

**WASHINGTON STATE  
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD  
MEETING NO. 170  
MAY 2, 2013**

**COLLEGE AND CAREER READY STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS**

Washington is moving to new standards and assessments to determine if K-12 students are college and career ready. Washington is one of 45 states and the District of Columbia adopting the Common Core State Standards of college and career readiness. Washington is also moving to a new student assessment system, known as Smarter Balanced Assessments, to measure whether students are meeting the Common Core standards.

Washington is also an active participant in the development of another set of career-focused standards: Common Career and Technical Core standards. The Technical Core standards were developed through a nationwide partnership with the leadership of the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education consortium. Education and workforce stakeholders, appointed by representatives from participating states, districts, and colonies, developed the Technical Core. The Technical Core is built around the 16 Career Clusters and the 79 Career Pathways developed and promoted by the national CTE consortium. A key component of the Technical Core calls for reviewing and updating Career Ready Practices—from communicating clearly to utilizing critical thinking—that span the 16 Career Clusters. These career practices promise to be pertinent in creating truly career-ready students, whether enrolled in CTE coursework or not.

The Career Readiness Partnership Council developed the Career Ready Practices. The council is made up of education, policy, business, and philanthropic organizations, working to create a comprehensive vision of what it means to be “career ready.” Although Career Ready Practices are intended to establish goals for CTE programs, these practices are also relevant to students in middle school, high school, and post-high school education and training.

Major education policy debates revolve around the connection between Common Core Standards and the Smarter Balanced Assessments to high school graduation requirements, four-year college and university admission requirements, and placement into college-level course work at either two- or four-year institutions. The Workforce Board has additional policy questions about whether Common Core and Smarter Balanced adequately measure career readiness, and if there should be additional tools to measure how well the K-12 system is preparing students with career-ready skills.

This tab includes a background paper prepared by Board staff.

The May meeting will provide an opportunity for members to learn more about the standards and assessments and discuss these issues.

**Board Action Required:** For discussion only.

## **College and Career Ready Standards and Assessments**

### **Common Core State Standards**

Washington's College and Career standards are centered on the Common Core State Standards and will be assessed using the Smarter Balanced Assessment starting with the 2014-2015 school year. Both Common Core standards and Smarter Balanced are components of the national standards-based education reform movement that seeks greater alignment of education standards in the nation's K-12 system. Advocates believe this effort will foster greater collaboration in teaching and learning, and that an economy of scale will lead to cost savings in professional development and curriculum. In addition, the newly established standards and assessments include the teaching and evaluation of the theoretical aspects and practical application of the Common Core, particularly in terms of critical thinking and problem solving.

Common Core stemmed from a national initiative led by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The initiative began with a Memorandum of Understanding signed in May of 2009 by 48 states and two territories. Currently 45 states, Washington, D.C., four colonies, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have adopted the Common Core standards.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provisionally adopted Common Core on July 19, 2010. The Legislature then reviewed the standards and they were formally adopted by OSPI on July 20, 2011 making Washington the 44th state to do so. Since then, Washington has begun the process to introduce the standards into state classrooms by the 2013-2014 school year.

To provide input on the development of Common Core, OSPI convened a workgroup of almost 100 educators and experts with previous involvement in standards development and revision efforts. Workgroup members included teachers, postsecondary educators (four-year and CTC), civil rights groups, those with expertise with English language learners (ELL), and students with disabilities, among others. The standards were made available for public comment.

Washington has the ability to add up to 15 percent of content and objectives to the nationally developed Common Core. The 15 percent cap is in place to ensure fidelity to the standards nationwide.

### **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is a state-led consortium developing assessments aligned to the Common Core standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Smarter Balanced is one of two multistate consortia awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education in 2010 to develop an assessment system aligned to Common Core standards by the 2014-2015 school year. Currently, 25 states are associated with Smarter Balanced. By creating a high-quality assessment system, Smarter Balanced believes teachers and schools can improve instruction and help students succeed—regardless of disability, language, or subgroup. Smarter Balanced members include experienced educators, researchers, state and local policymakers, and community groups.

As both a Governing State and fiscal agent for federal grant money, Washington plays a key role in the development of Smarter Balanced assessments. Governing States (of which there are 21 including Washington) are fully committed to the Smarter Balanced approach and have a vote in policy decisions. Alternatively, Advisory States may participate in workgroups and provide guidance for the development of the assessment system. The federal government has made available a number of grants that can be awarded to participating members of the Smarter Balanced consortium. Washington serves as the fiscal agent for the consortium and reviews applications and awards grants to participant states and districts.

