

Michigan Senate Hearing on the Common Core Presentation by Irene Nordé, Ph.D.



Biography

Irene Nordé, Ph.D.

Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics, President
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Irene Nordé, PhD is the Executive Director for Detroit Public Schools (DPS), Office of Mathematics Education. Dr. Nordé is also the President of the Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics. She is a DPS graduate and holds degrees from Olivet College and Wayne State University with majors in Mathematics Education and Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Dr. Nordé has held several roles in education over the years i.e., CPA Executive Director for Curriculum and Instruction, DPS Mathematics Central Office Supervisor, DPS Mathematics Chairperson and high school mathematics teacher. She has observed hundreds of mathematics classrooms from kindergarten to grade 12. She is also a Past-President of the Detroit Area Council for Teachers of Mathematics. Dr. Nordé has taught as adjunct professor at Wayne State University Mathematics Content and Methods courses for undergraduate and graduate students and Wayne County Community College mathematics courses.

Dr. Nordé has organized as well as presented at numerous workshops, seminars, and conferences focused on building mathematics content and pedagogical knowledge and technology integration for K-12 mathematics teachers. She has authored several publications consisting of articles, position papers, and more that focus on research and issues in mathematics education e.g., *MCTM supports Common Core State Standards for Mathematics*, and *What does it mean to be mathematically proficient? Why four years of mathematics is the best option for high school graduates?* Under her leadership, MCTM will be publishing the Mathematics in Michigan Journal consisting of a collection of articles from educators, curriculum developers and researchers on the Common Core State Standards for Student Mathematical Practice. The journal is a professional resource for educators passionate about improving students' mathematics learning and performance.

The Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM) is the professional organization for Michigan mathematics educators, pre-Kindergarten through college. As an advocate for excellence in mathematics education for all children, our members also include interested community members, pre-service mathematics teachers, and retired educators. MCTM has a board of directors that represents geographical regions throughout the Great Lakes State of Michigan. MCTM provides public voice and leadership to support and advance high quality teaching and learning of mathematics.

Michigan educators support the Common Core.

My discussion today will be focused on the Common Core, textbook advantages, and online assessment readiness in Michigan and Detroit. First, MCTM voiced concerns regarding CCSS early on and requested time to review and conduct side-by-side comparisons between the Michigan and the common core standards. Why? Michigan educators wanted to examine the alignment within and across grades and courses. We warned about being too hasty to adopt without being thorough.

I am glad to report we were given the opportunity to assist in the development of the Crosswalk documents that were provided for Michigan educators consisting of the alignment between the Michigan and the Common Core standards. Then and only then, we could say without hesitation we support. Later, we published a Position Paper entitled *MCTM Supports Common Core and High Quality Curriculum*.

Textbook Advantages of Common Core

As a curriculum developer, we have always had to develop curriculum using books written to address the state standards for Texas, Florida and California. There are 20 states known as textbook adoption states in which Texas, Florida and California play a significant role. Textbook adoption states choose at the state level what textbooks can be used by all districts. These are the states that have the leverage to dictate what goes in books. For the first time being a part of something larger, these states will no longer set the standards for

what is taught and learned in the books that Michigan uses. This is a direct result of being a part of Forty-five states, the District of Columbia, and four territories, who have adopted the Common Core State Standards. Our books will reflect the college and career readiness standards of the forty-five states in which Michigan is a member.

Administration of Online Testing in Detroit Public Schools, 2012-2013

Under the leadership of Emergency Manager, Roy Roberts and Superintendent for Academics, Karen Ridgeway, Detroit Public Schools administered online testing for SY 2012-2013. Detroit Public Schools consist of a portfolio of schools, i.e., EAA, charter and centrally managed schools. Detroit has adopted the Common Core standards and has already experienced gains in achievement measured by the MEAP, MME and results from the District's Online Common Assessment program. The District's online common assessments are based on grade specific outcomes aligned to the Common Core administered in grades kindergarten through grade 12.

We understand the added value of measuring academic progress. The District started implementation in SY 2012-2013.

All academic core areas (i.e., mathematics, reading comprehension, science and social studies) are assessed using an **online test administration website**. Teachers and students receive their results in real time (seconds) after selecting the submit option. There is no wait time for results to be given to staff, parents and students. Educators can examine the results and make adjustments in their instruction based on the outcomes.

Michigan Districts have been providing online options for students.

This is why classroom teachers have shared with this committee that they are ready to move forward. We currently throughout the Great Lakes State have *blended learning environments* that already have computers, netbooks, iPads and other technology as an integral part of teaching, learning and assessment. Michigan schools have been engaged in assessing student learning on computers, netbooks, and iPads.

An Early Look at Smarter Balanced Assessments

Available nearly two years before the assessment system is implemented in the 2014-15 school year, the Smarter Balanced Practice Tests allow teachers, students, parents, and other interested parties to experience the features of online testing and gain insight into how Smarter Balanced will assess students' mastery of the Common Core. Michigan schools and districts have had the opportunity to also pilot the new assessment. Sample items have been made available through their website. *The Smarter Balanced Practice Tests provide an early look at sets of assessment questions aligned to the Common Core for grades 3–8 and 11 in both English language arts/literacy and mathematics. The release of the Practice Tests follows the Smarter Balanced Pilot Test, the first large-scale tryout of items and performance tasks, conducted February – May 2013.*

Michigan educators are ready and your largest school district in the state stands ready, too.



