



TO: RIDE Leadership Team

FROM: ESSA Committee of Practitioners

DATE: October 28, 2016

SUBJECT: Committee of Practitioners Input on the continued use of CCSS and NGSS in RI schools

The following is a summary of the Committee of Practitioners' input from a meeting on August 24, 2016. Committee members discussed Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The notes here do not represent consensus but rather a high level overview of the most frequent comments. After consultation with constituents, members shared primary concerns and questions regarding standards, as well as perceived benefits of their implementation. More information on the input activity can be found [here](#).

Primary **concerns and needs for clarification** for the continued implementation of CCSS and NGSS include:

Alignment & narrowing of focus: Questions exist regarding the rigor of current standards, as well as how curricula become narrower as a result of teaching to CCSS and NGSS. Committee members commented:

- "...doesn't focus on skills like critical thinking, collaboration..."
- "CCSS emphasizes reading and writing over language, listening, speaking..."
- "NGSS does not align with NECAP (assessment for science)"
- "CCSS leaves little time for science instruction"
- "Does it align with university requirements?"

Appropriateness for age and subgroups: Committee members shared concerns that "one size doesn't fit all" with respect to the implementation of standards as it pertains to early childhood and early elementary aged students, and English Learners and Special Education sub-groups. Some noted that instruction in the lower grades was focused on readiness for PARCC by third grade, rather than on the standards themselves. Committee members commented:

- "K-3 children are being pushed too hard and in ways not developmentally appropriate."
- "K-3 children aren't having enough play time."
- "Special Education students and other students with disabilities are struggling with content."
- "[Standards] do not account for English Learners who are new arrivals, or with limited or interrupted formal schooling."

Resources for implementation: Equitable implementation of CCSS is difficult without guidance, and teachers may not fully understand standards. Committee members commented:

- "Lack of quality materials and resources to implement CCSS, or how to determine which resources are good."
- "Instruction does not yet match rigor or expectations."

Similarly, some members noted that parents may not fully understand the intent and content of the CCSS. Committee members cite this as a barrier to parents supporting students outside of the classroom.

Primary **benefits** of CCSS and NGSS may be leveraged for more effective implementation:

Focus on essential skills: The level of rigor and fewer, more-focused standards are ideal for developing essential skills for the future. Committee members commented:

- "...Standards are written to foster 21st century skills."
- "CCSS have a solid research/career readiness base and were crafted with attention to college/career readiness."



Uniformity and expectations: The use of standards helps shape curricula and provides consistency across the state, as well as grade levels. Committee members commented:

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- “...Important to have high standards for what students know and are able to do for each grade, consistent across the school district.”
- “...sets clear expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level.”
- “...sets direction for skills and strategies to teach.”

Resource development and collaboration: There is increased effort to provide adequate resources in response to a need for more guidance to implement state standards. Committee members commented:

- “...Renewed effort in professional development, especially in science with NGSS.”
- “...increased alignment of instructional materials to state standards.”
- “Growing availability of open access resources from across the country.”