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Whose Standards are These? A Chronological Glossary of Standards in P-12 Education

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Recommended Citation

Richard E. Day. "Whose Standards are These? A Chronological Glossary of Standards in P-12 Education" Stillwater, OK. Meet Me at the Commons: A Field Guide to the Common Core Standards in Higher Education (2015)

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Eastern Kentucky University

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2015

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/richard_day/68/

Chapter 2

Whose Standards Are These? A Brief Historical Timeline of the Development of the Common Core State Standards with References to Next General Science Standards, and the C3 Framework for Social Studies.

Richard Day

Introduction

The elementary and secondary education system was created in the early 1900s to serve a different time when people had different needs. Although the idea of human capital is as old as education itself, the concept of college readiness was hardly a concern when access to college was limited to a relatively few privileged individuals who had the wherewithal to attend. Illiteracy was seen as the state's educational problem. There was no concern that high school graduation rates were too low at a time when very few jobs required knowledge workers. Most students would grow up to work on the farm, in a factory, or a business and the dominant model of the school was as a sorting machine. If an individual student failed academically he was said to have wasted his opportunity, and the consequences were seen as the student's own fault. But while school failure might relegate a student to a life of manual labor, there were industrial jobs to be had. Indeed, one of the purposes of American high schools from 1920 to the 1940s was an attempt to remove youth from the labor market (Harrison & Klotter, 1997; Spring, 2010). School reform in the early 20th century was largely focused on the development the American high school (and somewhat separate efforts at vocational education, as with the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917) and were dominated by the prevailing progressive impulse to bring educated elites to the task of improving social conditions in the nation.

But by mid-century, nearly every state had compulsory attendance laws, teachers were required to earn a four-year degree, school administration had been removed from patronage-hungry trustees and placed in the hands of professionals, and most young people were earning the coveted high school diploma (Peterson, 1995). But the rise of the Cold War following World War II, and concurrent scientific advancements, brought a new urgency to the task of raising graduation standards. It began with a beep heard around the world.

- **1957: The Soviet Union launched Sputnik.** Despite the fact that the satellite, a 23-inch silver ball with whiskers, was relatively simple, compared to the satellites that would follow, its beeping radio signal quickly galvanized the nation. Not only had the Soviets beat the United States into space, but it became clear that they possessed the technology to launch nuclear bombs. The nation awoke to the need to improve the schools.
- **1958:** In response to the Soviet launch of Sputnik, the Eisenhower administration passed the **National Defense Education Act** which called for higher academic standards.
- **1959:** President Dwight D. Eisenhower suggested that national academic standards were needed (Layton, 2014).
- **1965:** The **Elementary and Secondary Education Act** was passed.
- **1966:** The **Coleman Report**, a massive study officially titled, Equality of Educational Opportunity, was commissioned by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The

700-page study created shock waves when it found that family background factors had a greater bearing on school performance than did school effects. The report's suggestion that African American students benefitted from non-segregated classrooms served as a catalyst for busing.

- **1968:** In *McInnis v. Shapiro*, **293 F. Supp. 327** (1968), the first fiscal equalization case to make it all the way to the U S Supreme Court, plaintiffs argued that under the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause, funds should be distributed based on educational need. But they were unable to help the court devise discoverable and manageable standards by which the court could determine when the Constitution is satisfied, and when it is violated. Plaintiffs began looking for a set of judicially manageable standards that could be used to determine whether a state had met its obligation to provide equitable schools for its children (Day, 2003).
- **1973:** The U. S. Supreme Court rejected 14th Amendment arguments altogether in *San Antonio Independent School District v Rodriguez*, **411 U. S. 1** (1973), creating a new wave of cases based on education clauses in state constitutions (Day, 2003).
- **1983:** President Ronald Reagan's National Commission on Education published its catalytic report, **A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform** (ANAR). The report was a response to the freewheeling reforms of the 1960s and early 1970s (which sought to free the children, challenge authority, and focus on social justice issues) and decried "**a rising tide of mediocrity**" in American high schools (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, para. 1). While the

report's statistics were disputed, the nation's attention was galvanized around the idea that American schools were failing and the era of school accountability was born. The Commission made findings in four areas: Content, Expectations, Time, and Teaching. In the area of content, the commission recommended an examination of curriculum standards in light of other advanced countries, and higher college admission standards. While shocking at the time, the vision of school reform as drawn by ANAR was mild compared to the 21st century vision that would develop around President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind eighteen years later. ANAR called on states and the nation to craft genuine curriculum standards and strengthen high school graduation standards. "Far from being a revolutionary document, the report was an impassioned plea to make our schools function better in their core mission as academic institutions and to make our education system live up to our nation's ideals" (Ravitch, 2010, pp. 22-26).

