

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Superintendents and Charter School Directors  
From: Larry K. Shumway, Superintendent  
Date: November 17, 2010  
Re: Implementation of the new Common Core Standards

---

After careful consideration and discussion with USOE leaders, I am providing you with the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) suggested schedule for implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The schedule is based on a backwards-designed timeline developed to prepare students, teachers and systems for full implementation during the 2014-2015 school year and the new operational assessments in spring of 2015. The schedule has been developed in committees that included math, language arts and assessment experts from schools and districts across the state.

According to the Utah State Board of Education-approved timeline (attached), all Utah schools and districts will be expected to fully implement CCSS by spring of 2015. **Districts and charter schools may choose to move at a slower or faster pace to reach the spring 2015 accountability deadline.** The USOE will provide materials, professional development, and assessments according to the State Board-approved implementation timeline (attached).

In June of 2009, as a critical part of its *Promises to Keep* efforts, the State Board voted to participate in the development of new Common Core State Standards in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. As you may know, the development of Common Core State Standards was a **state-led initiative**, not one led by the federal government; thus, the standards are Common Core State Standards, not federal standards. The decision for Utah to participate in the development of CCSS came before the *Race to the Top* initiative.

When CCSS were completed in June of 2010, the State Board adopted them based on the quality of the standards, the opportunity to have nationally and internationally benchmarked standards, and with confidence that the more rigorous CCSS will improve literacy and mathematics instruction across the state.

In the past, new core standards were typically implemented in a one-year process. A careful review of the issues related to adopting CCSS in two subject areas, including the need to significantly revise assessment practices to focus on more formative-type assessments, led USOE to expand this implementation and phase-in period from one year to five years. The expanded schedule will give USOE and local districts and schools time to formulate local plans for implementation, including preparation of materials, courses and appropriate professional development. Because most states have decided to adopt CCSS, material resources for implementation are more numerous than if we

were a lone state conducting a revision. USOE staff is working with publishers, higher education institutions, private organizations and other states to ensure that Utah teachers have the textbooks, resources and training they need to fully implement the new CCSS. **There will be no other subject cores reviewed or revised by the State Board during this five year focus on the new CCSS.**

Professional development will be provided by the USOE for districts and charter schools, according to the State Board-approved timeline (attached) and through professional development meetings, technology-driven classes and follow-up meetings. Lead teachers, rural teachers, assessment leaders, and trainers of teachers will be invited to these meetings so as to provide help to every district and charter school as they work toward full implementation. Trainees will then return to their districts and charter schools and provide local training. Funding sources at the state level now have a laser-like focus on CCSS and their implementation. We encourage local districts and schools to prepare a local plan for implementation that also utilizes locally-available resources of time, people and funds to focus on CCSS implementation. We recognize the loss of the professional development block grant at the state level but are hopeful that other funds and time might be built into contracts and plans to enable sufficient training statewide.

The implementation schedule is designed to phase in new mathematics coursework for secondary grade students. Transition pathways for high school and middle school students who have already begun their required mathematics courses are also attached.

Related to CCSS is the work of a number of states who comprise the SMARTER Balanced Consortium. The work of this Consortium is to revise assessments in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics so that assessments are more formative in nature, focused on detecting student abilities early each year, providing evidence of individual student growth, and meet all current federal summative assessment requirements.. Moreover, it is expected that these assessments will be computer-driven and adaptable to each child's current performance. The work of the SMARTER group continues and is timed to be completed along the same implementation timeline approved by the Utah State Board. You will see on the implementation timeline the phasing out of our old CRT tests and the phasing in of the new, SMARTER assessments. Professional development will include training in assessment for the CCSS. Districts and charter schools are encouraged to continue to acquire computers that are usable for such assessment practices. Computer specifications and acquisition information will be forthcoming from the SMARTER group within the next few months.

Some educators have expressed concerns about the impact of the new core on teacher licensing and endorsements. The State Board is actively working on this issue and USOE staff members are working with higher education pre-service providers to address the issue. It is anticipated that the Board will use a reasonable combination of grandfathering and credit for core professional development for current teachers to be able to qualify to teach the CCSS courses. The five year roll out of CCSS will facilitate this process.

You can find a copy of the new CCSS for Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics as well as learn what states have adopted the CCSS at: [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

If you have further questions regarding CCSS implementation please contact Brenda Hales at [brenda.hales@schools.utah.gov](mailto:brenda.hales@schools.utah.gov). We anticipate that we will continue to receive feedback and suggestions from our LEAs. If needed, we may modify the schedule to address changes in circumstances.