

June 18, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: Travis Dulany

**RE: STAFF REPORT: COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS INITIATIVE:
OVERVIEW**

For the June 2012 interim meeting of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC), Mr. Daniel G. Thatcher, Policy Specialist/Education Program, with the National Conference of State Legislatures, will provide an overview of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), including the background, timeline for implementation, progress, and cost of the initiative. This staff report provides a brief overview of the CCSS in New Mexico.

Introduction

In June 2010, LESL staff reported to the committee that the Governor and the Secretary of Public Education had signed a memorandum of agreement in May 2009 with the Center for Best Practices of the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), along with other states and the District of Columbia, to develop common standards in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for grades K-12.

According to the NGA, the standards were to be:

- aligned with college and work expectations;
- clear, understandable, and consistent;
- based on rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- built upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;

- internationally benchmarked; that is, informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- evidence-based.

In order to keep the committee informed on the progress of the CCSS initiative in New Mexico, this staff report provides information on the following:

- the development of New Mexico’s CCSS implementation plan;
- the transition from the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC); and
- background.

The Development of New Mexico’s CCSS Implementation Plan

In the summer of 2011, according to the Public Education Department (PED), the transition to New Mexico CCSS began when an initial team of PED staff gathered information and conducted a statewide survey of districts to determine district readiness levels, needs, and preferences. The department then formed a Planning Committee and a Framework Development Team (see Attachment 1) to provide recommendations and draft the *New Mexico Common Core State Standards Implementation Plan* (Implementation Plan). Funding to create the implementation plan was provided by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

In December 2011, WestEd, “a non-profit research, development, and services agency,” conducted an alignment study between New Mexico’s current standards and CCSS. The alignment study centered on the question, “To what extent do the New Mexico standards in ELA and mathematics correspond with the CCSS?” Among its findings, WestEd reported that the CCSS:

- grade-level standards for ELA are “organized by College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards” that are the same across grades K-12, while “New Mexico standards are organized differently, with skills and knowledge varying across individual grade levels”;
- grade-level standards focus on:
 - applying an understanding of the non-literal meanings of words and an understanding of the different ways language functions in different contexts to both reading and writing;
 - the choice of words, phrases, syntax, or punctuation for effective writing; and
 - the interpretation of specific words and phrases when reading. However, this component of CCSS language strand is generally not emphasized in the current New Mexico standards;
- with regard to Vocabulary Acquisition, emphasize some core skills across all grades, with some specific application of the skill of determining the meaning of words by using context clues at every grade; however, this skill is currently emphasized in some grades, but neglected in others in the current New Mexico standards;
- grade-level standards in conventions tend to introduce many skills at earlier grades than the New Mexico standards;

- use Reading Foundational Skills in grades kindergarten through five, which are also covered by the New Mexico standards, though in some cases there are slight differences in grade level, with CCSS introducing some skills one grade earlier than the current New Mexico standards; and
- present a “solid level” of alignment to the five mathematics “process” standards of the New Mexico standards, with New Mexico standards embedding more topics into fewer general categories.

PED’s Implementation Plan includes four sections:

- Section 1 – *Implementation Plan Development Process* – provides details on the Planning Committee and the Framework Development Team, and further defines each group’s workplan and timeline, which was scheduled to culminate by January 31, 2012.
- Section 2 – *Communication Plan* – describes the time frame and key messages for CCSS in New Mexico. The time frame for summer and fall of 2012 includes listening tours, and possible press releases and/or press conferences in August.
- Section 3 – *Student Assessment Plan* – provides the time frame for the transition to CCSS alignment for three separate assessments as follows:

