

# E-Newsletter

Show What You Know® Publishing

Winter 2010

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## Letter from the President

Dear Educators and Parents,

As the administration of state standardized tests inches closer, Show What You Know® Publishing would like to help your students succeed by diagnosing their strengths and weaknesses by standard with test formats that model the actual test.



To achieve success on these high-stakes assessments, we believe the best practice is using multiple testing and diagnostic tools to provide students with practice and teachers with data for intervention. The Show What You Know® program offers guided subject-specific Tutorials that demonstrate how to answer state assessment questions, as well as Practice Tests for every subject. Flash cards, aligned to standards, provide an additional testing tool.

We have designed our research-based program to assure that every student has the knowledge, test-taking strategies, and critical thinking skills required to succeed on their state assessments. We strive to help students show what they know!

Please contact me anytime to learn more about our Show What You Know® program.

Best wishes this testing season,

Cindi Englefield  
CEO and President

# Administration to increase education funding, revise No Child Left Behind

The Obama administration has proposed to increase education funding, as well as begin to rework the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

According to Education Secretary Arne Duncan, the administration hopes to have NCLB revised by the end of this year; however, the complexity of differing issues that educators, parents, and politicians have with NCLB leave many doubting that the proposed deadline will be met.

Duncan said the administration will reserve \$1 billion to fund programs that come out of the revision of NCLB. Additionally, President Obama is proposing to raise elementary and secondary education spending by \$3 billion in the next fiscal year that begins in October.

The administration's proposed funding increase includes an extra \$1.35 billion for "Race to the Top" competitive grants, which will be awarded to states based on positive school reform. This amount would be added to the \$4 billion grant program that was launched through the stimulus bill.

During President Obama's State of the Union Address on January 27, he announced a proposed freeze on many domestic programs, except for national security programs, Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security to contribute to a \$447 billion cut in domestic program funding. However, high-priority programs, such as education, energy, health, and the environment, will see little or no impact from the freeze. According to the administration, the freeze that President Obama has proposed for the fiscal years 2011 through 2013 will transform the federal government's discretionary domestic budget by 2015 into its lowest level in a half-century relative to the size of the economy.

## Timeline:

### No Child Left Behind

- |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1965</b> | Just after the passage of the <i>Civil Rights Act</i> in 1964, the <i>Elementary and Secondary Education Act</i> became a law.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>2002</b> | The <i>Elementary and Secondary Education Act</i> is rewritten to require more accountability from states so that students are performing at grade-level and gains are made in closing the achievement gap between white and minority students. President Bush signs the reformed law with the new name <i>No Child Left Behind</i> on January 8 with overwhelming bipartisan support. |
| <b>2007</b> | Congress attempts to revisit NCLB to make revisions but fails to complete the task.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>2010</b> | President Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan announce that NCLB will be reworked. Possible changes may include a push toward national standards, tightened requirements for high-quality teachers, and continued efforts to close the achievement gap.                                                                                                                          |

# Common Core Standards release for public review delayed

Drafts of common core academic standards for mathematics and English language arts are now scheduled to be released for public review in mid-February. The release date has been delayed two weeks due to feedback suggesting that the more than 200-page document outlining the standards is confusing and not user-friendly.

At this time, writing groups organized by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) are reworking the standards into new drafts that will be more concise, better organized, and easier to understand.

To date, 48 states, 2 territories, and the District of Columbia have agreed to help develop common core state standards in English language arts and mathematics for grades K-12. Once final drafts of the standards are released this year, states will be asked to review the standards and choose to adopt them. A state that chooses to adopt the common core standards agrees to make at least 85 percent of the state's standards the common core standards for mathematics and English language arts.

According to Education Week's Annual Report, states are anticipating a number of challenges to adopting the common core standards, including the need for a high level of stakeholder input and support, the disruption to ongoing state efforts, and the possible misalignment of state and national standards.

Many states have committed to the effort in hopes of strengthening their applications for an over \$4 billion competitive grant called "Race to the Top," which will be awarded to states based on positive school reform.

States that have committed to the partnership of the Common Core State Standards Initiative include: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, and Wisconsin.



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# Texas debates history standards

*New standards may affect how history is taught nationwide*

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The Texas State Board of Education is considering new classroom standards that will determine how history is taught in Texas and possibly other states for the next decade.

On January 13, several students, parents, and lawmakers provided more than six hours of public testimony in an attempt to shape the way millions of Texas students learn about history. Some lobbied for more diversity in Texas' social studies curriculum, while some religious activists pressed for more emphasis on the founding fathers Christian ideology and how Christianity was involved in the formation of the United States.

Because Texas is one of the largest textbook markets in the nation, the debate over Texas' history and social studies standards could affect schools in many other states as well.