- **1985:** In Kentucky, an equally influential contribution to the policy dialogue had come from the Prichard Committee on Academic Excellence with the publication of *The Path to a Larger Life: Creating Kentucky's Educational Future*. The Prichard Committee saw "Education [as] a seamless web running from the earliest years through the highest levels of educational achievement" and called for a more direct connection between secondary and postsecondary education in the form of a set of curriculum standards that anchored a high school diploma to entry-level college standards (Prichard Committee, 1990, pp. xiii). Prichard pushed for the publication of school goals, the "identification of the competencies expected of all Kentucky high school graduates," measurement of "the mastery of these

competencies,” and assuring that a diploma is only awarded “when the student demonstrates that he or she has mastered the desired competencies...” (Prichard Committee, 1990, pp. 32).

- **1989: The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE)** published their highly influential report, **America’s choice: High skills or low wages!** which called for new set of national educational performance standards to be benchmarked to the highest educational standards in the world and met by American students by age 16. Many states began enacting policies recommended by NCEE (National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990).
- **1989: Kentucky** drew national attention when its Supreme Court declared the entire system of schools to be unconstitutional in ***Rose v Council for Better Education*, 790 S. W. 2d 186**, (1989). The Rose court accepted a standards-based rationale for determining whether the state had met its constitutional obligation, and that launched another wave of school reform litigation based on both *equity* and *adequacy* claims as expressed in state constitutions (Day, 2011).
- **1989: President George H. W. Bush invited the nation’s governors to an education summit**, where influential AFT President Albert Shanker urged them to begin creating a national system of high standards and rigorous assessments with real consequences. Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton took charge of the governors’ effort to draft **national goals for the year 2000**, a major policy shift away from keeping students in school without any real standards of achievement.

- **1990:** In response to the Rose decision, the **Kentucky General Assembly** passed the nation's most ambitious statewide school reform package, the **Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990** (KERA) (Day, 2011; Guskey & Oldham, 1997). Arguably, KERA's most powerful feature was the advent of a new kind of high-stakes accountability system based on student achievement outcomes (test scores). The old method of reporting only school-wide means concealed the substandard performance of as much as a third or more of the student population. The new data, disaggregated into subgroup performance, revealed those short-comings and changed the way educators talked about student success. The public reporting of student test score data by subgroups, along with the ranking of schools – a contribution of the news media - proved to be a powerful tool for driving change in this new era of *high-stakes* assessment. The promise of *equality of educational opportunity* that had guided American schools for a century was effectively replaced by a new goal – *equity of student achievement outcomes* (Day & Ewalt, 2014).
- **1993:** Separately, the National Research Council issued a set of **national science standards**, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science published its **Benchmarks for Science Literacy** (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Institute for Advanced Study publish ***The Opportunity Equation*** calling for a common set of science standards (National Research Council, 2012).
- **1994:** President Bill Clinton's effort to create voluntary national standards fell apart when history standards, which included social justice issues, were attacked by

conservative groups as the epitome of left-wing political correctness (in Ravitch, 2010, pp. 16-22). Clinton backed away from national standards and provided funding under his **Goals 2000** program for states to write their own standards, pick their own tests, and be accountable for achievement (Ravitch, 2010).

- **1996:** The **National Governor's Association**, in concert with corporate leaders, created **Achieve, Inc.**, an independent, bipartisan, nonprofit education reform organization based in Washington D. C. that focused its efforts on helping states raise academic standards and graduation requirements, and strengthen accountability (American Diploma Project, 2011).
- **2001:** Achieve sponsored a **National Education Summit** and joined with the Education Trust, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, and the National Alliance of Business to launch the **American Diploma Project** (ADP) to identify the *must-have* knowledge and skills most demanded by higher education and employers.
- **2001:** When President George W. Bush signed the bipartisan **No Child Left Behind Act** into law a new definition of school reform became nationalized; one characterized by accountability (Ravitch, 2010). The Act required states to test every child annually in Grades 3 – 8 in reading and math and report disaggregated test scores. This reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was built upon a standards-based reform whose roots were found in policy responses to *A Nation at Risk* (Kaestle, 2006). Nationally, there was concern over the “vast differences in educational expectations [that] existed across the states” (Conley, 2014, pp. 1).

