

SREB

*State Implementation of College-
and Career-Readiness Standards*

Timeline and Approach to Standards and Assessments

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One of six benchmarking reports on progress in 14 states

These reports were prepared at SREB by Kimberly Anderson, director, Benchmarking College- and Career-Readiness Standards, and Mary Elizabeth Mira, assistant director, Benchmarking College- and Career-Readiness Standards. Research assistance was provided by Education First.

Six individual reports make up the set — a summary report, plus five reports with detailed state profiles by topic.

Cross-State Findings Report

Timeline and Approach to Standards and Assessments

Aligned Teaching Resources

Professional Development

Evaluation of Teachers and Leaders

Accountability

The *Cross-State Findings Report* summarizes the findings of this research. The five accompanying reports each present a detailed profile of each state's efforts in the topic area. Together, these reports represent the cumulative findings of SREB's Benchmarking College- and Career-Readiness Standards project. These reports replace the preliminary reports SREB released in March 2014. They update the information in the preliminary reports to reflect state efforts and plans between 2010 and summer 2014. Additional benchmarking studies are forthcoming from SREB. All of the reports are available at <http://www.sreb.org/page/1600/>.

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Timeline and Approach to Standards and Assessments

Introduction to State Profiles

State Efforts to Implement New College- and Career-Readiness Standards and Aligned Assessments

The following profiles address decisions and actions that state education policy-makers — in the state departments of education, unless otherwise noted — are taking to foster successful statewide implementation of their states' new college- and career-readiness standards and aligned assessments. These profiles provide a descriptive overview of each state's implementation efforts. For trends across the states in their efforts, successes, challenges, types of support needed to move this work forward, and practitioner perceptions of the effectiveness of state efforts and their experiences with implementation, see the accompanying *Cross-State Findings Report*.

As SREB researchers reviewed information about state efforts, they asked the following questions. These questions guide the organization of the state profiles.

- ◆ *Leadership Context:* When did the state adopt its new college- and career-readiness standards? How did state leaders organize to adopt and plan the transition to the new standards, and what other major reform initiatives or legislation informed their adoption and transition plans?
- ◆ *Standards:* What is the state's timeline for implementation of the new standards?
- ◆ *Assessments:* How is the state ensuring that its annual summative grade-level and course assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math are aligned to the new standards? Read further for information about how SREB determined the alignment of states' assessments. These profiles do not address assessments for content areas such as science and social studies (unless the state has revised those to assess new college- and career-readiness literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.
- ◆ *Supporting Implementation:* What are the main structures, routines and supports that the department has in place to support local implementation?
- ◆ *Reaching Diverse Learners:* How is the state ensuring that its alternate ELA and math standards and assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and its English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards and assessments for English learners are aligned to the state's new college- and career-readiness standards?

What Makes State Efforts Stand Out?

As SREB researchers reviewed information about state implementation efforts, some efforts stood out according to these criteria:

- ◆ The state is making progress in its implementation of the new standards. This includes ensuring that the state's ELP standards and assessments for English learners, and its alternate standards and assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, align to the new college- and career-readiness standards by 2014-15 or soon thereafter.
- ◆ The state has already aligned its ELA and math assessments to the new standards or continues to pursue plans to acquire aligned assessments by 2014-15.
- ◆ The department provides extensive support to local systems, schools and teachers for implementation of the new standards through strong structures, routines and resources that facilitate collaboration across levels of the system.
- ◆ State leaders, as well as other reform efforts (for example other major education initiatives or legislation), provide strong support for the implementation of the new standards and the state's college- and career-readiness agenda.

Highlights: It must be emphasized that all of the states in this study are undertaking comprehensive efforts to ensure successful implementation of new college- and career-readiness standards across their states.

States that have made *leading efforts* in relation to the criteria above are Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland and New York, as their efforts are the most comprehensive, coordinated and innovative. **States with *strong efforts*** are Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Mississippi and North Carolina. Refer to each state's profile for a description of its efforts. Leading states' efforts and other notable aspects of the work across the states are also summarized in the accompanying *Cross-State Findings Report*.

Additional Information About Alignment of Assessments to the New Standards

SREB researchers derived the following criteria for alignment of a state's assessments to its new college- and career-readiness standards from "A Primer on Common Core-Aligned Assessments" (*Education First*, 2013).

- ◆ The tests assess the full range and depth of knowledge and skills inherent in the standards. In particular, the tests assess the standards' new learning expectations, the increased level of rigor and the higher-order cognitive skills required.
- ◆ The tests incorporate items that require multiple modes of response (for example, not exclusively multiple choice items but also performance-based, multi-step and real-world problems), to reflect the more rigorous learning and performance expectations of the new standards.
- ◆ The tests are valid, reliable and fair.

The information provided in these reports about the extent of alignment of state assessments to the states' new college- and career-readiness standards is reported based on information available publicly at the time of publication. The information is self-reported by the states and test developers. SREB did not conduct its own technical analysis of the alignment of state assessments. Multi-state assessment consortia, such as the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, regularly provide publicly available information on alignment efforts and sample test items to demonstrate alignment. Other test developers (such as ACT) provide some sample aligned test items. Departments explain the extent of their tests' alignment in publicly available state policy

documents, and department representatives discussed it in interviews for this project. States, consortia and vendors may not yet have published expert external reviews of the alignment of their assessments. It is expected that over the next few years, such reviews will be undertaken and published.

Based on information provided by the states and test developers, this study groups the status of state test alignment into three categories listed below.

- ◆ *Not yet aligned.* These states have not modified their state assessments to align to the new standards; hence, the assessments are still aligned to the states' former standards. These states are at various stages in the process of developing or acquiring fully aligned assessments, with the goal of implementation in 2014-15.
- ◆ *Partially aligned.* These states have modified their state assessments in some way to align them more closely to the new standards. These states have used various approaches such as adding test items to address some or all of the new standards and/or eliminating items that address the states' previous standards, increasing the rigor of test items, adding items that require new modes of response, raising proficiency cut scores, or other changes. The states may have made some or all of these modifications and to varying degrees; what they have in common is that their assessments do not at this time meet all three of the alignment criteria listed above (from "A Primer on Common Core-Aligned Assessments"). These states are at various stages in the process of developing or acquiring fully aligned assessments, with the goal of implementation in 2014-15.
- ◆ *Fully aligned.* These states are already implementing assessments that they report are fully aligned to the new standards.

Methodology

Information for these profiles was gathered from two sources:

- ◆ Review of publicly available information (state policy documents and reports, department websites and other sources such as U.S. Department of Education reports)
- ◆ Interviews with department leaders

Each state department of education reviewed and provided feedback on drafts of its profile, to ensure the accuracy of the information.

Alabama

State-Level Leadership

Consistent with the recommendations of the Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching; the Governor’s Congress on School Leadership; and input from educators, businesses and the public, in 2012 the Alabama State Department of Education developed an overarching strategic improvement and reform plan called Plan 2020. Plan 2020’s goals and objectives include improving college and career readiness by developing and adopting college- and career-readiness standards and assessments. This aspect of Plan 2020 built on Alabama’s adoption of new College- & Career-Ready Standards (CCRS) in 2010. The CCRS were adopted with recommendations from a state assessment and accountability task force in 2009 and the state’s English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Course of Study Committees. The new CCRS incorporated the Common Core and a few Alabama-specific standards in each content area. The department developed the state’s implementation plan.

Standards Timeline

Alabama rolled out the CCRS over two years.

- ◆ *2012-13:* Math standards were implemented in K-12.
- ◆ *2013-14:* ELA standards were implemented in K-12.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess new college- and career-readiness literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state’s accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15:* Alabama adopted a suite of ACT assessments to align its assessments to the CCRS. For high school, Alabama uses ACT’s QualityCore end-of-course assessments. ACT reports that its QualityCore course standards, upon which these assessments are based, are fully aligned to the Common Core in ELA, math, and literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects. For grades three through eight, since 2013-14 Alabama has used ACT’s Aspire tests. ACT reports that the Aspire tests are fully aligned. Alabama decided to partner with ACT after joining the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to gather information about the groups’ work and to consider the various options available to states. Alabama withdrew from both consortia in 2013.
- ◆ *2014-15:* Alabama reports that the current aligned assessments will continue to be used in 2014-15.

- ◆ *Technology Readiness:* Regarding the readiness of Alabama’s technology infrastructure to facilitate administration of the new tests online, the department is working with districts to address issues in existing local capacity. The department reports that getting every district ready for computer-based assessments in the next few years will be a challenge.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

To further the state superintendent’s goal of building a transparent, collaborative partnership with local educators, and based on input from districts, the department built a structure of interlocking teams to support local implementation and build capacity. This structure includes district teams, regional teams and district curriculum coordinators. Department staff meet quarterly with district implementation leadership teams and with regional planning teams (which include representatives from the department, the state’s regional in-service centers, the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative, the Alabama Reading Initiative, higher education, early childhood education, and career and technical education). At these meetings, the department facilitates the development and delivery of professional learning and implementation guidance and discussions of district implementation status, and teams have time for planning and problem-solving. District teams are then expected to submit professional development and transition plans to the department for ongoing monitoring, and to redeliver professional learning to teachers in their districts. All districts in the state participate in these meetings voluntarily.

The department also meets quarterly with all districts’ curriculum coordinators to provide targeted professional learning and gather feedback on how implementation is going. Additionally, the department provides other (optional) professional learning opportunities, resources and materials to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction on its Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) Web portal. (See accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.)

In 2014, the department will reflect on the status of CCRS implementation statewide and establish expectations for how the department can effectively lead implementation in future years. Based on these expectations, department leadership will define the long-term responsibilities for the department. Further, in 2014 the department will establish plans to conduct occasional, random on-site visits to districts to monitor implementation.

