



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
300 DON GASPAR
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786
Telephone (505) 827-5800
www.ped.state.nm.us

HANNA SKANDERA
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

MEMORANDUM

September 9, 2011

TO: Public School Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, Directors of State Educational Institutions, and BIE School Administrators

FROM: Hanna Skandera
Secretary of Education, designate

RE: Update on the Transition to Common Core State Standards

We are excited to provide an update on New Mexico's transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). As you may know, the CCSS are rigorous standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math that 47 states and the District of Columbia have adopted. These standards are aligned with college and work expectations and provide a consistent understanding of what students are expected to know and be able to do, regardless of what state they live in. The development of the CCSS was a state-led process involving state leaders, teachers, and content experts and draws upon the best state standards and most effective models from around the world. The CCSS ready students to compete in the global economy. More information about the CCSS can be located at: <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) adopted the CCSS in October 2010 and initially planned for implementation during the 2012-2013 school year. Currently, NMPED is planning for full implementation of the CCSS in 2014- 2015. Full implementation means that students will be assessed on the CCSS. As a first step, experts at the Southwest Comprehensive Center are performing a detailed alignment study between the current New Mexico state standards and the CCSS. Based on the results, NMPED will determine planning steps for full implementation. For up to date information about New Mexico's transition to the CCSS, please visit: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/CCS/index.html>.

With the transition to the CCSS, New Mexico recently joined the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) to create assessments aligned to the CCSS. As part of the PARCC, New Mexico is able to leverage expertise, personnel, and fiscal resources that

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will ease the transition from the current assessment system to the new assessments. The new assessment system is computer based, aligned to the CCSS in grades 3-11, and allows for multiple assessments each year to provide timely instructional information for teachers. The PARCC assessments will be ready during the 2014-2015 school year.

Currently, NMPED is developing an implementation plan for how to support districts in the transition to the CCSS. Throughout the fall, a Planning Committee composed of teachers, parents, and administrators from around the state will be meeting to provide recommendations to NMPED on planning the transition. The Planning Committee will develop a framework for how districts should align materials within the district, create a plan on how teachers will receive training on transitioning to the CCSS, and create a technology and communication plan for districts.

We know that many districts have already begun work surrounding the transition, and we want to draw upon successful practices and determine how we can best support districts. We will soon be emailing a short survey to provide districts an opportunity to provide input into the planning process as well as to help NMPED begin to identify district needs for the transition. If you have any questions regarding the transition, please contact our Common Core Project Coordinator, Karina Vanderbilt, at Karina.vanderbilt@state.nm.us or our Director of Assessment and Accountability, Pete Goldschmidt at Pete.Goldschmidt@state.nm.us.

HS/KV

cc: Pete Goldschmidt
PED Senior Team