

State Board Plan to address Governor's request

Regarding Common Core Georgia Performance Standards

November 7, 2013

The Governor, in a letter dated August 15, 2013 has asked the State Board to do three major tasks:

1. Conduct a formal evaluation of the Common Core GPS in Math and English Language Arts and compare them to the GPS in place prior to adoption of Common Core GPS. Take into account feedback, observation and analysis from all stakeholders.
2. Work with Georgia Stakeholders to develop and adopt a model social studies curriculum that encompasses foundational tenets such as the importance of American government, our nation's founding documents, citizenship including voting and civic responsibility and economics education and fiscal responsibility.
3. Formally reconsider the appendix to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts that include sample "text exemplars" for classroom use and to develop a model reading list to be made available for local school systems in Georgia.

This will serve as documentation for the process to be used by the State Board to satisfy all three tasks.

Issue 1

"I am writing today to request that you conduct a formal evaluation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts and a comparison of these standards to the Georgia Performance Standards, which were in place prior to the adoption of Common Core. In this evaluation of the standards, I ask that you take into account feedback, observations, and analysis from all stakeholders."

Governor Deal's letter dated August 15, 2013 to Members of the State Board

The State Board will accomplish this task in three segments:

First, the State board will gather information from experts who support and those who question the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. Once the State Board has the expert written documentation, it will then be evaluated along with feedback from teachers and the public prior to determining what revisions, if any, should be considered to the current standards.

Second, the effort that has already been launched by the Department of Education, through the RESAs, to collect feedback from the teachers after one year of teaching Common Core GPS on standard improvements will be included in this process as feedback from teachers. The process used by the Department has been email surveys. To ensure we receive adequate feedback from teachers, we will also enlist the English/Language Arts and Mathematics curriculum specialists from every school system to provide similar feedback. We will ask them to utilize the alignment document created when the State

of Georgia moved from the Georgia Performance Standards to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and provide feedback on what works well and what should be changed or enhanced in some manner.

Third, feedback from parents and concerned citizens will be collected through public hearing held in each State Board member's district. Comments must be submitted in writing prior to the hearing. If an individual wishes to speak in support of or against the standards as a whole, they will be limited to one minute. Specific standard comments will be limited to three minutes during which time the speaker must state the standard: the specific issue regarding the standard; and any recommended changes or enhancements to the present standard. Speakers must be a Georgia citizen and live in the district where the hearing is being held.

Finally, a specific email address will be established by the department for any Georgia citizen to provide written comments on the current standards. Also, the department will use all communication channels available to communicate that we are seeking input on the current standards.

The State Board will convene a meeting or add to the agenda of a scheduled board meeting to hear all feedback on this issue such as expert opinions, report from the RESA process where teacher feedback has been collected, feedback from curriculum specialists, and summaries of comments from all public hearings.

Any recommended changes to the current standards will be presented to the board and then posted for a period of 90 days prior to any board action. During the 90-day comment period, the State Board will present the proposed changes to the State House and Senate Education Committees and incorporate any feedback they may provide. The board will then reconvene to hear all comments submitted during the comment period, take final public comments and then take action on changes to the current standards.

Issue 2

“While curriculum decision are – and should remain- the responsibility of our local school systems, the state should ensure that resources are made available so that every child learns the importance of American government, our nation’s founding documents, citizenship including voting and civic responsibility, and economics education and fiscal responsibility. Thus, I also ask you to work with Georgia Stakeholders to develop and adopt a model social studies curriculum that en compasses these foundational tenets to be made available to local school systems”

Governor Deal’s letter dated August 15, 2013 to Members of the State Board

The State Board will ask the staff of the Department of Education to bring a draft curriculum to the board for consideration that includes the requested foundational tenets for initial review. The

curriculum will be developed using a committee that is made up of a cross section of teachers, parents, superintendents, business partners and historians. Once the State Board feels it has a well-developed model social studies curriculum, the same process will be used as outlined above for Issue 1 – expert review, teacher and curriculum director feedback gathered through surveys and public hearings held in each state board member’s district. The same criteria for speaking and submitting comments will apply – Georgia resident, comments submitted in writing, specific issue with specific item, etc. There will also be an email address for comment collection. A State Board meeting will be held to hear all feedback and comments from all collection methods and post all comments for 90 days. During the 90-day comment period, the State Board will present the model curriculum to the State House and Senate Education Committees and then reconvene to hear all comments submitted during the comment period. At the next State Board meeting, the Board will review all comments made during the 90 day period, take final public comments and then take action on a model social studies curriculum.

Issue 3

“Additionally, while Georgia’s adoption of the Common Core State Standards did not mandate the use of a required reading list, I also ask you to formally reconsider the appendix to the Common core State Standards in English Language Arts that includes sample “text exemplars” for classroom use and to develop a model reading list to be made available for local school systems in Georgia”

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When the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were adopted in Georgia in 2010, The State Board did not formally approve Appendix B – Text Exemplars. Appendix B is not part of the standards. It is mentioned throughout the CCSS as a resource, but Georgia did not approve or require that Appendix B ever be used in our schools. Because it was not formally adopted as part of the standards, the State Board does not need to take formal action to repeal Appendix B. However, we are asking for the Department of Education to remove specific references to Appendix B from our website and to make it clear to our school districts that Appendix B is not a list of test exemplars approved by the Department of Education or the State Board of Education. We are a local control state so, bear in mind, if school districts choose to use the texts from Appendix B that is within their rights to do so. We are asking the Department of Education Staff to develop a list of “Things to Consider” when choosing text exemplars – such as appropriate reading levels – so we can share this model list of considerations with school districts. Once a recommended list of “Things to Consider” has been developed by staff it will be presented at the Rules Committee, posted for public comment and then brought for adoption to the State Board.