As Washington transitions to Common Core standards, student assessments will also change—although not right away. In 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, current state tests will remain. Students in grades 3-8 will take the Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) and 10th grade students will take the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) and End-of-Course (EOC) exams for federal and state accountability, and as graduation requirements. The new Smarter Balanced tests will replace the math, reading and writing portions of the MSP in 2014-2015. In high school, the Smarter Balanced tests will be administered in 11th grade.

### **Common Career and Technical Core**

The Common Career and Technical Core is a state-led initiative coordinated by the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education consortium. The initiative consists of 42 states, the District of Columbia, and Palau. Over 320 participants from across the 16 Career Clusters were appointed to participate in the development of the Technical Core. Although it is targeted toward CTE students and programs, Technical Core can be used more broadly by students in middle school, high school, and post-high school education programs, across a range of disciplines. Launched in January of 2011, the process began with subject matter experts reviewing the 2008 knowledge and skill statements associated with the 16 Career Clusters and 79 Career Pathways (16:79 framework).

After a comprehensive review of state, industry and other national CTE standards, (including the national association of CTE directors' Knowledge and Skills Statements), CTE state directors had an opportunity in November 2011 to sign a declaration of support for the development of the Technical Core. Some 42 states, the District of Columbia, and the Republic of Palau signed on in support. After declaring support for the process, participants were given the opportunity to identify one subject matter expert from their jurisdiction for each of the 16 Career Clusters.

During the Spring of 2012, in collaboration with a third party independent research firm (Marzano Research Laboratory), the national association of CTE directors brought together focus groups and deployed surveys to review proposed changes to Technical Core.

Participants also reviewed the broader Career Ready Practices that span the 16:79 framework. These Career Ready Practices include 12 statements of the knowledge, skills and personal qualities important to becoming career ready.

Career Ready Practices include:

1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
3. Attend to personal health and financial well-being.
4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
9. Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
10. Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
11. Use technology to enhance productivity.
12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

Developing and refining these Career Ready Practices offers the opportunity to bring together Technical Core standards with Common Core standards, better defining what it means to be *both* college and career ready in a 21st Century economy.

### **Career Readiness Partnership Council**

The Career Readiness Partnership Council has been a key player in developing Career Ready Practices. The council includes education, policy, business, labor, and philanthropic organizations. The Council was formed in 2012 and is coordinated by the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education consortium. The partnership is comprised of 28 stakeholder organizations that include the Business-Higher Education Forum, the National Education Association, the Manufacturing Institute, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Governors Association, and others. The career readiness council seeks to equip students with the skills necessary for workforce success. The council is developing initiatives that target policy makers, teachers, higher education, students, parents, and community members.

The council's definition of a career-ready person is one who effectively navigates education and employment to achieve a fulfilling, financially secure, and successful career. Career readiness has no defined endpoint. To be career ready in an ever-changing global economy requires adaptability and a commitment to lifelong learning, along with mastery of key academic, technical and workplace knowledge, skills, and dispositions that vary from one career to another and change over time.

### **Policy questions:**

1. Should proficiency on the newly developed Smarter Balanced Assessments be a high school graduation requirement?
2. Should proficiency on the Smarter Balanced Assessments be the basis of college and university admission requirements? Should the Smarter Balanced Assessments serve as tests for placement into college-level classes at two- and four-year institutions?

3. Should there be additional standards and assessments of Career Readiness beyond the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced Assessments?
4. Should Washington utilize its ability to add additional objectives into the Common Core standards?
5. Is there an opportunity to collaborate with and capitalize on the work around the development of the Common Core standards and Technical Core standards?

More information:

Common Core State Standards

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

Common Career and Technical Core

<http://www.careertech.org/career-technical-education/cctc/info.html>

Smarter Balanced Assessments

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/>

## Implementing the Common Core State Standards in Washington State

**Our Vision:** Every student will have access to the CCSS standards through high quality instruction aligned with the standards every day; and that all teachers are prepared and receive the support they need to implement the standards in their classrooms every day.

**Our Purpose:** To develop a statewide system with aligned resources that supports all school districts in their preparation of educators and students to implement the CCSS.

