Common Core:
What should we like and dislike? And what don't we need to worry about …

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Presentation Outline

1. What are CCSS?
2. Why should we be pleased with the AR adoption of the Common Core?
3. Why should we be hesitant about the AR adoption of the Common Core?
4. What are some criticisms that we don't need to worry about …

Clarity: Common Core

1. Standards, not curriculum
2. Developed by NGA, incentivized by DOE
3. Continuation of State Standards that currently exist
4. Not actually a very big shift (jump up one level of aggregation)

Example: ELA Grade 4

AR Curriculum Frameworks R.9.4.12

Summarize content of selection, identifying important ideas and providing details for each important idea

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

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Example: **Math** Grade 6

CCSS.Math. Content.6.EE.A.3

Apply the properties of operations to generate equivalent expressions.

AR Curriculum Frameworks NO.2.6.2

Apply the distributive property of multiplication over addition to simplify computations with whole numbers

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Potential Pluses

1. Potentially improved rigor
2. Cross-State
   - cross-state comparison
   - competitiveness of our students
3. Computer-based exams
4. Many teachers and schools are well on way to adopting
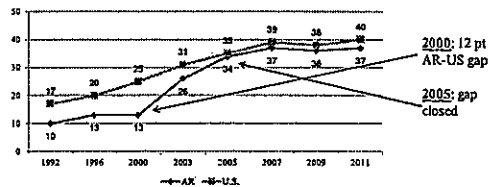
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Rigorous Standards

1. Recent *Education Next* study found AR proficiency cutoffs 43rd in USA:
   - Great difference between proficiency rate on AR state exams and on national NAEP exams
   - Dropping since 2003

2. Fordham Foundation (2010) report *(clarity / specificity and content/rigor)* found:
   - ELA: CCS = B+ AR = D
   - Math: CCS = A- AR = C
   - In each case, AR standards "clearly inferior"

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ACTAAP Standards => Growth

Figure 7: Percent Proficient or Advanced in NAEP 4th Grade Math Assessments for Arkansas and the United States, 1992-2011

2000: 12 pt AR-US gap

2005: gap closed

ANALYZING THE 2011 NAEP RESULTS: WHERE DOES ARKANSAS STAND NOW?
Misty Newcomb Gary Ritter (March 7, 2012)
http://www.uark.edu/ua/oep/AER/9_1_NAEP_2011_Analysis.pdf

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Cross State Information

1. We can compare school and district results across states; in the absence of national standards and exam, NAEP only allowed state-vs.-state comparisons
2. College-level admissions: AR students may be more able to compete at a national-level because held to same educational standards as students across country
3. Theoretical support:
   - Today: "Hot Springs" math ≈ "Heber Springs" math
   - CCS: "New Jersey" math = "New Mexico" math
   - Can add state specific details if needed (15%)

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Other Possible Benefits

1. Computer-based exams (PARCC) can return results more quickly so that teachers can use
   - This gives incentives for state and districts to make the proper technology investments

2. Many teachers and schools are well on way to adopting
   - The reception has generally been positive
   - Many of the curricular aspects are quite similar to current standards

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Potential Concerns with CCSS

1. Not as rigorous as advertised
   - Dr. Stotsky - ELA
   - Dr. Milligram -- Math
2. Concern with placing one body in charge of many state standards
3. Implementation Challenges are Numerous

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Standards Overseen by One Body

1. Entities that develop standards are not subject to same democratic accountability
2. More clarity is needed on the ability of states to modify the standards.
3. Even if we like these standards, what if next set of standards from organization are less good?
4. Could we set similarly high standards without central group?

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Implementation Challenges

1. Perhaps need more time for accountability
2. Currently in a difficult transition with students taught to CCS standards and tested via benchmark exams
3. Challenges with broadband needs associated with computer-based testing
4. Challenges with computers and classroom space

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What we shouldn't worry about …

In my view, several of the issues discussed over the past many hours of testimony are:
- Not problems that are associated with Common Core, or …
- Not problems at all.

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What we shouldn't worry about …

1. *CCS represents excessive regulation and over-reach by centralized group.*

- In fact, standards were created by a relatively small group and then OK'ed by states, not unlike the way state standards generally are developed in most states (like AR)

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What we shouldn't worry about …

2. CCS will lead to breaches of data privacy.

- No one is asking for "extra information" (religious affiliation, exact income, voter status)
- Very difficult to get permission to access to de-identified student data

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What we shouldn't worry about …

3. CCS are being adopted without any track record of proven success.

- This is the case with most of what we do in schools (and in most institutions for that matter)
- There's also no proof that whatever else we might do instead of CCS would work
- There was no proof ahead of time that ACTAAP standards would work.
- But .. good caution that we should evaluate.

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What we shouldn't worry about …

4. CCS will lead to lots of standardized testing that is hurting our kids.

- No evidence that we will have more testing.
- No justification that state tests are too burdensome
- How else do we answer legislative questions about effectiveness?
- At most, students spend 12 hours/yr (2 school days) taking standardized tests
  - http://www.uark.edu/ua/oep/policy_briefs/2008/Time_Spent_on_Testing.pdf

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What we shouldn't worry about ...

5. *With CCS, our teachers will have to force our students to abandon traditional algorithms and engage in "fuzzy math."*

- Common Core does not tell teachers how to teach
- Some of these anecdotes are occurring, and did occur well before CCS
- Agree that we should certainly not force students to forego traditional problem solving strategies

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Questions?

Thank you for your inviting the input of the OEP.

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