



# Doc H's Blog

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## Common Core – Part 1

Over the last few weeks, there seems to have been a lot of misinformation being pushed by folks who are not supportive of more rigorous standards for students that will enable our high school graduates to compete on an international level and also achieve readiness for college and careers. These standards were developed by teachers, college professors, and national education organizations. The standards were called the [Common Core State Standards](#) and were eventually adopted by 45 states with Kentucky leading the way. I thought my blog this week and next might help provide accurate information from someone who was actually in attendance at many of the national meetings and also in attendance at all of the state meetings when decisions were being made to adopt the common core standards.

In Kentucky, the main driver for adopting the Common Core State Standards was [Senate Bill 1](#) passed in 2009 by an overwhelming vote of the Kentucky General Assembly. When I came to Kentucky to interview for the commissioner's position in late spring of 2009, the key questions from the Kentucky Board of Education related to Senate Bill 1 implementation. Once I was appointed commissioner, I worked closely with Sen. Ken Winters and Rep. Carl Rollins and other key legislators to form a Senate Bill 1 steering committee. Bob King, President of the Council on Postsecondary Education, and Phil Rogers, then Executive Director of the Professional Standards Board, were also key partners on the steering committee. From the very first meeting with the steering committee and with the Interim Joint Education Committee, it was very clear that Senate Bill 1 had been passed with the expectation that Kentucky would adopt the standards being developed by the [National Governor's Association](#) and the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#) which eventually became the Common Core State Standards. So, let me be clear. Anyone who says the General Assembly did not support or was not aware of the standards that were being developed and eventually approved by the Kentucky Board of Education is either not aware of the events that transpired in Kentucky or is trying to deceive the public.

Another myth that seems to be circulating is that the standards were developed in secret. Again, this statement is either made by someone who was not aware of the actual events or by someone purposefully trying to misinform the public. The standards were developed with significant input from Kentucky teachers and college professors. There were several iterations of the standards that were publicized for teacher and public feedback. Kentucky teachers were very positive about the standards and felt that their collective voices had been heard.

My final note for this week is the myth that this is a national curriculum and the federal government is trying to control what is taught to our children. This accusation is so ludicrous that it really does not deserve an explanation, however, let me make two key points. The standards were developed by teachers, college professors, and national education organizations by analyzing what the top countries in the world education rankings are expecting of students in order to ensure college/career readiness and international competitiveness of their high school graduates. From the summer of 2009 until present day, I have been present at all national meetings between National Governor's Association and Council of Chief State School Officers where the standards were reviewed and finalized. At no meeting was there anyone from the federal government dictating or even suggesting what should be included in the standards. My second point is that, the federal government is barred by law from dictating a national curriculum.

The Kentucky Board of Education and the Kentucky Department of Education are barred by state law from requiring a certain curriculum. All curriculum decisions rest with schools and districts.

Next week, I will review the actual steps taken in Kentucky to ensure teachers, parents, and communities were prepared for the standards -- which in Kentucky are called the [Kentucky Core Academic Standards](#). Kentucky teachers actually took the Common Core State Standards and interpreted the standards for teacher use.

The ultimate measure of whatever standards we implement per Senate Bill 1 will be the percentage of students who graduate from our high schools that are college- and career-ready. Since the implementation of the Kentucky Core Academic Standards in our state, we have moved from 34 percent of our graduates who are college/career- ready to 47 percent of our graduates reaching college- and career-readiness.

Kentucky citizens may want to know the real facts rather than listen to a bunch of misinformation from people who either are not aware of the real events or who are attempting to deceive the public. A key question might be to ask these folks what their agenda really is. Our agenda at the Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky Board of Education is to help more children graduate with the skills needed to be successful in college and careers.

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