**Our Core Values:** This vision can only occur through core values of clarity, consistency, collaboration, coordination, and commitment from classrooms, schools, and communities to the state level.



### Foundational Components for Implementing New Academic Standards

	Classroom Teachers will Need...	District and Building Administrators, Coaches, and Teacher Leaders will Need...
1) Awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Understanding of the standards, the major shifts and differences between the old and new standards within their subject and grade levels</li> <li>2) Time and support within professional learning communities to plan and consider impact at the classroom level</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Understanding of the standards, the major shifts and differences between the old and new standards</li> <li>2) To conduct analyses of alignment and gaps within district/building instructional materials and district/building level assessments</li> <li>3) An implementation and communication plan for transitioning between old and new standards that integrates with existing district/building priorities, school improvement efforts and educator evaluation processes</li> </ol>
2) Build Educator Capacity, and 3) Classroom Transitions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Collaborative time to dig into the standards document more deeply in order to understand key content and vertical articulation of ideas</li> <li>2) Collaborative time in order to develop instructional skills to implement the standards</li> <li>3) Collaborative time to understand alignment gap of the CCSS within classroom units and lessons</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To identify teacher leaders to develop and lead district/building professional learning</li> <li>2) Provide professional learning time for all teachers to implement the standards</li> </ol>
4) Application and Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Aligned materials and instructional supports, as well as classroom-based assessments</li> <li>2) Understanding of the gaps in their own knowledge and skills to further inform professional learning needs</li> <li>3) Knowledge and ability to use data from the new assessment system</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Knowledge and ability to implement a new assessment system, including a thorough understanding of the system and its resources/components available throughout the year</li> <li>2) Resources to provide to teachers materials, instructional supports and aligned classroom-based assessments</li> <li>4) Understanding of the gaps in knowledge and skills of teachers to further inform professional learning needs</li> </ol>

# Washington's CCSS Implementation Timeline and Activities (State, Regional, and District Efforts) – January 2012

2010-11 School Year	2011-12 School Year	2012-13 School Year	2013-14 School Year	2014-15 School Year and beyond
<p><b>1) CCSS Exploration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct standards comparisons</li> <li>Analyze costs/benefits of adoption</li> <li>Engage stakeholders &amp; policy makers</li> <li>Conduct bias and sensitivity review</li> <li>Formal Adoption 7/20/11</li> </ul>	<p><b>2) Build Awareness of CCSS and Begin Building Statewide Capacity Supports for Standards Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide initial CCSS overview presentations to OSPI and ESD staff</li> <li>Identify resources from national organizations, and other states</li> <li>Establish CCSS Quarterly Webinar Series</li> <li>Convene school district leadership teams to learn about CCSS and build transition plans</li> <li>Develop, disseminate, maintain communication materials to support building awareness</li> <li>Connect districts with resources to align professional learning and materials to support implementation</li> <li>Develop and begin dissemination of content-specific transition supports</li> <li>Establish CCSS specialist cadres of educators to build capacity within districts to implement the CCSS</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2012: MSP/HSPE/EOC based on 2008 WA Math Standards and 2005 Reading/Writing Standards</li> </ul>	<p><b>3) Build Statewide Capacity and Classroom Transitions Supports for Standards Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide supports around CCSS vision and awareness; including resource for special populations</li> <li>Convene school district leadership teams to learn about CCSS and build transition plans</li> <li>Maintain existing core content support at regional levels (establish, where necessary)</li> <li>Maintain CCSS specialist cadres of educators to build capacity within districts to implement the CCSS</li> <li>Align state CTE Course Frameworks with CCSS</li> <li>Develop and disseminate CCSS implementation toolkits for various audiences</li> <li>CCSS Quarterly Webinars</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give priority to using current WA items most closely aligned to CCSS when developing state tests</li> <li>Work with Legislature to determine impact of new assessment system on high school exit exams</li> <li><b>2013:</b> MSP/HSPE/EOC based on 2008 WA Math Standards and 2005 Reading/Writing Standards</li> <li><b>2014:</b> Statewide pilot of new assessment items for Math and ELA</li> </ul>	<p><b>4) Statewide Application and Assessment of CCSS Supports for Standards Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to provide supports around CCSS vision and awareness and classroom transitions; including key messages and supports for special populations</li> <li>Convene school district leadership teams to share transitional activities and to collaborate around CCSS implementation</li> <li>Maintain CCSS educator cadre as a resource within and across districts; including as support to utilize CCSS toolkits</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2015:</b> New assessments in Math, Reading, and Writing</li> </ul>	<p><b>5) Statewide Coordination and Collaboration to Support Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and maintain engagement and coordination of state Steering Committee, State Communications Advisory, and ESD Network CCSS activities</li> <li>Convene state professional learning associations and stakeholders to align messages, coordinate efforts, and build statewide capacity</li> <li>Engage partners to align and leverage state/national initiatives and resources</li> <li>Work with key state partners on efforts to build capacity across systems for CCSS implementation (e.g. early learning, higher education)</li> </ul>



