

MICHIGAN



Adopted Common Core State Standards in 2010

Michigan School Demographics

Total #Schools	3,658	
Total #Students	1,548,841	
Total #Black Students	283,322	18%
Total #Hispanic Students	104,907	7%
Total #Amer Ind/AK Native	11,297	1%
Total #Asian/Pac Islander	46,982	3%
Total #Two or More Races	43,998	3%
Total #White Students	1,058,335	68%
Total #Free and Reduced Lunch	726,974	47%
Total #ELL	72,811	5%
Total #Students with Disabilities	200,304	13%

The State Board of Education in Michigan adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics in 2010, and in 2014 the standards were renamed the Michigan K-12 Standards.

In 2010, the Michigan Department of Education (the Department) began to engage stakeholders, legislators, and the public much like they had with previous initiatives. They sent memos to various groups, providing them with basic information on what was happening with the change in the state's learning standards, moving from the previous Grade Level Content Expectations to the new, more rigorous college- and career-ready standards. They didn't anticipate any pushback with the new standards because previous

improvements to state standards had moved forward without issue.

Importance of Communications

The biggest challenge they faced in implementing the college- and career-ready standards was political. Department officials planned a four-year timeline for rolling out the new college- and career-ready standards, but spent two years of that time struggling with anti-Common Core groups that wanted to see the standards removed.

While the education community was solidly behind the new standards from the start, there were a number of other constituencies that were concerned about the Common Core and wanted to stop the implementation. In fact, when the Department's budget was passed in the summer of 2013, the legislation banned the Michigan Department of Education from spending any funds on implementing the Common Core. Three years after the new learning standards were adopted, the Department was forced to stop implementation efforts, or even speaking about the new standards.

"We had to shut down implementation for three months, that was very challenging," said Andrew Middlestead, Office of Standards and Assessments Director. "We found out that we couldn't just roll the information out, we needed to do more outreach with legislators and stakeholders."

The Department learned that they really needed to enhance communication with legislators and launched an education campaign focused on providing them with a better understanding of what exactly learning standards are and how the Common Core was developed. During the first half of 2014, the Department focused its efforts at one-on-one work with legislators. That was the turning point, when they were able to engage legislators and provide them with the facts on the standards.



Department staff were able to calm the concerns of lawmakers and to make them more comfortable with the college- and career-ready standards, which ultimately allowed the Department to move forward with implementation of the standards. They also benefitted from Governor Rick Snyder strongly, and publicly, supporting the new standards, as well.

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The Department has learned to be more strategic in communicating the changes to lawmakers and stakeholders. There was never an issue before, because Michigan always had its own standards. Now, as the Department looks at more collaborative work with other states, especially in standards and assessments, they are putting more time in with lawmakers, providing that education up front and ensuring that lawmakers get the information they need from the Department to make informed decisions.

Partnering with Professional Associations

Initially, the Department worked with the field to implement with resources and professional development. They developed crosswalks for the new standards and created the [Michigan Academic Standards Page](#) to provide educators with tools to help implement the standards. The Department also spent a lot of time engaging their professional associations and other groups to serve as a proxy for the Department. They partnered with these groups, providing them with messaging and talking points to help provide additional information in the schools. One project that stakeholders put together was the [Common Core Resources and Guides for K-12 Michigan Schools](#) website.

The website has training tools educators can use to better understand the standards. It is a collaboration of the Regional Education Media Center Association of Michigan and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators.

The shifts in Michigan classrooms are apparent. Middlestead says educators' focus has transitioned from just teaching the facts to inquiry and problem-solving, changing how content is being delivered to students. The change is allowing educators to build tests that are more engaging and exciting for students. The giant testing bubble sheets are becoming a thing of the past, and tests that grab a student's attention and require them to demonstrate knowledge are helping Michigan educators better prepare students to succeed after school.

"It is encouraging to me to see educators and students shift their thinking to deep thought and critical skills," said Middlestead. "We're catching up in a lot of ways to better prepare students for college and careers."



MICHIGAN - DISTRICT



Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

11 Local School Districts

7 Public School Academies

18 Private Schools

The Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD) provides services to all of the education agencies in Ottawa County, located along Lake Michigan in the central part of the state. Michigan's Intermediate School District provides programs and services to schools including special education, career and technical education, general education, and professional development.

Soon after Michigan adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and math, staff at the OAISD began going through the Grade Level Content Expectations and the new college- and career-ready standards. They began identifying gaps at grade levels and eliminating standards that no longer needed to be taught and incorporating the new standards to eliminate alignment gaps.

The staff at the OAISD held three half-day grade-specific professional development sessions three times per year. Districts in the county were allowed to send as many teachers as they wanted, allowing for conversation and collaboration across an entire district. It also allowed the OAISD to tailor instruction based

on the specific district needs. Initially they focused their teacher training on the strategies that were new under the Common Core, and now are more narrowly focusing on best teaching practices, along with the importance of formative assessments to drive instruction.

At the time of the initial rollout many districts were looking to adopt new math programs, so the staff began reviewing various programs for alignment. As districts have adopted the new programs, training is more focused on vertical and linear professional development for elementary and special education teachers, especially those that need to know the standards and content at various grade levels.

The majority of schools in Ottawa County uses the same math program, which has allowed for OAISD to tailor the professional learning opportunities to align with the curriculum. They refer to it as readiness training. Before they begin a sequence of units, they meet with teachers to discuss strategies. As teachers get ready to dig into new content, they receive professional development and have time to collaborate and process the new materials with their colleagues from across the district.

"We supported our teachers in that manner and the administration and superintendents supported our recommendations by allowing all their teachers to attend," said Robyn Decker, Mathematics Consultant. "We are approaching our biggest challenge now. We have proven the importance of professional development and yet funding is being depleted, therefore less of it can happen now."

Decker says it has been a challenge helping teachers understand what they might not know. She says using classroom videos has helped teachers to see how different their instruction



will look. Math-Talk in the classroom has been a challenge for some, simply because some teachers didn't know what they were supposed to be listening to. They are used to leading class discussions and not listening to them. The teachers are now asking questions of the students, and the students are providing explanations, which is resulting in a major classroom shift.

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"We are trying to help teachers understand that the ones doing the most talking are doing the most learning," said Decker. "The result is more student engagement."

The feedback the OAISD has received from professional development evaluations shows that the new standards and how they are being implemented are relevant to teachers. The OAISD has been able to do in-district trainings, videotaping teachers in action and sharing with colleagues to see best practices in action. The video recording allows other teachers to learn from their colleagues and also gives principals an opportunity to see the instructional shifts.

Decker says she would advise other districts to be intentional and have long term goals and that professional development for teachers is the "make it or break it" part of implementation, with a need to be relevant and collaborative.

"This has been amazing and a challenge," said Decker.