Reaching Diverse Learners

- ◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*

Alabama has ensured that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the CCRS.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** The state reports that it fully aligned its own Extended Standards for ELA and math to the CCRS.
- **2014-15:** Alabama currently is developing an alternate assessment, which it reports will be fully aligned to the CCRS, for implementation in 2014-15.

Alabama (continued)

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the CCRS in the content areas, Alabama has ensured that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the CCRS.

- **Current:** Alabama adopted the English Language Development (ELD) Standards and the ACCESS for ELLs test of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. WIDA designed its ELD standards and assessment to address the academic language skills inherent in the Common Core. In a WIDA alignment study, the assessment received a rating of moderate to strong alignment to the Common Core.
- **2015-16:** Additionally, Alabama is a participant in the Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems (ASSETS) project. ASSETS states are building on the work of the WIDA Consortium to create a next-generation, technology-based ELP assessment system, which is planned for implementation in 2015-16.

Colorado

State-Level Leadership

In 2008, the Colorado Legislature passed Senate Bill 212, Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) — the goal of which is to align the state's pre-K-16 system through new standards and assessments, with a focus on school readiness and college and career readiness. As a result, the state Department of Education initiated a yearlong review of its academic standards in 2009, collaborating with representatives from pre-K-12, higher education, the business community, and advocates of English learners and students with disabilities. This effort culminated in 2009 with the adoption of the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) in 10 content areas as well as new English language proficiency (ELP) standards. In 2010, the state Board of Education adopted the Common Core as the state's new CAS in English language arts (ELA) and math, while maintaining some "unique to Colorado" standards in those areas. The state also has a Race to the Top grant that supported some of its early implementation work (the grant ends in December 2015). In 2014, the state Legislature passed House Bill 1202, creating a task force charged with studying Colorado's statewide assessments and producing a report with recommendations by January 2015. House Bill 1234 also passed, appropriating \$32 million to the department for the augmentation of state assessments.

Standards Timeline

Colorado rolled out the CAS over three years.

- ◆ *2011-12:* This was a transition year.
- ◆ *2012-13:* This was a transition year.
- ◆ *2013-14:* ELA, math and all other content area standards were fully implemented in K-12.

Additionally, in 2010 Colorado developed CAS-aligned pre-K standards (called the Colorado Preschool Academic Standards), which were adopted by all school districts in 2011.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses and plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and ELP assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess new college- and career-readiness literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15:* Since 2011-12, Colorado has used its Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) tests for ELA (reading and writing) and math in grades three through 10. The TCAP is partially aligned to the CAS.
- ◆ *2014-15:* As a member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium, Colorado plans to implement the new PARCC tests in ELA and math for grades three through 11.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness:* Regarding the readiness of the technology infrastructure to facilitate administration of the new tests online, the department is collaborating with district technology coordinators and using resources from PARCC to assess district readiness for online testing and to address issues. The department expects that districts will be ready for the computer-based assessments in 2014-15.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

The department's approach to supporting implementation of the CAS and aligned assessments strikes a balance between Colorado's history of strong local control and unprecedented requests from districts for support. After adoption of the standards, the department provided districts with an implementation toolkit and engaged with district leaders as they mapped out transition plans. Since then, through the Colorado District Sample Curriculum Project and the Content Collaboratives initiative, the department has trained hundreds of teachers (on a voluntary basis) in the development of aligned curriculum planning and assessment tools. The department has worked with 116 district teams (on a voluntary basis) to develop aligned instructional units based on the templates. The department has worked with experts and teachers to identify and create assessments for classroom use that are aligned to the standards. Over 300 assessments have been loaded into an online Assessment Resource Bank. Additionally, the department provides other (optional) resources and materials to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction on its content-area Web pages. Much of this support was provided using the state's Race to the Top grant funds. (See accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.)

Colorado (continued)

Reaching Diverse Learners

◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*

Colorado has ensured that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the CAS.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** As of 2013-14, Colorado is implementing its own Extended Evidence Outcomes in ELA and math (as well as social studies and science) and its own Colorado Alternate Assessments (CoAlt), which it reports are fully aligned to the CAS.
- **2014-15:** Colorado expects to either continue to use its CoAlt or to adopt the new, fully aligned assessments of the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment System Consortium.

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the CAS in the content areas, Colorado has ensured that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the CAS.

- **Current:** Colorado uses the English Language Development (ELD) Standards (adopted as the Colorado English Language Proficiency, or CELP, standards) and the ACCESS for ELLs test of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. WIDA designed its ELD standards and assessment to address the academic language skills inherent in the Common Core. In a WIDA alignment study, the assessment received a rating of moderate to strong alignment to the Common Core.

Delaware

State-Level Leadership

Delaware's Race to the Top application served as the catalyst for the state to develop college- and career-readiness initiatives. Delaware adopted the Common Core in June 2010 with the support of the governor, the state PTA, the teachers union and the business community. The state Department of Education then developed a plan to implement the standards. The state Board of Education's 2011 strategic plan also strongly supports the use of the Common Core and aligned assessments to prepare students for college and careers. In 2014, Governor Jack Markell helped to launch the Partnership for Higher Standards, led by the Bipartisan Policy Center, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and the Hunt Institute. This partnership aims to strengthen support for the Common Core by emphasizing the importance of the standards to students and the skills they will need, while also trying to dispel myths about the standards. The state's Race to the Top grant has supported some of the state's implementation efforts.

Standards Timeline

Delaware's implementation of the Common Core occurred over two years:

- ◆ *2011-12*: K-12 began initial implementation in English language arts (ELA) and math.
- ◆ *2012-13*: Full implementation began across K-12.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess new college- and career-readiness literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15*: In 2012-13, Delaware partially aligned its Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) in reading and math for grades three through 10. The department modified the assessments to more closely measure the learning expectations of the Common Core, with more than 90 percent of assessment items aligned by 2013-14. The department reports that its end-of-course assessments in Algebra II and Integrated Math III are fully aligned to the Common Core.
- ◆ *2014-15*: As a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, Delaware plans to implement the new, fully aligned Smarter Balanced tests in ELA and math for grades three through eight and 11. The department developed Accessibility Guidelines for the Smarter Balanced assessments in May 2014 and will provide in-person and online professional development in fall 2014.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness*: The department reports that districts will be ready to administer the Smarter Balanced assessments online, given that current state assessments are already computer-based and adaptive, and because the state has the basic technology infrastructure in place. (Many district technology needs, such as bandwidth and connectivity, fall under the state Department of Technology and Information.) State Department of Education officials note that Delaware, by having previously used the same test developer as Smarter Balanced and by conducting rigorous field-testing and thorough communication, has prepared educators for the transition. One concern is that some districts may need to update some of their hardware. Additionally, Delaware is a member, along with Oregon and Hawaii, of the Item Bank Collaborative — an effort to develop Common Core-aligned test items for computer-adaptive state tests.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

The department's current approach to supporting local Common Core implementation stems both from the secretary of education's vision that reform should be from the ground up (with the department providing support) and from the desire to foster deeper and swifter reform among districts than was seen in the first two years after adoption of the standards. In the Common Ground for the Common Core initiative, the department collaborates intensively with local educators and leaders. Schools and districts build guiding teams of teachers and administrators. Guiding teams participate in professional learning institutes throughout the

Delaware (continued)

year and in monthly meetings with department staff to receive training, share evidence of implementation and identify needs for support. Guiding teams submit implementation plans for department review and lead implementation efforts at their local sites. The Common Ground initiative will continue in 2014-15 with a focus on formative, interim and summative assessment. The department also provides data coaches to support school-based teacher Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and employs cadres of ELA and math teachers and higher education personnel to create professional development modules on Common Core implementation. Local educators use the modules in their PLCs and other school-based workshops. Department specialists in ELA and math also provide technical assistance to educators throughout the school year. The department provides other professional learning opportunities, resources and materials to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction on its Common Ground website (<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/200>). Much of this support is provided using the state's Race to the Top grant funds, which will continue to be in place through 2014-15. (See accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.)

Reaching Diverse Learners

◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: ELA and Math Extended Standards and Alternate Assessments Aligned to the Common Core*

Delaware has ensured that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the Common Core.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** Delaware used its own Grade Band Extensions and an alternate assessment system (DCAS-ALT1) that the department reports are fully aligned to the Common Core.
- **2014-15:** Delaware will continue to use the Grade Band Extensions and DCAS-ALT1, while exploring a change to a new aligned alternate assessment system for the 2015-16 school year.
- **Professional development:** Teachers can access training and coaching on implementation of the Grade Band Extensions and instructional strategies for ELA, math, science and social studies (including the development of model units that embed life skills and vocational skills within academic activities) through the ACCESS technical assistance project at the University of Delaware.

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to ensuring that English learners receive instruction in the Common Core in the content areas, Delaware has ensured that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the Common Core.

- **Current:** Delaware adopted the English Language Development (ELD) Standards and the ACCESS for ELLs test of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. WIDA designed its ELD standards and assessment to address the academic language skills inherent in the Common Core. In a WIDA alignment study, the assessment received a rating of moderate to strong alignment to the Common Core.

- **2015-16:** Additionally, the state is a participant in the Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems (ASSETS) project. ASSETS states are building on the work of the WIDA Consortium to create a next-generation, technology-based ELP assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core, which is planned for implementation in 2015-16.