➤ *the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment (SBA):*

| Time frame | Assessment |
|-------------------------|--|
| March 19-April 13, 2012 | Accountability Assessments: SBA based on current New Mexico Content Standards; High School Exit Exam |
| March 18-April 5, 2013 | Accountability Assessments: 2013 SBA Bridge Assessment for grade 3 dually aligned with the New Mexico State Standards and the CCSS; Current SBA for grades 4-8, 10, and 11; High School Exit Exam |
| Spring 2014 | Accountability Assessments: 2014 SBA Bridge Assessment dually aligned to the New Mexico State Standards and CCSS for grades 3-8, 10, and 11; High School Exit Exam |
| Spring 2015 | Accountability Assessments: PARCC; meeting college and career ready standards assessed through PARCC required for graduation |

➤ *the New Mexico Alternate Performance Assessment (NMAPA):*

| Time frame | Assessment |
|-------------------|---|
| 2011 | Accountability Assessments: NMAPA |
| 2012 | Accountability Assessments: NMAPA |
| Spring 2013 | Accountability Assessments: NMAPA Bridge Assessment |
| Spring 2014 | Accountability Assessments: NMAPA Bridge Assessment |
| Spring 2015 | Accountability Assessments: Fully Aligned CCSS NMAPA |

- *the ACCESS for English Language Proficiency Assessment, provided by the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium¹:*

| Time frame | Assessment |
|-------------------|---|
| 2012 | Title III Accountability Assessment: ACCESS for English language learners (ELLs) assessment |
| 2013 | Title III Accountability Assessment: ACCESS for ELLs assessment |
| 2014 | Title III Accountability Assessment: ACCESS for ELLs assessment |
| 2015 | Title III Accountability Assessment: English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment awarded through RFP Process |

- Section 4 – *Curriculum & Instruction/Instructional Materials Plan* – specifies that, beginning in spring 2012, all districts will be expected to incorporate the following into teaching and learning at all grade levels:
 - Capacities of the Literate Individual;
 - English Language Arts Shifts in Instruction;
 - Reading and Writing Framework Shifts in Instruction;
 - Mathematical Practices; and
 - Mathematics Shifts in Instruction.

The transition from the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium to PARCC

Upon joining the CCSS initiative, New Mexico initially indicated that it would participate in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. However, in 2011 PED reported that the department would transition to PARCC.

In August 2011, the LESC received correspondence from Secretary-designate Hanna Skandera explaining New Mexico’s transition from the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium to PARCC. In that letter, the Secretary-designate stated that PARCC’s goals better align with New Mexico’s education policy goals because:

- the PARCC Consortium’s requirement of multiple through-course assessments aligns to the Governor’s vision for increasing the usefulness and reliability of assessments;
- the possibility for multiple annual assessment requirements will ensure that teachers receive timely and meaningful information to help guide instruction;
- the ability to assess all students in grades 3-12 will provide accurate measures of student achievement and teacher growth for each grade; and
- the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium only provides one assessment at the high school level, and PED believes that the PARCC Consortium will provide a better fit for New Mexico’s needs.

¹ PED currently has a contract with the WIDA Consortium, which is set to expire in June 2013

According to the PARCC website, the consortium:

- received \$186 million in grant funding through the US Department of Education’s (USDE) Race to the Top assessment competition to support the development and design of a new assessment system; and
- includes 24 states, which collectively educates 25 million students (see Attachment 2).

According to PARCC, the timeline for development and deployment of its common assessment began in school year 2010-2011, and continues through summer of 2015.

In April 2012, according to a Florida Department of Education project application, PED was approved for a \$96,600 grant from the state of Florida, which acts as the fiscal agent for PARCC. The grant will cover salary and benefits for one full-time equivalent position, titled “New Mexico PARCC Manager.” The funding will provide “staff support for the coordination and implementation of the activities related to the PARCC.”