- **2004:** The American Diploma Project (ADP) published, **Ready or not: Creating a high school diploma that counts** which described “specific content and skills in English and mathematics graduates must master by the time they leave high school if they expect to succeed in postsecondary education or high-performance, high-growth jobs.” The standards were said to be “considerably more rigorous than [the existing] high school standards” (American Diploma Project, 2007, pp. 7).
- **2005:** At the **National Education Summit on high schools** that year, governors from 45 states joined with business leaders and education officials to address a critical problem in American education – that too few students were graduating from high school prepared to meet the demands of college and careers in an increasingly competitive global economy. The result was ADP’s creation of a set of benchmarks that were proposed as anchors for other states’ high school standards-based assessments and graduation requirements. ADP identified an important convergence around the core knowledge and skills that both colleges and employers – within and beyond ADP states – require (American Diploma Project, 2004). The American Diploma Project set five goals and the criteria against which participating states were measured to determine if the goal had been met:
 - 1) **Common Standards** – The criteria are met if the standards writing process is guided by the expectations of the state’s postsecondary and business communities, if those communities verify that the resulting standards articulate the knowledge and skills required for success in college and the

- workplace, and if an external organization verifies the standards' alignment to college- and career-ready expectations (American Diploma Project, 2011).
- 2) **Graduation Requirements** – High school graduates...need to complete a challenging course of study in mathematics that includes the content typically taught through an Algebra II course (or its equivalent) and four years of grade-level English aligned with college- and career-ready standards (American Diploma Project, 2011).
 - 3) **Assessments** – States must have a component of their high school assessment system that measures students' mastery of college- and career-ready content in English and mathematics. The assessment must have credibility with postsecondary institutions and employers such that a certain score indicates readiness (American Diploma Project, 2011).
 - 4) **P-20 Data Systems** – States must have unique student identifiers to track each student through and beyond the K-12 system” and must have “overcome all barriers to matching” and have “the capacity to match longitudinal student-level records between K-12 and postsecondary, and matches these records at least annually (American Diploma Project, 2011).
 - 5) **Accountability Systems** – States must value and reward the number of students who earn a college- and career-ready diploma, score college-ready on high school assessments, and enter college without the need for remediation (American Diploma Project, 2011).
- **2006:** ACT's report, **Reading between the lines** argued that there are high costs (\$16 billion per year in lost productivity and remediation) associated with students

not being ready for college level reading and suggested that students were actually losing momentum during high school, that poor readers struggle, are frequently blocked from advanced work, that low literacy levels prevent mastery of other subjects, and is commonly cited as a reason for dropping out (ACT, 2006). NAEP reading results from 1971-2004 showed average reading scores for 9-year-olds were the highest on record but scores for 13-year-olds had risen only slightly since 1975. But reading scores for 17-year-olds had actually dropped five points between 1992-2004 (Perie, Moran, & Lutkus, 2005).

- **2007:** The **National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)** issued a report that established the lack of any continuity among the various state accountability systems. Under the provisions of the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), states were required to report annually the percentages of students achieving proficiency in reading and mathematics for grades 3 through 8. But the law allowed each state to select the tests and set the proficiency standards by which it determines whether the state has met its adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals. The NCES report revealed that proficiency standards varied so much from state to state that comparisons were impossible. Students in states where cut scores for proficiency had been set low appeared to be achieving at remarkable rates. But when the performance in these states was mapped against the estimate of students achieving a “proficient” rating on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) there were substantial difference found. The variations could be explained by differences in both content standards and student academic achievement from state to state, as well as from differences in the stringency of the standards adopted by the

states. As a result, there was no way to directly compare state proficiency standards in an environment where different tests and standards were used (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007, pp. 482).

- **November 2007:** The **Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO) policy forum** discussed the need for one set of shared academic standards.
- **2008:** Achieve report **Benchmarking for success: Ensuring U.S. students receive a world-class education** recommended states upgrade state standards by adopting a common core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts for grades K-12 to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be globally competitive (National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, & Achieve Inc., 2008).
- **July 2008:** With the release of **Out of many one: Toward rigorous Common Core Standards from the ground up**, CCSSO Executive Director, Gene Wilhoit argued that all students should graduate from high school prepared for the demands of postsecondary education, meaningful careers, and effective citizenship, and that a state-led effort is the fastest, most effective way to ensure that more students graduate from high school ready for college and career, a universally accepted goal. “ADP Core has become the common core as a byproduct of the alignment work in each of the states.” (Achieve, Inc., Press Release, July 31, 2008).
- **Summer 2008:** CCSSO’s Executive Director Gene Wilhoit and Student Achievement Partners Co-founder David Coleman convinced philanthropist Bill Gates to spend more than \$200 million advancing Common Core. Over the next two

years Gates would fund groups across the political spectrum and by June 2009, CCSS would be adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia (Layton, 2014).

- **December 2008:** NGA and ADP report urged states to create internationally benchmarked standards.
- **April 2009: NGA & CCSSO Summit in Chicago** called for states to support shared standards.
- **May 2009:** The **CCSS Initiative** development began on the college and career ready standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014).
- **July 2009:** Based on positive responses from the states **Common Core State Standards Writing Panels** began their work.
- **July 2009:** President Barack Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced \$4.35 billion in competitive **Race to the Top** (RTTT) grants. To be eligible, states had to adopt "internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the work place (U. S. Department of Education, 2009). But the support of the Obama administration for this hitherto voluntary national effort would create confusion as to whether CCSS was a *national* effort or a *federal* effort. When viewed as a federal effort, CCSS became ripe for politicization.