Delaware is making leading efforts to support local implementation of the Common Core. Delaware adopted the standards in June 2010 with the support of the state Board of Education, the governor, the state PTA, the teachers union and the business community. In 2014, Governor Jack Markell helped to launch the Partnership for Higher Standards, led by the Bipartisan Policy Center, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and the Hunt Institute. This partnership aims to strengthen support for the Common Core. The new standards have been fully implemented in Delaware classrooms since 2012-13. To support local implementation, the state Department of Education launched the Common Ground for the Common Core initiative. Schools and districts build guiding teams of teachers and administrators who participate in intensive, ongoing professional learning opportunities throughout the year, including monthly meetings with department staff. The department also provides data coaches to support school-based teacher Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and employs cadres of English language arts (ELA) and math teachers and higher education personnel to create professional development modules. Much of this work was supported by the state's Race to the Top grant funds. Further, Delaware has ensured that teaching and learning for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, as well as English learners, are supported by extended English language arts and math standards and alternate assessments, and English language proficiency standards and assessments, aligned to the rigorous demands of the Common Core.

Georgia

State-Level Leadership

Georgia's work on college and career readiness stems back to its participation, beginning in 2005, in the American Diploma Project (facilitated by Achieve) and, in 2008, in the College and Career Ready Policy Institute (jointly facilitated by Achieve, the Data Quality Campaign, Education Counsel, Jobs for the Future and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices). Based on that work and the state's Race to the Top grant plan, in 2010 Georgia adopted the Common Core, with minor changes, as the College and Career Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). The state Department of Education then developed the state's implementation plan. The state Board of Education monitors the implementation in coordination with the Georgia Alliance of Education Agency Heads (which includes representatives from the state's seven education agencies, the governor's office, chambers of commerce and Georgia Public Broadcasting). In 2014, the state Legislature enacted House Resolution 0550, which formed a House Study Committee on the Role of the Federal Government in Education. The committee (composed of 15 legislators, state board members, local superintendents, teachers and parents) will review the Common Core — its origins and its adoption in Georgia as

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the CCGPS — and agreements between the federal government and state education agencies, to determine the impact on taxpayers. The committee will submit a report of findings and recommendations to the Legislature, the board, the state superintendent, the governor and local boards of education by November 2014.

Standards Timeline

The department established a multi-year implementation timeline.

- ◆ *2012-13*: Implementation included K-9 in math and K-12 in English language arts (ELA).
- ◆ *2013-14*: Implementation included grade 10 in math.
- ◆ *2014-15*: Implementation will include grade 11.
- ◆ *2015-16*: Additional math courses (options for a fourth high school math course) will be added.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below in this profile. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess new college- and career-readiness literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15*: Georgia reported that in 2012-13 it fully aligned its Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) for grades three through eight in reading, ELA and math, and high school end-of-course tests in ELA and math.
- ◆ *2014-15*: Georgia will implement a new assessment system that is fully aligned to the CCGPS, the Georgia Milestones assessment system. The Georgia Milestones system will include summative end-of-grade tests for grades three through eight and end-of-course tests for ninth grade literature and composition, American literature and composition, coordinate algebra and analytic geometry (as well as physical science, biology, U.S. history and economics). The system will also include aligned formative and benchmark assessments. To develop the new system, Georgia has contracted with a test development firm and will partner with the state's university and technical college systems and Georgia educators. Georgia plans to embed norm-referenced items into its assessment, share items with other states and align expectations with other states' tests to enable national comparisons. Georgia was a founding member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium but withdrew in July 2013, citing the projected cost of the tests and the technology requirements as too burdensome.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness*: While the department is concerned about district readiness to deliver fully online assessments, and work is ongoing to address this issue, Georgia has a history of districts using online test platforms. Some districts have been administering online assessments since the early 2000s.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

To support implementation of the CCGPS in a fashion that focuses work at the local level and maximizes the impact of the department's small staff, the department partners with Georgia's 16 Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs). The department trains and provides ongoing support to RESA ELA and math specialists who provide direct professional learning and ongoing implementation support to districts and schools. The department also delivers professional learning directly to teachers and others in local schools and districts. For example, it hosts frequent webinars and trainings via live streaming video, which range from general information presentations to sessions for specific groups of teachers focused on specific subjects, grades and instructional content. The department also offers summer Teaching Academies. Additionally, the department provides extensive resources and materials to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction and developing assessment literacy at <http://www.georgiastandards.org> and on its Teacher Resource Link portal (<http://www.gadoe.org/Technology-Services/SLDS/Pages/Teacher-Resource-Link.aspx>). Much of this support has been provided using funds from the state's Race to the Top grant, which ended in 2014. (See accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.)

Reaching Diverse Learners

◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*

Georgia has ensured that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the CCGPS.

- **Prior 2014-15:** Georgia reported that in 2012-13 it fully aligned its own alternate ELA and math standards and assessments (CRCT-M and Georgia Alternate Assessment, or GAA, tests) to the CCGPS (though the CRCT-M will be discontinued after 2013-14).
- **2014-15:** Georgia was originally a member of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) alternate assessment consortium, but withdrew in 2014. Instead, Georgia plans to continue using its own fully aligned alternate ELA and math standards and GAA tests.

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the CCGPS in the content areas, Georgia has ensured that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the CCGPS.

- **Current:** Georgia adopted the English Language Development (ELD) Standards and the ACCESS for ELLs test of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. WIDA designed its ELD standards and assessment to address the academic language skills inherent in the Common Core. In a WIDA alignment study, the assessment received a rating of moderate to strong alignment to the Common Core.

Kentucky

State-Level Leadership

Kentucky's Senate Bill 1, passed in 2009, was landmark legislation that mandated a new public education assessment and accountability system for 2011-12. This required the creation of a new set of standards prior to developing new assessments, and this led to the adoption of the Common Core, called the Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS), in 2010. The state also had a Race to the Top grant, which supported some of the key work the state did to launch implementation of the new standards.

Standards Timeline

Kentucky rolled out the KCAS over one year.

- ◆ *2010-11*: English language arts (ELA) and math in K-12 were fully implemented.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess new college- and career-readiness literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15*: Since 2011-12, Kentucky has developed and administered its own tests in ELA (reading and writing) and math for grades three through eight, the Kentucky Performance Rating of Education Progress (K-PREP). The state Department of Education reports that K-PREP tests are fully aligned to the KCAS. Kentucky uses ACT's QualityCore end-of-course assessments for high school. ACT reports that its QualityCore course standards, upon which these assessments are based, are fully aligned to the Common Core in ELA, math and the literacy standards in history/social studies, science and technical subjects.
- ◆ *2014-15*: In summer 2014, Kentucky began to explore the future of standards, assessment and accountability, with a retreat for the members of the state Board of Education. The goal of the retreat was to begin to think about what the next evolution of assessment might look like in Kentucky.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness*: Regarding the technology infrastructure for administering online assessments, Kentucky already uses online testing. Through its Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) Web portal, the department offers its high school QualityCore end-of-course assessments online for voluntary district use. In 2014, approximately 40 percent of all high school students took their exams online. The department's goal is to increase that percentage in 2015. In addition, the department reports that the state's infrastructure appears robust enough to handle larger numbers of online testing, though the capacity of individual platforms in local schools remains a challenge.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

The department's approach to supporting local implementation of the KCAS is to provide aggressive training to local leaders who can lead the reform. In 2010, as part of a three-year initiative, the department built a structure of interlocking networks based on District Leadership Teams (DLTs). The DLTs collaborated with the department, regional educational cooperatives and institutions of higher education to receive training, develop district and school implementation plans, and redeliver professional development to local colleagues. In this work, DLT members participated in common professional learning activities and also in parallel support networks — the Leadership Network for ELA and math teacher leaders and the Instructional Support Leadership and Superintendents Network for school and district leaders. In 2013-14 and beyond, these DLT and network members are expected to lead professional learning efforts in ELA and math across the state.

The department also created additional networks: the Science Teacher Leaders Network for science teachers in grades six through 12, launched in 2013, and the Social Studies Teacher Leaders Network for social studies teachers in grades six through 12, launched in 2014. Two other networks, the Higher Education Network and the Early Learning Leadership Network, provide coordination of reform from pre-K through higher education. The Higher Education Network involves faculty who meet regularly to learn about the standards and align college freshman syllabi. The Early Learning Leadership Network involves preschool and kindergarten educators and leaders who meet regularly to align the state's early learning standards to the KCAS and to further other aspects of early learning for college and career readiness. Additionally, on its CIITS Web portal, the department provides other professional learning opportunities and extensive resources and materials to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction. Much of this support was developed using the state's Race to the Top grant funds. (See accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.)

Reaching Diverse Learners

◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*

Kentucky has ensured that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the KCAS.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** Kentucky reports that it aligned its own alternate standards for ELA and math and alternate assessments (Alternate K-PREP) to the KCAS.
- **2014-15:** Kentucky might consider adopting the alternate standards and assessments of one of the multi-state alternate assessment consortia, Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) or National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC), when they become available in 2014-15. Or, it may pursue other plans.

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the KCAS in the content areas, Kentucky has ensured that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the KCAS.

Kentucky (continued)

- Current:** Kentucky adopted the English Language Development (ELD) Standards and the ACCESS for ELLs test of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. WIDA designed its ELD standards and assessment to address the academic language skills inherent in the Common Core. In a WIDA alignment study, the assessment received a rating of moderate to strong alignment to the Common Core.