BUILDING BLOCKS FOR CHANGE:

# What it Means to be Career Ready

The ever-changing demands of the global economy and the desire to remain competitive, coupled with mounting frustration over decades of lackluster academic performance, are converging to create an opportunity for change.

Once a powerhouse, the United States now trails many nations in achievement and attainment in secondary and postsecondary learning. And, increasingly, there is evidence of a mismatch between employer needs and the knowledge and skills of the current and future workforce, on display in employment figures and reports from business and industry leaders.

Policymakers and the public alike are embracing “college and career readiness” as the solution, but what does it mean? Much of the policy debate focuses on college entrance and completion, without remediation, as a solution. However, college readiness is only part of the answer. What is needed is a more comprehensive strategy that bridges the gap between education and workforce preparation.

**What is needed is a more comprehensive strategy that bridges the gap between education and workforce preparation.**

To find that solution, the Career Readiness Partner Council was formed in 2012. The Council unites leaders from national education and workforce organizations with the goal of bringing clarity and focus to what it means to be career ready. This document highlights the outcome of the collaborative efforts of the Council to help inform policy and practice in states and communities.



## Career Readiness Partner Council

Achieve  
Alliance for Excellent Education  
American Association of Community Colleges  
American Federation of Teachers  
American School Counselor Association  
America's Promise Alliance  
ASCD  
Asia Society  
Association for Career and Technical Education  
Business-Higher Education Forum

ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career  
Corporate Voices for Working Families  
Council of Chief State School Officers  
The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation  
Ford Motor Company Fund  
Gallup  
James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy  
The Manufacturing Institute  
National Academy Foundation

National Association of State Boards of Education  
National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium  
National Council of La Raza  
National Education Association  
National Governors Association  
National League of Cities  
National Youth Employment Coalition  
Skills for America's Future, The Aspen Institute  
Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

# Defining What it Means to be Career Ready

There is an often-confusing mix of definitions, frameworks, policies and implementation strategies for career readiness. Some viewpoints center around learning skills for a specific entry-level job, while others define career readiness as a broader understanding of workplace skills. Still other definitions focus on knowledge and skills for a particular industry sector such as health sciences or marketing. Career readiness is a convergence of all of these definitions.



**A career-ready person** effectively navigates pathways that connect education and employment to achieve a fulfilling, financially-secure and successful career. A career is more than just a job. Career readiness has no defined endpoint. To be career ready in our ever-changing global economy requires adaptability and a commitment to lifelong learning, along with mastery of key knowledge, skills and dispositions that vary from one career to another and change over time as a person progresses along a developmental continuum. Knowledge, skills and dispositions that are inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing. These include:

## Academic and Technical Knowledge and Skills

A career-ready person is proficient in the core academic subjects, as well as in technical topics. This foundational knowledge base includes competence in a broad range of academic subjects grounded in rigorous internationally-benchmarked state standards—such as the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics. It also includes a level of technical-skill proficiency aligned to a chosen career field and pathway, and the ability to apply both academic and technical learning in the context of a career. Many careers also require deeper learning and mastery in specific academic or technical subjects.

## Employability Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions

A career-ready person has a good understanding of their interests, talents and weaknesses and a solid grasp of the skills and dispositions necessary for engaging in today's fast-paced, global economy. These include, but are not limited to:

- Goal setting and planning;
- Managing transitions from school to work and back again, and from one occupation along a career pathway to another;
- Clear and effective communication skills;
- Critical thinking and problem solving;
- Working productively in teams and independently;
- Effective use of technology; and
- Ethical decision-making and social responsibility.