- **September 2009: 48 states (not Texas or Alaska), Washington, D. C., the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico** were counted as participating in the CCSS effort (National Governors Association, 2009).
- **January, 2010:** Responding to fears that Common Core might squeeze social studies out of the curriculum, an alliance of social studies organizations, including a state collaborative working under the CCSSO called the Social Studies Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction (SSACI), the National Council for the Social Studies, and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools (CMS) began an initiative to focus on the four state standards identified in the No Child Left Behind Act: Civics, Economics, Geography and History. The group expanded to include 15 organizations and formed the **Task Force of Professional Organizations to work with SSACI** (Swann & Griffin, 2013).
- **February 11, 2010: Kentucky adopted CCSS**, the first state to do so.
- **March 2010: First draft of CCSS was officially released.**
- **June 2, 2010:** The standards-development process was completed in approximately one year by Achieve, Inc. (Mathis, 2010). The **Common Core State Standards** (English Language Arts and Math) were finalized on June 2, 2010 (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2010).
- **July 2010: Kentucky launched Leadership Networks** for teacher, school, and district leaders around the implementation of the common core state standards within the context of highly effective teaching, learning, and assessment practices.

September 2, 2010: Education Secretary Arne Duncan awarded \$360 million to two multi-state consortia to develop standardized tests: The **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)** and The **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)** (U. S. Department of Education, 2010)

- **Fall 2010:** Work on state **social studies standards** began under the name **C3** (Swann & Griffin, 2013).
- **July 1, 2011:** The Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Institute for Advanced Study published ***A Framework for K-12 Science Education Standards: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas***, the guiding document for **Next Generation Science Standards**.
- **2011:** Achieve began managing the state-led development of the K-12 Next Generation Science Standards.
- **Summer 2011:** The Task Force of Professional Organizations and SSACI hired a writing team to begin work on C3 (Swann & Griffin, 2013).
- **Spring 2012:** **Kentucky assessed CCSS** in a new accountability system.
- **2013:** Nationally, with bipartisan support for a conservative proposal, and much evidence-based rationale, CCSS seemed to be on track for a relatively easy adoption among the 45 states that remained committed. The thornier issue appeared to be whether a set of national exams based on the CCSS could be agreed to, and would be affordable. But backlash against CCSS was surfacing in state legislatures in Alabama,

Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania Missouri, Georgia, South Dakota, and Kansas (Ujifusa, 2013).

- **April 9, 2013:** The final **Next Generation Science Standards were released.** The standards required evidence of three-dimensional learning (including practices, crosscutting concepts, and core ideas) and learning progressions outlined with standards at all grade levels, including engineering, and connections with common core standards (NGSS Lead States, 2013)
- **April 2013:** The **Republican National Committee surprised many educators when it passed a resolution bashing the standards.** In a letter to colleagues on the appropriations subcommittee that handles education funding, Sen. Charles Grassley (R, Iowa) calls CCSS an “inappropriate overreach to standardize and control the education of our children” (Strauss, 2013). Grassley asked Congress to cut off all future funds for CCSS and its assessments, and “restore state decision-making and accountability with respect to state academic content standards.” The letter said in part: “While the Common Core State Standards Initiative was initially billed as a voluntary effort between states, federal incentives have clouded the picture. Current federal law makes clear that the U.S. Department of Education may not be involved in setting specific content standards or determining the content of state assessments. Nevertheless, the selection criteria designed by the U.S. Department of Education for the Race to the Top Program provided that for a state to have any chance to compete for funding, it must commit to adopting a ‘common set of K-12 standards’ matching the description of the Common Core. The U.S.

Department of Education also made adoption of ‘college- and career-ready standards’ meeting the description of the Common Core a condition to receive a state waiver under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Race to the Top funds were also used to fund two consortiums to develop assessments aligned to the Common Core and the Department is now in the process of evaluating these assessments” (Grassley, 2013).

- **2013:** Once a public policy issue becomes politicized, it is difficult to accurately predict its future. But a **report from the Center on Education Policy (CEP)** found that while concern over funding for CCSS implementation was high, state education leaders said that the effort would go forward. In their report, Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: State Education Agencies Views on the Federal Role, CEP found that the majority of the 40 states responding to the survey, said that it is unlikely that their state would reverse, limit, or change its decision to adopt CCSS this year or next. Few state education leaders said that overcoming resistance to CCSS was a major challenge in their state (Renter, 2013).
- **September 17, 2013** (Constitution Day): The **C3 Framework was published online** by the National Council for the Social Studies.
- **June 2014:** By this time **43 States, the Department of Defense and several U. S. territories had adopted CCSS in ELA/literacy and Math** (CCSS Initiative, 2014).

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