Background

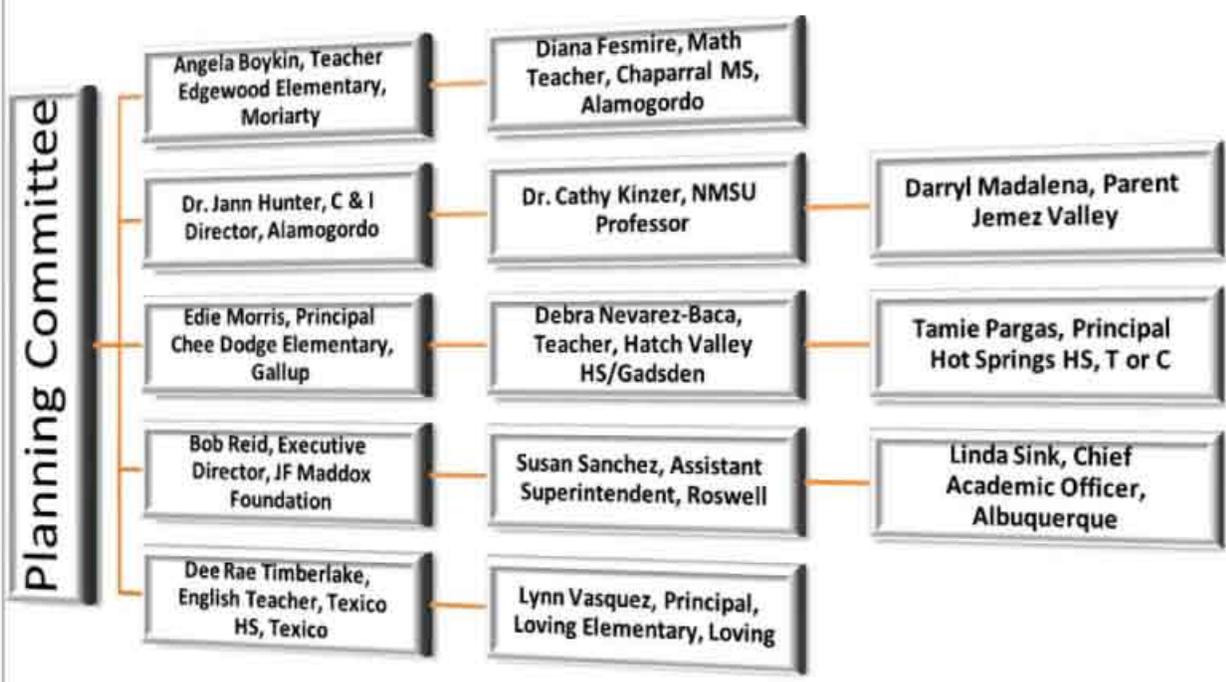
In 1967, legislation was enacted requiring the State Board of Education (now PED) to prescribe standards for all public schools in the state, including curriculum, academic content, and performance standards.

In 2001, in order to receive Title I funds, each state was required to:

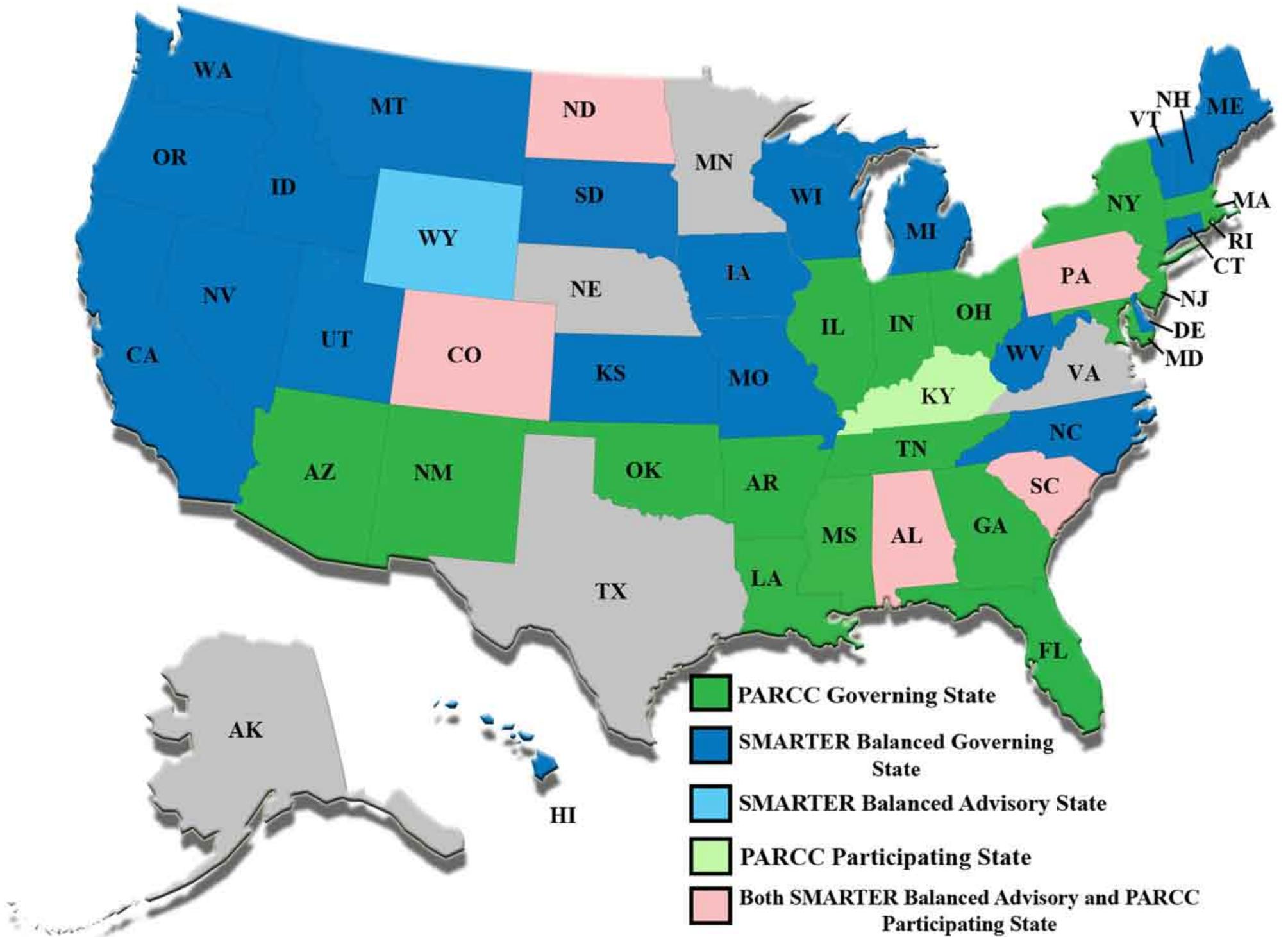
- adopt rigorous content and academic achievement standards; and
- implement an accountability system based on a system of annual assessments aligned with those standards and approved by USDE for all students in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school in reading/language arts and mathematics.

In 2007 and 2008, in connection with the LESC’s study of high school redesign, and supported by an appropriation to the LESC, New Mexico joined the American Diploma Project. This effort, spearheaded by Achieve, Inc., provided states with a formal process to revise their mathematics and ELA standards so they aligned with the expectations of college and careers. A state team that included staff from the LESC, PED, and the Higher Education Department, and faculty from state public secondary and postsecondary institutions spent 18 months reviewing and revising the state standards. The revised math standards were adopted in PED rule in June 2009, and the ELA standards in September 2009.

Meanwhile, in June 2009, the NGA and CCSSO announced the launch of the nationwide, state-led CCSS initiative to give educators direction about what all children need to succeed in college and the workplace, and to allow states to share best practices that, it is hoped, will dramatically improve teaching and learning.



SOURCE: February 15, 2012 New Mexico Elementary and Secondary Flexibility Request



- PARCC Governing State
- SMARTER Balanced Governing State
- SMARTER Balanced Advisory State
- PARCC Participating State
- Both SMARTER Balanced Advisory and PARCC Participating State