These academic and employability knowledge, skills and dispositions are acquired in a range of secondary, postsecondary and workplace settings, and help to address an increasing reality: Today, most career pathways require some form of postsecondary education, whether it's an entry-level job, a management position for a mid-career professional or perhaps even a shift from practicing a profession to teaching others. A particular job might require a certificate, a two-year degree, a four-year degree, a doctorate or even a handful of courses to hone in on a particular piece of knowledge or a skill. Indeed, the "college and career" tagline that has become part of the education reform rhetoric encompasses all of these postsecondary options. Career readiness also incorporates engaging workplace experiences that allow a person to apply academic and technical learning to real-world projects and problems alongside professionals. This starts with career awareness and exploration and includes job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships and service learning.

# Building a Comprehensive System That Supports Career Readiness

Career readiness also requires a comprehensive system of supports that deliver learning when it is needed, where it is needed, how it is needed and by a cadre of experts that includes teachers and career professionals. It includes both classroom and workplace experiences, high-quality standards and instructional materials to support learning, a portfolio of assessments that gauge progress using multiple measures along a continuum from being not at all career ready to fully career ready, and finally a policy and funding structure that is aligned across K-12, higher education and business and industry sectors.

No one group or individual can realize change of this magnitude; however, uniting around a common goal is a powerful catalyst for change. Working together there are strategies to ensure our nation's prosperity and the success of future generations:

**Policymakers.** Align policy and funding infrastructures that break down long-standing silos between secondary, postsecondary and workforce systems and provide the full spectrum of supports needed to ensure seamless transitions from high school to college and beyond. One step to accomplish this is to clearly define what it means to be career ready in policy and to adopt a set of metrics to measure career readiness that will help to strategically align funding and programs.

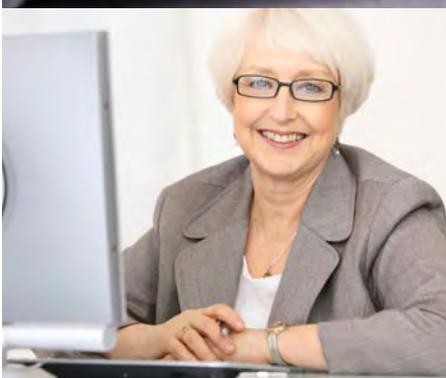
**High school teachers, leaders and counselors.** Engage with business and industry and higher education leaders and faculty to better understand what is expected of high school students and to develop joint goals for college and career readiness. Also, actively engage parents and students in developing long-term goals and strategies around college and career aspirations.

**Business and industry.** Actively partner with secondary and postsecondary stakeholders to develop shared goals. Also, share expertise and provide engaging opportunities for students and educators to experience hands-on, work-based learning.

**Higher education.** Engage with secondary educators and business and industry to develop common goals that seek to align systems. Ensure career-readiness knowledge, skills and dispositions are fully integrated into curriculum and instruction, and help students chart a course for career success beyond college.

**Parents and students.** Expand the goal of "college bound" to include career goals. For students in particular, take responsibility for charting a course that aligns with personal interests and talents. For parents, strive to provide support and guidance in helping students meet education and career goals.

**Community.** For social service professionals, after school providers, healthcare practitioners, religious leaders and other community leaders, engage with K-12, higher education and business and industry to create common goals that align with the values, beliefs and economic needs of the community. Support the shared goals by aligning community resources and programming.



## A Call to Action

For too many years, high school graduates throughout the United States faced a fork in the road. One path led to a four-year college, the other to an entry-level job. Some students chose for themselves, while others were tracked based on aptitude and, all too often, on race and income. In today's 21st century global economy, the choices are much more complex and interconnected, and the fork in the road has been replaced by numerous paths, all of which require a rigorous and rich high school experience that prepares all students—not just some—for college and a career.



The attempt of the Career Readiness Partner Council to bridge diverse viewpoints and develop a joint statement about what it means to be career ready is an important step in leveraging current efforts to transform education and workforce development. But much more is needed.

We hope this definition spurs conversation and action in communities across the nation. The inextricable link between education and the economy has never been more apparent; the urgency for change unparalleled. We have a window of opportunity for bold change, and the future of our nation, and each and every citizen depends on it.

Please visit us at [CareerReadyNow.org](http://CareerReadyNow.org) to learn more about the Career Readiness Partner Council.

