

NEWS

Recommendations for National K-12 Education Standards Target College Readiness

by Joyce Jones , June 3, 2010

Categories:

K12 / No Child Left Behind Act / Students / Curriculum /

The United States is one of only a few developed countries that have not adopted national standards for its public schools. That could soon change. On Wednesday, the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers released its final recommendations for what students in grades K-12 should master each year in English language arts and mathematics.



National Education Association vice president Lily Eskelsen

The proposal, unveiled at special ceremony held at Peachtree Ridge High School in Suwanee, Georgia, includes some of the more than 10,000 recommendations that the Common Core State Standards Initiative received after it released a draft in March. Standards are detailed in two documents, Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

The goal is to ensure that every student graduates from high school prepared to attend a post-secondary institution or enter the workforce. Individual states will be able to determine how well their students are performing against those in other states and it also gives employers and higher education institutions benchmarks to compare education across states in a way that they can't do now except for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

The common standards would force some states to dramatically improve the quality of education they provide. Students in Mississippi, for example, perform very well in the state's assessment test, but very low on the NAEP. They wouldn't be considered at all proficient in Massachusetts, which in education circles represents the gold standard. Under the common standards initiative, students in the two states would be expected to develop the same level of proficiency. It is not yet clear how many states will participate in the initiative, but Texas and Alaska did not participate in the standards-creation effort, and Virginia has already opted out.

National Education Association vice president Lily Eskelsen says that the initiative could have a huge impact on all children who will no longer have to memorize information simply to make the cut score on standardized tests but will instead have to develop critical learning and thinking skills that will prepare them for both college and life.

The "testing mania" that is a by-product of the No Child Left Behind law, she adds, has been particularly detrimental to low income and minority children and common standards will enable them to get the "complete education that they deserve." Eskelsen also believes that the standards could have a profound impact on teacher training.

"Higher education will have an essential role to play in preparing teachers to help students reach these standards and in ensuring that assessments provide students, parents and teachers with an accurate indication of students' progress toward college readiness," said a group of national higher education organizations in a statement. "We stand ready to work closely with our colleagues in elementary/secondary education on this groundbreaking work."

The unveiling of the national standards for K-12 education prompted the American College Testing Program, Inc., or ACT, to hold a media briefing Wednesday for Latino media reaching parents within the nation's largest minority group. Latino student growth has ballooned in recent years with some estimates predicting that one in every four students in public schools will be of Hispanic descent by 2020.

Although the standards have not been translated to other languages, Scott Montgomery, assistant vice president of strategic initiatives in the education division at ACT, said the non-profit organization is working toward increasing standards accessibility. For teachers, he said, the standards could provide much-needed clarity and guidance for college-readiness.

Montgomery said Latino organizations such as the National Council of La Raza participated in reviewing the standards through a state-led collaboration of parents, teachers, and government officials.

"Along the way, all of the standards have gone through several groups to validate them and make sure they are equitable and serve the diverse student body and are as comprehensive as they can be," Montgomery said.

Not everyone is so enthusiastic, however.

STORY TOOLS

- Print
- Smaller | Larger
- Email
- Share 7
- 5 retweet

RELATED STORIES

- » Education's Weak Link
- » Mvskogee Creek Teacher Wins Writing Award
- » New Report: College Readiness of Latino Students Improving
- » New Report: College Readiness of Latino Students Improving
- » New Report: College Readiness of Latino Students Improving
- » New Report: College Readiness of Latino Students Improving
- » Education's Weak Link

POPULAR TOPICS

- » Learning Disabilities Researcher Brings Attention to Overlooked Asian American Students
- » Advocates Question Whether Administration's Proposals Will Leave Minority Institutions Behind
- » Community College Conference Urges Focus on Student Success
- » GAO Again Recommends Better Oversight of Grants to Minority Serving Institutions

PEOPLE

- » Lily Eskelsen
- » Scott Montgomery
- » Lois Harrison-Jones
- » Neal McCluskey

ORGANIZATIONS

- » National Governors

DiverseJobs

Search Jobs | Post a Job | Job Tools



Advertise with Diverse

Diverse Books

Diverse: Issues In Higher Education on Facebook

[Like](#)

Diverse: Issues In Higher Education has 2,335 fans

Dianne	Tonya	Susana	April
Tyrel Skoolbr	Tina	Jennifer	Other

Diverse: Issues In Higher Education on Facebook

Special Report

TOP 100
Degree Producers

ADVERTISING DEADLINE JUNE 17, 2010
PUBLICATION DATE JULY 8, 2010

Advertise with Diverse