Kentucky is making leading efforts to support local implementation of the new standards. Based on Senate Bill 1 in 2009, Kentucky became the first state in the nation to adopt the Common Core (adopted as the Kentucky Core Academic Standards, KCAS). It was also the first state to begin tracking student achievement on the new standards, with fully aligned assessments in 2012. To support local implementation, the state Department of Education facilitates intensive, comprehensive professional learning, ongoing support, and collaboration across levels in the system through its interlocking Leadership Networks. These networks provide training and support to district and school leaders and content-specific groups of teachers, as well as to participants from the higher education and early learning sectors. The department also offers a strong set of online, on-demand resources and materials for educators on its Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System Web portal. The state funded much of this work with its Race to the Top grant. Further, Kentucky has ensured that teaching and learning for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and English learners are supported by alternate English language arts and math standards and assessments, and English language proficiency standards and assessments, that align to the rigorous demands of the new standards.

Louisiana

State-Level Leadership

In July 2010, the state Board of Education approved the adoption of the Common Core. The state Department of Education and Louisiana's Board of Regents (BOR), the state's coordinating board for postsecondary education, jointly assumed responsibility for establishing the state's approach to implementation of the new standards throughout the state's pre-K-16 system. Together, the department and the BOR led two major stakeholder groups that provided input into the state's early work: the Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence (composed of representatives from postsecondary education, pre-K-12 education, parents and community leaders) and the Common Core/Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium State Implementation Team (composed of department leadership, the commissioner of higher education, BOR leadership and district superintendents). Currently, several stakeholder groups provide input to the department on the state's ongoing implementation planning and

progress: the Louisiana Believes Teacher and Principal Advisory Committees, the Louisiana Superintendents Advisory Committee, the Louisiana Believes Parents/Community Advisory Committee, and Louisiana Teacher Leader Advisors. The state also had a Race to the Top grant, which supported aspects of the state's implementation work.

Standards Timeline

Louisiana rolled out the Common Core over four years.

- ◆ *2010-11:* The state adopted the Common Core and joined PARCC. District leaders communicated this shift to local stakeholders.
- ◆ *2011-12:* The department held statewide informational training on the instructional shifts, the new standards, and the department's implementation plan.
- ◆ *2012-13:* The state began implementation of the English language arts (ELA) and math standards in K-2.
- ◆ *2013-14:* The state began fully implementing the ELA and math standards in K-12.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess the Common Core literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15:* Louisiana reports that in 2013-14 it fully aligned its Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) and integrated LEAP (iLEAP) tests for grades three through eight. In addition, the department reports that Louisiana's high school end-of-course tests in math and ELA are aligned to the Common Core.
- ◆ *2014-15:* As a member of PARCC, Louisiana plans to implement the new, fully aligned PARCC tests in ELA and math for grades three through eight. Louisiana will not adopt the high school PARCC tests, and instead will continue administering its own high school end-of-course tests in ELA and math, which the department reports are fully aligned to the Common Core.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness:* Regarding the readiness of the technology infrastructure to facilitate administration of the new tests online, the department is working with districts on their technology preparations, offering a range of resources, technical assistance and supports. Throughout 2013-14, the department trained more than 800 teachers and district and school leaders on administering the online PARCC tests, and partnered with district technology and assessment coordinators in volunteer districts to ensure that they had sufficient hardware. In spring 2014, Louisiana participated in the PARCC field-test, without any major technology challenges reported. During the field-test, the department provided a support center for districts and noted areas for improvement moving forward. Third- and fourth-grade students will continue with paper-based tests in

Louisiana (continued)

2014-15, and the department will conduct a “dry run” of computer-based tests for grades five through eight in fall 2014. If specific schools serving grades five through eight are unable to demonstrate technology readiness, the department will grant one-year exemptions for 2014-15.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

To maximize support for local implementation of the Common Core, the department offers a layered set of structures and resources that are tailored to support work at different levels of the system and to facilitate collaboration across those levels. The department provides an online District and School Support Toolbox and a Teacher Support Toolbox, each with an array of planning tools, curriculum and assessment guides, and myriad other resources. (For example, the 2014-15 curricular package for districts includes a curriculum overview, curriculum guidebooks, information about curricular and assessment resources from vendors that have been reviewed for alignment to the new standards, and a calendar of state professional development offerings.) Additionally, the department coordinates regional support networks. Through these networks, established in 2012-13, the department meets regularly with district implementation teams to identify priorities, discuss implementation plans, review data and provide general support. The department develops customized technical assistance for each district team on the basis of the network meetings, student performance data, and district superintendent feedback collected through a department survey. The department also hosts frequent conference calls with district team leaders to discuss implementation timelines, issues and resources. In turn, district leaders coordinate support for school implementation teams, and a work flow specialist helps ensure timely state-district communication. In 2013, the department launched another network — the Teacher Leader Cadre. The department provides several teachers from each school in the state intensive professional development, resources and opportunities for collaboration. Teacher leaders help disseminate information and deliver training on the standards, aligned assessments, and teacher and leader evaluation to their local colleagues. Network teams and teacher leaders will continue to build capacity in their local sites in 2014-15. The state’s Race to the Top grant funds were one of several sources Louisiana used to support aspects of this work. (See the accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.)

Reaching Diverse Learners

◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*

Louisiana is working to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the Common Core.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** Louisiana reports that it was working to align its own Extended Standards for ELA and math and alternate assessments (LAA 1) to the Common Core.
- **2014-15:** The department is in the research and planning stage regarding the acquisition of fully aligned alternate ELA and math standards and assessments. Louisiana is a member of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) alternate assessment consortium.

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the Common Core in the content areas, Louisiana is working to ensure that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the Common Core.

- **Current:** Louisiana has not aligned its own ELP standards to the Common Core. The state is using the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA), which was developed by states partnering with the Council of Chief State School Officers. The ELDA is not aligned to the Common Core.
- **2015-16:** As a member of the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) consortium, Louisiana plans to adopt the new, fully aligned ELP standards and assessments of ELPA21 in 2015-16.

Louisiana is making leading efforts to support local implementation of the Common Core. The state Department of Education partnered with the Louisiana Board of Regents, the state's coordinating body for postsecondary education, to implement the Common Core throughout the state's pre-K-16 system. The department also leverages several stakeholder groups of teachers, principals, district superintendents, parents and community members to provide input on the state's ongoing implementation planning and progress. To support local implementation and provide ongoing technical assistance, the department facilitates regional support networks, meeting regularly with district implementation teams. In 2013, the department launched a Teacher Leader Cadre, a group of several teachers from each school in the state who receive ongoing, intensive professional development on the new standards and assessments. The department also provides extensive instructional materials and resources for educators through its online District and School Support Toolbox and Teacher Support Toolbox, which include a 2014-15 curricular package to support districts in making curriculum decisions. The state's Race to the Top grant funds helped to support its professional development initiatives and curriculum resources.

Maryland

State-Level Leadership

The Maryland State Department of Education, state Board of Education, Legislature, governor and other state-level leaders have been active in the state's move to new college- and career-readiness standards. The department worked with the Maryland P-20 Council, the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education and local districts to develop a vision for furthering college and career readiness. The board adopted the Common Core in June 2010 with the support of these partners and the governor. Maryland then refined the standards to meet the state's needs and named them the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.

Maryland (continued)

This revised name provides Maryland the opportunity to include additional college- and career-readiness standards from content areas outside of the Common Core, such as Next Generation Science, and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The department developed the state's implementation plan. The state has a Race to the Top grant to support its initial implementation efforts (funding for most of the projects ended in 2014).

Maryland's 2013 Senate Bill 740, the College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act, requires reforms that build on the state's new standards and aligned assessments. It requires, among other things, that beginning in 2014-15, all students must be assessed for college readiness by grade 11. Maryland plans to use the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium assessments for this purpose. By 2015-16, the department must collaborate with districts and public community colleges to develop and implement transitional courses for grade 12, or other instructional opportunities aligned to the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, for students who have not yet achieved college readiness by the end of grade 11. Additionally, House Bill 1164 of 2014 establishes a Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and PARCC Implementation Review Workgroup to assess best practices and resources to support implementation for all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. The workgroup will submit its recommendations to the governor, the board and the Legislature by December 2014.

Standards Timeline

Implementation of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards spanned one year.

- ◆ *2013-14:* The standards were fully implemented in English language arts (ELA) and math in K-12.

Additionally, the department worked with state educators to create aligned standards for pre-K.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess new college- and career-readiness literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15:* Maryland did not align its Maryland School Assessment (MSA) in reading and math for grades three through eight or its Maryland High School Assessments (HSA) in English and math to the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards. Maryland received approval from the U.S. Department of Education for elementary and middle grades schools to select students to participate in the PARCC spring 2014 field-test in one content area (either ELA or math), while taking the MSA in the other content area. Students not selected for the field-test took the MSA in both content areas. One or two classrooms from nearly every Maryland school participated in the field-test.

- ◆ *2014-15:* As a member of PARCC, Maryland expects to implement the new, fully aligned PARCC tests in ELA and math for grades three through eight and the Algebra I and English 10 high school assessments in 2014-15.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness:* Regarding the readiness of the technology infrastructure to facilitate administration of the PARCC tests online, the department reports that many schools are still not prepared. The department continues to work with districts to assess technology readiness and to address issues.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

To support local implementation of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, the department capitalized on its history of working closely with districts to build structures that facilitate school-district-state collaboration. The department hosted monthly meetings throughout 2011-12 with leaders from all districts (Maryland has 24 districts) to assist with planning the transition. In 2011-12, the department began working with educators from across the state to develop the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum Frameworks, which broke down the new standards into their essential skills and knowledge. These frameworks assisted educators in analyzing the standards and in differentiating instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. In addition, the department began developing curriculum units, lessons and lesson seeds that local districts can use as models for their own curriculum development work. Development of these models continues through 2014. When complete, tools will be available for all grade levels to address all the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards in ELA, math, and literacy in social studies, science and technical subjects.

