop and share cross-walks of the CCSS to the Connecticut standards for each subject area and grade level.
- Provide professional development to assist teachers and administrators to develop a bridge between standards and classroom practice. Stakeholders recommended that professional development be provided on topics including the link to SRBI, resources for students with special needs including gifted students and students in Tiers I, II and III, integration of technology, strategies for addressing needs of ELL and SPED students, differentiation, importance of and specifics of the CCSS and linkages between the CCSS and Connecticut standards, strategies for scaffolding from grade to grade, integration of literacy in the content areas, developmentally appropriate practice to meet standards, and content driven professional development for mathematics teachers. Professional development was described as particularly important for teachers in the early grade levels and for administrators to assist them to provide leadership throughout the schools related to implementation of the CCSS.
- Provide standards awareness workshops to stakeholders throughout Connecticut to ensure a general understanding of the implementation process.
- Ensure that adequate technology is available for all schools to allow the integration of the CCSS standards.
- Provide opportunities for teachers, administrators and faculty from higher education to interact and collaborate to provide a seamless transition between high school and college and a consistent approach to implementation across all grade levels.
- Work with districts to develop an action plan to align CCSS with existing district curricula. A number of individuals suggested that districts be able to work with Achieve to assist them to align CCSS with existing standards.
- Provide curriculum, student assessments, and instructional materials necessary to support districts in the implementation of the CCSS.