Board Chairman Gail Lowe said that civil-rights leader Cesar Chavez and Christmas will not be removed from the standards. State Rep. Norma Chavez, D-El Paso, cited the lack of Latinos in fifth-grade social studies curriculum and asked for the board to add Texas' first Mexican American female legislator Rep. Irma Rangel and Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez to the list of required reading. However, some suggested that too much emphasis was being placed on diversity in the new standards and that Texas students needed to learn that they were Americans, first and foremost. Additionally, several people asked the board to acknowledge Sikhism, the world's fifth-largest religion, in the new standards.

While some people asked the board to include different religions in the curriculum, others promoted the separation of church and state. A representative of the National Council of Jewish Women said the "culture wars" over religion and other controversial

topics was distracting the board and Texas schools from making sure students got a sound education with the revised standards.

Board members were scheduled to make a tentative vote on the new standards just days after the public hearing, but on Friday, January 15, the board chose to defer the first vote until March, when their final vote was originally scheduled. The final vote has been pushed to May.

The curriculum that the board chooses will set guidelines for teaching history and social studies to 4.8 million K-12 students for 10 years. The standards will be used to develop Texas' state tests, and they could affect other states if textbook publishers develop materials for the nation based on the new history and social studies curriculum that Texas adopts.

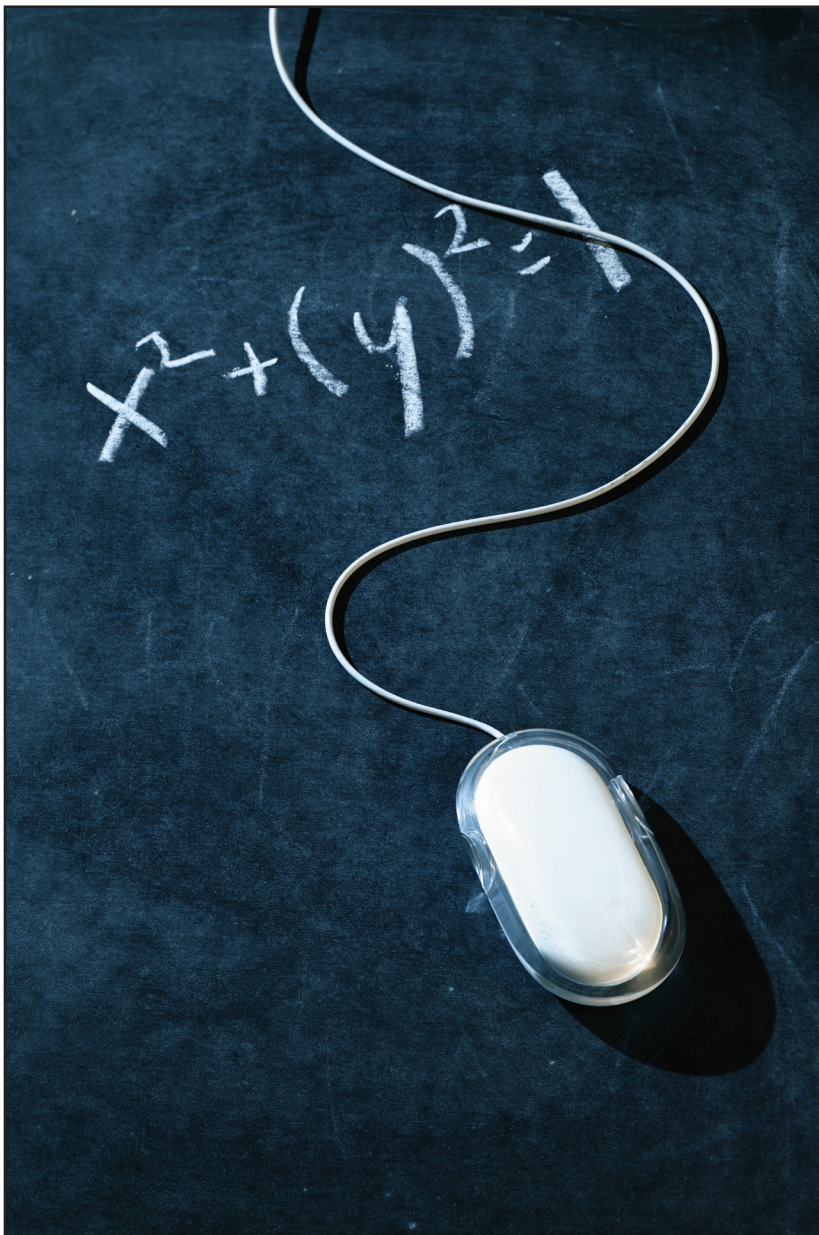


# National Superintendent of the Year finalists discuss effective education practices

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The four finalists of the National Superintendent of the Year competition held a panel discussion on January 12 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., to showcase their ideas on how school leaders and the Obama administration can bring about change in public schools.

Superintendent Elizabeth Molina Morgan of Washington County Public Schools, Maryland, said the Obama administration should give schools the tools, support, and guidance that they need to transform themselves without adding more federal oversight.