Each summer from 2011 to 2013, the department sponsored summer Educator Effectiveness Academies for school teams consisting of the principal and three to five teachers from every public school in the state. Team members received training about the new standards and developed local implementation and transition plans. The academies were followed by regular online sessions throughout the school year to provide additional information and timely resources to support local implementation efforts. At the end of each summer academy, the department provided the resources online for on-demand access for all educators. Further, the department currently is developing new courses to support educators as they use the curriculum frameworks and other state resources. Additionally, in 2013-14 the department began on-site district support visits, meeting intensively with every district to discuss implementation status and explore avenues to support continuous improvement. Department leaders also meet monthly with all local district curriculum and instruction leaders, assessment leaders and executive officers responsible for supervising and evaluating principals. Based on feedback from educators, in 2013-14 the department paired small districts with larger districts to facilitate sharing and collaboration. The department provides other professional learning opportunities and extensive resources and materials to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction on its Curriculum Management System Web portal (<https://msde.blackboard.com>). Much of this support was developed using the state's Race to the Top grant funds. (See accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.)

Maryland (continued)

Reaching Diverse Learners

◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*

Maryland is working to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** Maryland did not align its own alternate standards for ELA and math and alternate assessments (ALT-MSA) to the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.
- **2014-15:** As a member of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) alternate assessment consortium, Maryland plans to implement the consortium's new, fully aligned Core Content Connectors and alternate assessments.

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards in the content areas, Maryland has ensured that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards.

- **Current:** Maryland adopted the English Language Development (ELD) Standards and the ACCESS for ELLs test of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. WIDA designed its ELD standards and assessment to address the academic language skills inherent in the Common Core. In a WIDA alignment study, the assessment received a rating of moderate to strong alignment to the Common Core.
- **2015-16:** The state is a participant in the Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems (ASSETS) project. ASSETS states are building on the work of the WIDA Consortium to create a next-generation, technology-based ELP assessment system, which is planned for implementation in 2015-16.

Maryland is making leading efforts to support local implementation of the new standards (adopted as the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards). The Maryland State Department of Education has worked with a variety of state partners and leaders, as well as local districts, to develop and further the state's vision for college and career readiness. The state Legislature has enacted numerous laws to build on and support the state's new standards and assessments. Senate Bill 740 of 2013 requires that beginning in 2014-15, all students must be assessed for college readiness by grade 11, and that by 2015-16, the department must collaborate with districts and public community colleges to develop and implement supports such as transitional courses in grade 12 for students who have not yet achieved college readiness by the end of grade 11. House Bill 1164 of 2014 established a state workgroup to assess and recommend best practices and resources to support implementation of the standards for all students. To support local implementation, the department sponsored annual summer academies from 2011 to 2013 for school teams, which included a principal and three to five teachers, from every public school in the state. These teams received additional online professional learning throughout the school year. In 2013-14, the department began on-site district support visits, meeting intensively with every district to discuss implementation status and explore avenues to support continuous improvement. The department also provides extensive instructional materials and resources to support teachers through its Curriculum Management System Web portal. Much of this work was supported by the state's Race to the Top grant funds. Further, Maryland has ensured that teaching and learning for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, as well as English learners, will be supported by alternate English language arts and math standards and assessments, and English language proficiency standards and assessments, aligned to the rigorous demands of the new standards.

Mississippi

State-Level Leadership

In 2010, the governor, Legislature, state Board of Education and state Department of Education agreed upon the goal of improving education for all students, and the board adopted the Common Core in August of that year. The department then developed Mississippi's implementation plan. Building upon this plan, in 2014 the department released the Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards (CCRS). The CCRS articulate what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level in preparation for college and career; provide a basis for local curriculum development for K-12 in English language arts (ELA) and math, and in literacy in the content areas of history/social studies, science and technical subjects for grades six through 12; and outline changes in academic courses that were revised to align to the Common Core. The CCRS are based on the Common Core and the Model Content Frameworks of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium.

Mississippi (continued)

In 2013, based upon feedback from constituents, the Legislature asked its oversight agency (the Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review, PEER) to review Mississippi's adoption of the Common Core and its potential impact on the state's students, parents, teachers and districts. In January 2014, PEER submitted its report to the Legislature, outlining the reasons for the state's adoption of the Common Core, the department's implementation efforts and approximate costs of the new, fully aligned assessments. The PEER committee will continue to monitor the state's implementation and the outcomes of the new CCRS. In 2014, the Legislature approved funds to support the state's work on the Literacy-Based Promotion Act, some of which will be used to support the state's work on implementation of the CCRS.

Standards Timeline

Mississippi rolled out the Common Core (as of 2014, the CCRS) over three years.

- ◆ *2011-12:* K-2 began implementation in ELA and math.
- ◆ *2012-13:* Grades three through eight were added.
- ◆ *2013-14:* Full implementation took place across K-12.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess new college- and career-readiness literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career- readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15:* Mississippi did not align its Mississippi Curriculum Test, Second Edition (MCT2) for grades three through eight or its high school Subject Area Testing Program, Second Edition (SATP2) in ELA and math to the CCRS.
- ◆ *2014-15:* As a member of PARCC, Mississippi plans to implement the new, fully aligned PARCC tests in ELA and math for grades three through eight, and in English II and Algebra I for high school.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness:* Regarding the readiness of the technology infrastructure to facilitate administration of the new tests online, the department is working with districts as they prepare, and technology readiness is a board priority. The department reports that districts will be more limited by the number of available devices on which to administer the assessments than by network and bandwidth capabilities. Current estimates indicate that approximately 75 percent of students will complete the new assessments online. Districts that do not have adequate technology capacity can use paper-based tests in 2014-15.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

The department's approach to supporting local implementation of the Common Core began with an effort to maximize the impact of its small staff by building local capacity to lead. After providing initial awareness sessions for volunteer districts during 2010-11, the department offered a series of grade-band trainings to volunteer teams from districts across the state. The department delivered a series of elementary and secondary teacher "boot camp" trainings across the state in 2013-14, with approximately 500 teachers in attendance. In addition, members of Mississippi's PARCC Educator Leader Cadre serve as ambassadors for the new CCRS and assessments in their home communities. The department also utilizes online formats (such as webinars and listservs) to provide information directly to educators. In 2012, the department administered a statewide teacher survey to gauge the status of local implementation activities and needs.

In 2013-14, the state-level support for local implementation of the CCRS expanded: in spring 2013, in response to Mississippi's 2013 Literacy-Based Promotion Act, the department began providing literacy training for teachers and leaders in targeted schools, with the goal of training all K-3 educators in the state by 2016-17. Based upon the PEER report and readiness input from districts, in spring 2014 the board approved a contract funding additional staff at the state's six Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs). In 2014-15, the RESAs will provide enhanced professional learning services and instructional resources to districts, schools and teachers in the areas of ELA, literacy, math, special education and early childhood education, with a goal (among others) of reaching the majority of the state's approximately 34,000 educators. The department provides other professional learning opportunities, resources and materials to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction on its Common Core SharePoint website. (See accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.)

Reaching Diverse Learners

◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*

Mississippi is working to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the CCRS.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** Mississippi did not align its own alternate ELA and math standards and assessments (the Mississippi Alternate Assessment of Extended Curriculum Frameworks, MAAECF) to the CCRS.
- **2014-15:** As a member of the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment System Consortium, Mississippi plans to implement the DLM Essential Elements and new, fully aligned assessments.

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the CCRS in the content areas, Mississippi has ensured that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the CCRS.

- **Current:** Mississippi adopted the English Language Development (ELD) Standards and the ACCESS for ELLs test of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)

Mississippi (continued)

Consortium. WIDA designed its ELD Standards and assessment to address the academic language skills inherent in the Common Core. In a WIDA alignment study, the assessment received a rating of moderate to strong alignment to the Common Core.

- **2015-16:** Mississippi also participates in the Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems (ASSETS) project. ASSETS states are building on the work of the WIDA Consortium to create a next-generation, technology-based ELP assessment system, which is planned for implementation in 2015-16.

New York

State-Level Leadership

The New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department oversee all education institutions in the state. In 2009, the board and the department developed the Regents Reform Agenda to further the goal of college and career readiness for all students. A cornerstone of this agenda was the Common Core. New York adopted the Common Core in 2010, made some minor changes to it and renamed it the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The CCLS supported simultaneous initiatives to strengthen data-driven instruction and establish a new teacher and leader effectiveness system. These core initiatives have been supported by New York's Race to the Top grant and the philanthropically supported Regents Research Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization that provides additional capacity for research and planning at the state level. In February 2014, the board adopted a comprehensive suite of workgroup recommendations designed to adjust implementation of the CCLS. Recommendations included providing more support for parents and teachers, improving public trust in CCLS implementation, limiting unnecessary testing and protecting student data privacy. Additionally, in March 2014, a state Common Core Implementation Panel, made up of national experts and New York parents, educators, legislators, and business and community leaders, reviewed implementation of the standards and submitted to the governor recommendations to ensure their success.

Standards Timeline

The department established a timeline to implement the CCLS over 12 years.

- ◆ *Summer 2010:* The standards were adopted.
- ◆ *2010-11:* Implementation began in classrooms.
- ◆ *2012-13:* The first CCLS-aligned assessments were administered in grades three through eight.
- ◆ *2013-14:* The first CCLS-aligned high school assessments were administered.
- ◆ *Class of 2022:* The first cohort of students must pass a CCLS-aligned high school assessment at the proficiency level for graduation purposes.