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MCTM supports Common Core State Standards and High Quality Curriculum

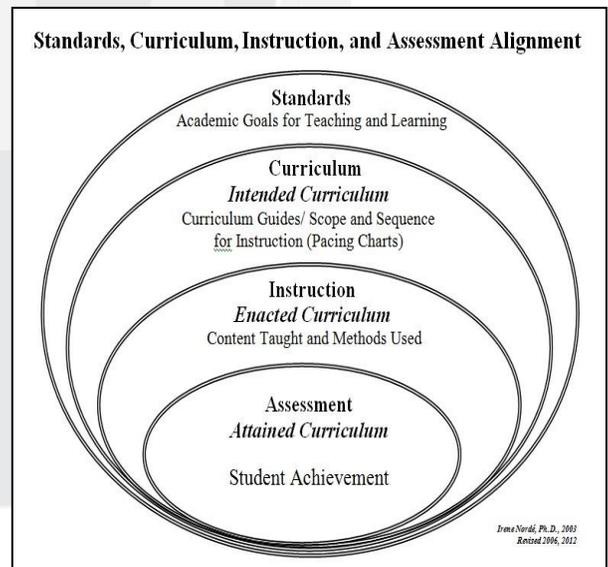
The Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM) supports the goals and intent of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics. The Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) is a *state-led effort* designed to improve educational outcomes for all students by developing a set of consistent, clear K-12 academic standards in English language arts and mathematics. In 2009 the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the coordinators of the initiative, convened a group of leading experts to develop the K-12 standards for mathematics. These standards are rigorous and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills needed to be prepared for both college and work in a global economy.

Why MCTM supports the adoption of the CCSSM?

American students are inadequately prepared for college and career. The United States ranks 31st out of 56 countries in mathematics skills, falling behind most industrialized nations; most states in the United States rank closer to developing countries than to developed countries in math education; thirteen developed countries have more than twice the percentage of advanced math students as does the United States, including Germany, Canada, the Czech Republic, Japan, Finland, and Austria.¹ ACT found that only 25% of the students will pass classes in all four areas tested with a C or better.²

Michigan educators understand that academic excellence is a product of high quality teaching and learning which takes place when standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment interrelate and reinforce each other. The interrelationship is key to the strength in its application. Academic standards are the benchmarks of quality and excellence in education such as the rigour of curricula and the difficulty of examinations.³

Standards spell out what students are expected to learn in each grade and each subject. Without standards, districts and schools do not have goals to aim for. By aligning what is taught in the classroom to the standards in each subject area, students, parents, teachers and



¹ Harvard Kennedy School (2010, Nov 10). Percentage of U.S. Students Achieving at Advanced Levels in Math Trails Most Industrialized Nations. Retrieved October 15, 2012, from <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/news-events/news/press-releases/pr-peterson-education-nov10>.

² Times (2012, August 24). ACT Score High School Students are not ready for college. Retrieved October 14, 2012, from <http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/08/24/act-scores-show-high-school-students-are-not-ready-for-college/>.

³ Academic standards defined by Adey and Shayer (1994) in *Really Raising Standards: Cognitive Intervention and Academic Achievement*.



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administrators know what teachers should be teaching, what students should be learning and what they will be assessed on. Standards offer a framework for curriculum development but not a scope and sequence for instruction. Standards are the *what* should be taught while curriculum and instruction are the *how* it will be taught. Standards define criterion for all students in terms of the minimum expectations for the lowest acceptable proficiency. Schools and districts can always do more.

MCTM does not advocate for an overreliance on standardized tests that have adversely impacted the offering of robust curriculum through the focus on test preparation in the past. Furthermore, curricula should challenge students beyond the rigor published in a textbook. Few textbooks contain rich mathematical tasks that stretch students mentally and require depth of conceptual understanding. Textbooks cannot be the sole determinant for what students should be taught and must learn.

The connection between standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment must be a strong relationship in order for the results to have validity and reliability. Curricula must be implemented with fidelity whether we are discussing the intended curriculum (operational plan for instruction), enacted curriculum (classroom practice) or the attained curriculum (content that has been learned). However, before a curriculum can be designed there must be an agreement of what students should know and be able to do. Standards are essential and important indicators that are used for the purpose of setting common goals. It establishes a floor level view on which districts and schools can build upon.

The Common Core State Standards for Mathematics consist of clear and consistent standards, however it is up to districts to define the curriculum in ways that address the needs of all students including English language learners, learners who struggle, advanced learners, and learners who need accommodations. MCTM supports fewer rigorous topics that allow for the development of deeper understandings. Curriculum, instruction and assessment tied to clearer standards will increase student achievement. Studies have shown that when curriculum allows teachers to cover select topics in greater depth, rather than numerous topics superficially, student achievement is improved.