Walt Rulffes, superintendent of Clark County School District in Nevada agreed with Morgan. He said he's not looking to the president to change education, but he appreciates the Obama administration opening up opportunities for schools.

Jefferson County Public Schools, Colorado, Superintendent Cynthia Stevenson said technology has helped transform her district. She also hopes the federal government pursues an incentive-based system for ensuring teacher quality, as opposed to a consequential system. She said compensation models and tenure models must be changed, but they should be based around teacher values to create incentive and to reward good behavior.

Superintendent Joyce C. Levey of Tuscaloosa City Schools, Alabama, stressed the importance of utilizing the community in transforming schools. She said districts should look to families and talk to parents to ask them to become part of the solution.

The 2010 National Superintendent of the Year will be announced Feb. 11 at the American Association of School Administrators' National Conference on Education.

# OVERVIEW:

## State Standards Revision

### **COLORADO**

The Colorado State Board of Education adopted new academic content standards in December 2009. The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) will continue to be administered statewide in March 2010 and March 2011. The name of the Colorado tests is subject to change, but no announcement of a new name has been made.

The following is a projected timeline for the new Colorado assessment system:

- **January 2010**—Continue working on the assessment design
- **February 2010**—Create a draft of specifications for the new assessment system
- **March 2010**—Confirm specifications
- **December 2010**—Award contract to vendor(s)
- **January 2011**—Develop assessments
- **March 2012**—Next generation of state assessments are given to students

### **FLORIDA**

According to the Florida Department of Education, the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards have been finalized for Reading and Mathematics and student will be tested on them in April 2011. Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for all subjects, including Reading, Mathematics, Writing, and Science, will be tested in 2012. The name of the Florida state assessments is subject to change, but no announcement of a new name has been made.

### **OHIO**

The Ohio Achievement Test (OAT) has received a name change to the Ohio Achievement Assessment (OAA), but the standards tested will remain the same

until Ohio completes its revision of standards for Reading, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. Additionally, the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) will be replaced with end-of-course exams.

All subjects' standards are being revised by the state. The review and comment period for the first draft of the Social Studies and Science standards revision ended on January 22. Ohio Department of Education staff will review the feedback and use it to determine the next steps in the standards revision process. Once the review is complete, newly revised drafts will be posted for review.

Social Studies and Science academic content standards, which are currently being reworked for middle level grades, will be adopted by the State Board of Education by June 30. It will then be about three years before the standards become effective.

Ohio has put its review of Reading and Mathematics state standards on hold while waiting for the final draft of the proposed Common Core State Standards, which are now scheduled to be released for public review in mid-February.

After the new standards are set, the state plans to revise curriculum and assessments.

### **TEXAS**

Texas Commissioner of Education Robert Scott has announced that the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) will be replaced by a new testing system called the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR).

STAAR, pronounced the same as star, will be used for the 12 end-of-course assessments mandated

# OVERVIEW: State Standards Revision

by SB 1031 in 2007 and the new grade 3-8 assessments mandated by House Bill 3 in the 2009 legislative session.

The new tests will begin to be used in the 2011-2012 school year. Students graduating in the Class of 2015 will be the first students required to meet the end-of-course testing requirements, in addition to passing their classes, in order to earn their diplomas.

The Texas Education Agency reports that the new tests will be significantly more rigorous than previous tests. They will measure a student's performance and academic growth. The grade 3-8 STAAR tests in reading and mathematics, by law, must link from grade to grade to performance expectations for English III and Algebra II end-of-course exams.

Scott said the last TAKS-based school accountability ratings will be issued in 2011. Ratings will be suspended in 2012 while the new accountability system is developed, and a new state rating system will debut in 2013.

For more information, go to the Texas Education Agency website: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us>.

## WASHINGTON

Washington schools have begun preparing students for the new state assessments, the Measurements of Students Progress (MSP) in grades 3-8, and the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) in grade 10.

Students will be tested on the current Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) in Reading, Writing, and Science, as well as new Core Content and Performance Expectations for Mathematics.

The MSP will be shorter than its predecessor, the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), featuring shorter reading passages, fewer short-answer questions, and new completion items that require a one or two-word response.

Online testing is voluntary for students in grades 6-8 for reading and mathematics tests this spring 2010.

### Testing Dates for Spring 2010 MSP & HSPE

Grade	Subjects	Testing Dates
3	Math, Reading	May 12–May 28
4	Math, Reading Writing	May 12–May 28
5	Math, Reading Science	May 12–May 28
6	Math, Reading	May 12–May 28 (Online Tests: May 3–June 4)
7	Math, Reading Writing	May 12–May 28 (Online Tests: May 3–June 4)
8	Math, Reading Science	May 12–May 28 (Online Tests: May 3–June 4)
10	Math Reading, Writing Science	April 13 March 16-18 April 15