Additionally, in 2011 New York developed and adopted CCLS-aligned pre-K standards (called the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core) for implementation in 2012-13.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of English language arts (ELA) and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess new college- and career-readiness literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15:* Since 2012-13, New York has administered its own Common Core ELA and math tests in grades three through eight, which it reports are fully aligned to the CCLS. New York reports that its high school English and Algebra I Regents Exams align to the CCLS as of 2013-14, and that it is in the midst of aligning others — geometry in 2014-15 and Algebra II in 2015-16.
- ◆ *2014-15:* New York is a member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium, but it will not adopt the PARCC assessments in 2014-15. New York participated in the PARCC field-testing for some students during 2013-14 and is scheduled to do so again in 2014-15. The decision to adopt new assessments for 2015-16 and beyond is yet to be made. Until the board establishes a timeline for transition, New York will continue to administer its own fully aligned assessments.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness:* Regarding the readiness of the technology infrastructure to facilitate statewide administration of online assessments, the department is working with districts to develop capacity. Concerns about technology capacity are among the reasons for the delay in transitioning to PARCC testing. To offset the cost of developing the necessary technological infrastructure, the department is assisting districts and schools through the New York State School Technology Voucher Program. The department is also encouraging schools and districts to use the Technology Readiness Tool developed by PARCC and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, to determine the feasibility of computer-based testing and inform technology implementation planning.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

The department implemented a system of supports for local educators in their transition to the CCLS that also aims to foster change in the other Regents Reform Agenda areas of teacher and leader effectiveness and data-driven instruction. In 2011, the department created Network Teams (NTs) and Network Team Equivalents (NTEs). Through 2014, NTs and NTEs were the main vehicle for implementing the reforms associated with the state's Race to the Top grant and the Regents Reform Agenda. NTs are three- to 15-member teams of experts and professional development providers in the areas of curriculum, instruction and data analysis located around the state. They work in close partnership with districts and schools to build the capacity of educators. Districts that have existing local or regional professional development infrastructures can use their own personnel to establish NTEs that serve the same purpose as the NTs. NTs and NTEs collaborate directly with districts and schools as they plan CCLS implementation, receive training, provide professional learning to their colleagues, develop resources to supplement local curricula and work to integrate the

New York (continued)

activities of the three major reform initiatives. Each school district in the state can receive support from its NT or NTE to help implement the reforms. Each NT adopts its own schedule of supports, based on the needs of its districts or schools.

Regional Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) also collaborate with their districts to select teacher and principal Common Core Ambassadors charged with exemplifying the change in local practice, helping to build the capacity of colleagues and communicating the importance of the CCLS to educators and the public. Additionally, the department provides other professional learning opportunities and extensive resources and materials to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction on its EngageNY website (<http://www.engageny.org/>), including a comprehensive workbook to help districts implement reforms and the EQUiP/Tri-State Rubrics (developed by New York in collaboration with Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Achieve) for assessing the alignment of instructional plans to the standards. Much of this support was provided using the state's Race to the Top grant funds. Pending approval by the Office of State Comptroller, the department is planning to coordinate Common Core Institutes, in which educators from districts, BOCES and charter schools serve as full-time Common Core Institute Fellows throughout 2014-15. The fellows will support regional professional development and capacity-building, and develop additional online instructional materials for 2015-16. (See accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.)

Reaching Diverse Learners

◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*

New York has ensured that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the CCLS.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** New York developed its own alternate ELA and math Essence Statements and Extensions, which it reports are fully aligned to the CCLS. In 2013-14, the state began using its own New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA), which it reports is fully aligned to the CCLS.
- **2014-15:** New York is a member of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) alternate assessment consortium. By 2014-15, New York plans to decide whether to use its own revised standards and assessments or adopt the NCSC Common Core Connectors and assessments.

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the CCLS in the content areas, New York is working to ensure that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the CCLS.

- **Current:** In 2012, New York developed new ELP standards (New Language Arts Progressions, or NLAP), which it reports are fully aligned to the CCLS. New York reports that its ELP assessment (the NYSESLAT) was revised to partially align to the CCLS for 2013-14 and that it will be fully aligned by 2015-16.

- Through its Bilingual Common Core Initiative, the department is also developing CCLS-aligned standards for use in bilingual classrooms (Home Language Arts Progressions, or HLAP). It is developing HLAP curricula in the five most common home languages of students in the state.
- In addition to its work on aligning standards and assessments for English learners, in 2014 the department released a Blueprint for English Language Learners (ELLs) Success, a statewide framework of eight guiding principles to guide administrators, policy-makers and practitioners as they work to prepare English learners for success, beginning in prekindergarten to lay the foundation for college and career readiness.

New York is making leading efforts to support college and career readiness for all students through the state's comprehensive Regents Reform Agenda, which includes the implementation of the Common Core (called the Common Core Learning Standards, CCLS). The New York State Education Department created Network Teams of educators and experts who work with districts and schools to provide professional learning and support implementation planning, local curriculum development and the integration of the CCLS with other major reform initiatives. Pending approval of the Office of State Comptroller, the department is also planning Common Core Institutes, with local educators serving as full-time Common Core Institute Fellows throughout 2014-15 to support implementation and curriculum development. New York already has English language arts and math assessments fully aligned to the new standards for grades three through eight and for high school English and Algebra I Regents Exams, and it is in the midst of aligning exams for geometry in 2014-15 and Algebra II in 2015-16. Additionally, New York helped to develop the EQuIP/Tri-State Rubrics (tools that help educators to determine the alignment of instructional plans to the Common Core) and offers the EngageNY website, which provides an extensive array of tools to help educators implement the new standards and other aspects of the state's reform initiatives (the EngageNY site is a popular resource cited by educators in several of the other states in this study). The state also supports work to prepare English learners and bilingual students to be college and career ready through its Blueprint for English Language Learners (ELLs) Success guidelines and its Bilingual Common Core Initiative.

North Carolina

State-Level Leadership

Spurred by 2008 findings from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing and Accountability, North Carolina developed the Framework for Change in fall 2008, which required the revision of all state standards in order to prepare students to be globally competitive and ready for postsecondary education. Together with the governor's Career & College: Ready, Set, Go! initiative, the framework led to the work of the Accountability and Curriculum Reform Effort (ACRE), which involved K-12 educators, higher education faculty and national experts. To forward the goals of ACRE, North Carolina adopted the Common Core in English language arts (ELA) and math in June 2010. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction then developed the state's implementation plan. Some of the state's efforts were funded through a Race to the Top grant. In 2014, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted Senate Bill 812, requiring a review of the state standards, recommendations for possible modifications to the standards, and a plan for new, aligned assessments.

Standards Timeline

Based on the state's previous experience transitioning to new standards in 2009, and with input from teachers across the state, the department developed an implementation timeline of three years.

- ◆ *2010-11:* The state adopted the Common Core standards. This transition year included planning, resource development and professional learning.
- ◆ *2011-12:* This transition year included planning, resource development and professional learning.
- ◆ *2012-13:* Implementation began in ELA and math classrooms in K-12.

This implementation of the Common Core coincided with the state's transition to new North Carolina Essential Standards in all other content areas, including social studies, the arts, healthful living, career and technical education, and world languages.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners (referred to in North Carolina as English language learners), are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess the Common Core literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15:* The department worked in partnership with North Carolina State University to develop its end-of-grade assessments for grades three through eight in ELA and math and its high school end-of-course assessments in English II and Math I. The department reports that these tests have been fully aligned to the Common Core since 2012-13. In addition, North Carolina implemented its NC Final Exams in Math II and III, and English I, III and IV in 2012-13; the department reports that these are fully aligned to the Common Core.

- ◆ *2014-15 and beyond:* North Carolina will continue to use its own state assessments in 2014-15. Also, North Carolina is a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. In January 2014, the state Board of Education decided to convene an advisory group to evaluate testing options and provide recommendations for 2017-18. Senate Bill 812, enacted in 2014, requires legislative approval for adoption of any assessment instrument to assess student achievement on state academic standards.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness:* With regard to the technology infrastructure for administering new online assessments, districts had the option of administering the state's 2013 tests online where available. The department is working with districts as they upgrade their systems, with the goal of administering all assessments online.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

North Carolina's approach to supporting local Common Core implementation is based on an intention to build capacity at the local level to lead reform, and on research showing that training alone, without ongoing support, does not foster successful change. From 2010 to 2014, the department collaborated with Regional Professional Development Leaders and Regional Education Service Alliances to provide regional intensive summer professional development institutes for district leadership teams. As follow-up, support meetings throughout the year provided additional professional learning and fidelity checks, where teams discussed their progress, challenges in implementation, and plans for improvement. The institutes also included professional development on the standards specifically for representatives from institutions of higher education. The 2014 institute focused on district professional learning plans for 2014-15 and beyond, after the department's summer institutes conclude. Additionally, the department provides other professional learning opportunities (<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/profdev/calendar/>) and extensive resources and materials, such as webinars and online modules, to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction on its Home Base Web portal (<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/homebase/>). Much of this support was provided using the state's Race to the Top grant funds, which end in 2015. (See accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.)

Reaching Diverse Learners

- ◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*
North Carolina has ensured that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the Common Core.
 - **Prior to 2014-15:** Since 2012-13, North Carolina has used its own Extended Content Standards and alternate assessments, the NCEXTEND1 and NCEXTEND2 end-of-course test, which its reports are fully aligned to the Common Core. North Carolina discontinued use of the NCEXTEND2 after 2013-14.
 - **2014-15:** The state is a member of the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment System Consortium and expects to adopt the DLM Essential Elements and aligned assessments when they become available in 2014-15.

North Carolina (continued)

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the state content area standards, North Carolina has ensured that this instruction is supported by ELP standards (referred to in North Carolina as English language development, or ELD, standards) and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the Common Core.

- **Current:** North Carolina adopted the English Language Development (ELD) Standards and the ACCESS for ELLs test of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. WIDA designed its ELD standards and assessment to address the academic language skills inherent in the Common Core. In a WIDA alignment study, the assessment received a rating of moderate to strong alignment to the Common Core.
- **2015-16:** Additionally, the state participates in the Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems (ASSETS) project. ASSETS states are building on the work of the WIDA Consortium to create a next-generation, Common Core-aligned, technology-based ELP assessment system planned for implementation in 2015-16.

Pennsylvania

State-Level Leadership

The state Board of Education, state Department of Education and Legislature were involved in charting the state's course toward implementation of Pennsylvania's new standards and aligned assessments. In 2010, Pennsylvania adopted the Common Core in English language arts (ELA) and math. In 2012, the department convened educators from across the state to meld the previous Pennsylvania Academic Standards with the Common Core. The new ELA and math standards, called the Pennsylvania Core Standards (PCS), were customized to meet the state's needs. They embrace the content and rigor of the Common Core, including the Common Core anchor standards in ELA and the Common Core standards for mathematical practice. They also include the best of what the Pennsylvania Academic Standards offered (for example, the PCS include the state's prekindergarten standards). The PCS were approved by the board in September 2013. The standards were then transmitted to the Pennsylvania House and Senate education committees and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission for review, as well as the attorney general's office for legal review. With publication of Chapter 4 in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* in March 2014 (<http://www.pabulletin.com/secure/data/vol44/44-9/index.html>), the PCS became part of state regulation.

Standards Timeline

The department's implementation timeline for the PCS spanned two years.

- ◆ *2013-14:* Districts began the transition to the PCS.

- ◆ *2014-15:* Full implementation of the standards will occur in 2014-15, to align with the implementation of PCS-aligned assessments.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess new literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Assessments:* In 2012-13, Pennsylvania implemented its high school Keystone Exams in literature and Algebra I. The department reports that these tests are fully aligned to the PCS. Pennsylvania is currently in the process of aligning its Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) in ELA (reading and writing) and math for grades three through eight, for implementation in 2014-15. Originally involved in the work of both the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to stay informed about the groups' progress, in June 2013, Pennsylvania decided not to adopt either set of assessments, citing as a major reason the desire to have its own state assessment system.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness:* While Pennsylvania supports robust technology in its schools across the state, it recognizes the financial implications of testing solely online. As Pennsylvania finishes development of its PCS-aligned assessments, options for paper-based and online testing will be available, and districts may choose which mode to use. The department provides online testing guidance to help districts evaluate whether online testing is appropriate for their needs and to provide a foundation for moving to successful online testing. It also encourages districts to participate in field-tests for its online diagnostic assessment (the Classroom Diagnostic Tool) to gain experience in using online tests and to assess their technical capacity (<http://www.pdesas.org/module/assessment/pages/Diagnostic/>). In February 2014, the department released updated online testing software and is working on versions of the software for use on multiple kinds of devices. In addition, the department is working on virtualization options to enable districts to repurpose older machines for online testing use.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

To support the work of Pennsylvania's 500 local school districts, the department collaborates with the state's 29 regional centers, called Intermediate Units (IUs). The department and the IUs work closely together to create and deliver professional learning and resources. The IUs work directly with districts and schools to provide training and support tailored to their needs. This ongoing collaboration and communication with IUs also allows the department to gather information from the IUs on the progress of local implementation, informing the department's work to support educators. Additionally, the department provides other professional learning opportunities, resources and materials to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction on its Standards Aligned System (SAS) website (www.pdesas.org). Some of this support was provided using the state's Race to the Top grant funds.

Pennsylvania (continued)

Reaching Diverse Learners

◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*

Pennsylvania is working to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the PCS.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** Pennsylvania reports that it was working to align its alternate ELA and math Essential Content Connectors to the PCS. The Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) test was not aligned to the PCS.
- **2014-15:** Pennsylvania currently is in the process of aligning the PASA tests to the PCS and assessment anchors. Pennsylvania is a member of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) and the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment System Consortium, and it has completed a review of the alignment of its PCS to the NCSC assessment. In 2014-15, Pennsylvania plans to administer the PASA for accountability purposes with voluntary participation for schools in the NCSC and DLM field-tests.

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the PCS in the content areas, Pennsylvania has ensured that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the PCS.

- **Current:** Pennsylvania adopted the English Language Development (ELD) Standards and the ACCESS for ELLs test of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. WIDA designed its ELD standards and assessment to address the academic language skills inherent in the Common Core. In a WIDA alignment study, the assessment received a rating of moderate to strong alignment to the Common Core.
- **2015-16:** Pennsylvania is participating in the Assessment Services Supporting ELLs through Technology Systems (ASSETS) project. ASSETS states are building on the work of the WIDA Consortium to create a next-generation, technology-based ELP assessment system, which is planned for implementation in 2015-16.

South Carolina

State-Level Leadership

In 2005, the South Carolina Legislature passed the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA), which mandated reform in the public education system to provide students with individualized educational opportunities and to enhance academic content to further students' career possibilities. State leaders agreed that the Common Core would complement the initiatives already in progress under the EEDA, and the state Board of Education adopted the Common Core in July 2010. The state Department of Education then developed the state's implementation plan.

In 2014, the standards and assessment landscape in South Carolina shifted when the Legislature passed Act 200. Act 200 requires the department to develop new college- and career-readiness standards for English language arts (ELA) and math (separate from Common Core) for implementation in 2015-16. These new standards must be approved by the state's Education Oversight Committee. South Carolina will continue to implement the Common Core in 2014-15. Act 200 also requires that the State Budget and Control Board direct the procurement of a summative assessment system for the 2014-15 school year and subsequent years, in ELA and math for grades three through eight and 11, and if funds are available, grades nine and 10. Additionally, the law requires that South Carolina withdraw from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and precludes the use of the Smarter Balanced assessments.

Standards Timeline

The department's implementation timeline for the Common Core spans four years, with additional time for the new college- and career-readiness standards required by Act 200.

- ◆ *2011-12 through 2014-15:* Common Core was introduced and implemented.
 - **2011-12 and 2012-13:** These were transition years to prepare educators.
 - **2013-14:** This was a bridge year in which Common Core was used for instructional purposes.
 - **2014-15:** The Common Core standards will be fully implemented in K-12 and will be the basis of assessment.
- ◆ *2015-16 and beyond:* New college- and career-readiness standards are to be developed as required by Act 200.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that a state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess new college- and career-readiness literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

South Carolina (continued)

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15:* In 2013-14, South Carolina partially aligned its Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) for grades three through eight in ELA, writing and math and its high school End-of-Course Examination Program tests in English I and Algebra I. The department modified the assessments to more closely measure the learning expectations of the Common Core. South Carolina withdrew from Smarter Balanced in April 2014.
- ◆ *2014-15 and beyond:* The state currently is conducting a new assessment procurement process to determine which fully aligned assessment will best meet the needs of its students. The state is not considering the use of the Smarter Balanced tests.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness:* Regarding the readiness of the technology infrastructure to facilitate administration of the new tests online, the department acknowledges that many districts and schools may not be prepared to administer assessments online in 2014-15. As a result, the state has decided to offer online and paper-based assessments through 2015-16, while it works intensively to enable all testing to be online by 2016-17.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

The department's approach to support implementation of the Common Core stems from the superintendent's commitment to local control and support for reform from the ground up. In 2011, the department asked districts to voluntarily form District Implementation Teams (DITs) to lead local planning, professional learning and implementation. The department worked with the DITs in 2011-12 through summer training and quarterly follow-up meetings. In 2012, it opened up ongoing professional development offerings to all interested educators. Throughout 2013-14, the department provided a professional development series specifically for principals on instructional leadership for the Common Core and formative assessment. Additionally, the department provides other professional learning opportunities, resources and materials to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction on its website (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/190/>). (See accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.) The department's approach to leading implementation of the state's new college- and career-readiness standards (to be developed for 2015-16) is unknown at this time.

Reaching Diverse Learners

- ◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*
South Carolina is working to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the state's college- and career-readiness standards.
 - **Current:** South Carolina has not aligned its own Extended Standards in ELA and math or its alternate assessment (the SC-Alt) to the Common Core. South Carolina is a member of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) alternate assessment consortium. The state administered the Common Core-aligned NCSC field-tests in 2013-14, and intends to use the NCSC assessments for federal accountability in 2014-15.

- **2015-16 and beyond:** The alternate standards and assessments South Carolina will use are unknown at this time.
- ◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*
In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the content areas according to the state's college- and career-readiness standards, South Carolina is in the process of deciding how to ensure that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the college- and career-readiness standards.
- **Current:** In 2013-14, South Carolina adopted the English Language Development (ELD) Standards of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium and made them available for districts as a resource. It administered the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) developed by a consortium of states working with the Council of Chief State School Officers. The ELDA is not aligned to the Common Core. For 2014-15, South Carolina will use WIDA's ELD standards and its ACCESS for ELLs test. WIDA designed its ELD standards and assessment to address the academic language skills inherent in the Common Core. In a WIDA alignment study, the assessment received a rating of moderate to strong alignment to the Common Core.
- **2015-16 and beyond:** South Carolina will determine which ELP standards and assessments to use based on its membership in the Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems (ASSETS) project (ASSETS states are building on the work of the WIDA Consortium to create a next-generation, technology-based ELP assessment system, for implementation in 2015-16), and its membership in the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) Consortium, which is developing next-generation ELP standards and assessments for implementation in 2015-16.

Tennessee

State-Level Leadership

In 2007-08, Tennessee began work to raise the rigor of its K-12 education standards through the Tennessee Diploma Project as part of the American Diploma Project facilitated by Achieve. Guided by a statewide Tennessee Alignment Committee made up of leaders from K-12, higher education, business and philanthropic communities, and the governor's office, the state Department of Education revised Tennessee's content-area standards and assessments during the school year. The state Board of Education adopted the Common Core in July 2010 to build on these reforms. Tennessee has since established a Common Core Leadership Council made up of principals, supervisors and superintendents from all regions in the state to advise the department on all aspects of the transition and implementation of the new standards and assessments. The state also received a Race to the Top grant.

Tennessee (continued)

Standards Timeline

The department established a three-year rollout for the new standards.

- ◆ *2011-12:* The English language arts (ELA) and math standards were implemented in K-2; educators began initial implementation efforts.
- ◆ *2012-13:* K-2 fully implemented the standards, and grades three through eight began initial implementation efforts in math.
- ◆ *2013-14:* K-12 fully implemented the standards in ELA and math.

Also, reflecting Tennessee's increased focus on literacy, in 2013 the board adopted new social studies standards that the department developed using other leading state standards and the Common Core literacy standards in history/social studies as references. Many career and technical education courses in the state also incorporate literacy standards, and Tennessee is currently in the process of revising its science standards.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess new college- and career-readiness literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15:* As of 2012-13, Tennessee partially aligned its Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Achievement Test for grades three through eight in reading and math, and as of 2013-14, Tennessee partially aligned its high school TCAP end-of-course (EOC) exams in English II and III and Algebra I and II. The department narrowed the tests to reflect only content that is covered in the Common Core.
- ◆ *2014-15:* In 2014, Tennessee enacted legislation delaying the transition to any new assessment for one year, and withdrew from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium. Tennessee will continue to administer its TCAP Achievement Test and EOC exams in 2014-15, and will use a competitive bidding process to select a fully aligned assessment for 2015-16.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness:* Regarding the readiness of the technology infrastructure to facilitate administration of tests online, the department is working with districts to address issues in existing local capacity. As a result of the 2013 state legislative session, local governments received a one-time \$51 million investment from the state to enhance technology use in schools and districts, including the preparation for online assessments. Additionally, through its Writing Project, the department offers an online portal for teachers and students to practice for computerized assessments in writing.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

The department's approach to supporting local implementation of the Common Core is to train teachers and leaders aggressively and to design the trainings to showcase the leadership and expertise of local educators. In 2012, the department selected 200 educators to serve as Core Coaches, who led the 2012 summer professional learning sessions in math for school teams and district staff from all but one district in the state. In 2013, the department expanded the sessions to include more educators and to address ELA, science, social studies, and career and technical education. The department selected and trained 700 local educators to serve as Core Coaches to lead these sessions. By the session in summer 2014, approximately 55,000 educators have attended these trainings (approximately 10,000 in 2012, 30,000 in 2013 and an estimated 15,000 in 2014 — these counts include some participants who attended multiple trainings). The 2014-15 trainings will focus on writing, math learning progressions, foundational skills in reading and math in pre-K-2, and intervention strategies in reading and math. To further enhance support for the Common Core, in 2012, the department initiated regular meetings with district leaders to track implementation progress and address challenges. The state also revamped its regional centers, called Centers of Regional Excellence (COREs), to bring additional support to districts and schools. Additionally, the department provides other professional learning opportunities, resources and materials to support educators in preparing for and delivering high-quality instruction on its TNCore Web portal (<http://tncore.org/>). Much of this activity was supported through the state's Race to the Top grant funds. While funding ended for most projects in 2014, it extends for some projects through 2015. (See accompanying state profiles on *Aligned Teaching Resources* and *Professional Development* for further information on these and other supports.)

Reaching Diverse Learners

◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*

Tennessee is working to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the Common Core.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** Tennessee does not use alternate standards, and prior to 2014-15, the state did not align its own alternate assessments in ELA and math (TCAP-Alt) to the Common Core.
- **2014-15:** Tennessee is a member of the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) alternate assessment consortium. The department currently is reviewing the experiences of districts with the NCSC field-test and will consider options for future assessments for the students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the Common Core in the content areas, Tennessee is in the process of deciding how to ensure that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the Common Core.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** Tennessee did not align its own ELP Standards to the Common Core. Tennessee used the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA), which was developed by states in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers. The ELDA is not aligned to the Common Core.

Tennessee (continued)

- **2014-15:** Tennessee uses the English Language Development (ELD) Standards of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. Guided by a state English as a Second Language task force, Tennessee plans to adopt WIDA's ACCESS for ELLs test. WIDA designed its ELD Standards and assessment to address the academic language skills inherent in the Common Core. In a WIDA alignment study, the assessment received a rating of moderate to strong alignment to the Common Core.

West Virginia

State-Level Leadership

In 2010, the state Board of Education adopted the Common Core and integrated it into the state's standards framework as its state's Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives (NxG CSOs) for English language arts (ELA) and math. The state Department of Education then developed the state's implementation plan and began statewide educator trainings. In 2013, West Virginia joined the Improving Student Learning at Scale Policy Collaborative (a partnership of five other states, the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Conference of State Legislatures) focusing on Common Core implementation and increasing student achievement.

In 2013, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 359, which mandated a shift in the locus of support for implementation from the state to the regional level. The state's Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) currently provide the bulk of professional learning and support to districts. The bill also requires reforms that build upon the state's adoption of the NxG CSOs. The bill requires, among other things, that by school year 2014-15 the board, the Higher Education Policy Commission and the Council for Community and Technical College Education adopt uniform standards of college and career readiness based on the NxG CSOs (this has been accomplished); that the determination of whether a student is ready for credit-bearing courses in college be based on an assessment linked to those standards; and that the board align the requirements for a high school diploma with the standards.

Standards Timeline

The department established a four-year rollout for the NxG CSOs.

- ◆ *2011-12:* Kindergarten began implementation in ELA and math.
- ◆ *2012-13:* First grade began implementation.
- ◆ *2013-14:* Second grade began implementation.
- ◆ *2014-15:* Grades three through 12 will begin implementation.

Additionally, the department updated the state's social studies standards to incorporate the NxG CSO literacy standards for history/social studies, and West Virginia's standards for early learning and career and technical education have been aligned to the NxG CSOs.

Aligned Assessments

The following section on aligned assessments addresses only the regular summative grade-level and course assessments that the state uses or plans to use to measure student learning in the content areas of ELA and math. Alternate ELA and math assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for English learners, are addressed in a separate section below. Tests in other content areas, such as science and social studies, are not addressed here (unless the state has revised them to assess the new literacy standards in those subjects). College- and career-readiness assessments such as ACT or SAT, if part of the state's accountability system, are addressed in the accompanying state profile on *Accountability*.

- ◆ *Prior to 2014-15:* West Virginia did not align its West Virginia Educational Standards Test 2 (WESTEST 2) in reading and math for grades three through eight and high school to the NxG CSOs.
- ◆ *2014-15:* As a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, West Virginia expects to implement the new, fully aligned Smarter Balanced tests in ELA and math for grades three through eight and 11.
- ◆ *Technology Readiness:* Regarding the readiness of the technology infrastructure to facilitate administration of the new tests online, the department is working closely with districts to identify and address issues, particularly bandwidth issues in rural areas. The department, the board and the Legislature collaborated to create an innovative support for districts: they established a two-year moratorium on spending state funding for new textbooks and materials for 2011-12 and 2012-13. Districts could use these years' funds to upgrade their technology infrastructure and digital resources. Capacity varies across districts, so while many required this two-year period to build basic infrastructure, others were better equipped and used the funds for other improvements.

State Approach to Supporting Implementation

West Virginia's approach to supporting local implementation of the NxG CSOs has evolved since the standards were adopted. In 2011 and 2012, the department focused NxG CSOs training and support at the state level. The department trained district teams that were then charged with leading implementation and professional learning at the local level. In 2013, and as a result of Senate Bill 359, the locus of support for training and assistance shifted to the RESAs. The RESAs now provide professional learning and implementation support to local districts, and the department provides additional expertise. In 2013-14, RESAs trained 1,800 school-level trainers, who have in turn trained almost 25,000 educators. The RESAs also facilitate a Collaborative Team Network, a statewide group of schools working to create and sustain teacher teams for continued professional learning on the new standards and early learning.

West Virginia (continued)

Reaching Diverse Learners

◆ *Students With the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Aligned Alternate ELA and Math Standards and Assessments*

West Virginia is working to ensure that students with severe intellectual disabilities (those unable to participate in general state assessments, even with appropriate accommodations) receive instruction and assessments aligned to the rigorous demands of the NxG CSOs.

- **Prior to 2014-15:** West Virginia did not align its own alternate assessment, the Alternate Performance Task Assessment (APTA), to the NxG CSOs. West Virginia is a member of the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment System Consortium. It adopted new Next Generation Alternate Academic Achievement Standards, which were used to guide classroom instruction for these students.
- **2014-15:** As a member of the DLM, West Virginia expects to implement the new, fully aligned DLM alternate assessments.

◆ *English Learners: Aligned English Language Proficiency Standards and Assessments*

In addition to requiring that English learners receive instruction in the NxG CSOs in the content areas, West Virginia is working to ensure that this instruction is supported by ELP standards and assessments that align to the rigorous demands of the NxG CSOs.

- **Current:** West Virginia has adopted new ELP Standards that are fully aligned to the NxG CSOs. The state has not aligned its own ELP assessment (the West Virginia Test of English Language Learning, WESTELL) to the NxG CSOs.
- **2015-16:** As a member of the English Language Proficiency for the 21st Century (ELPA21) consortium, West Virginia expects to adopt the ELPA21 fully aligned ELP assessments when they become available in 2015-16.