

Common Core State Standards

DPI Sifts and Winnows Through Common Core Contentions

SESSION: *Common Core State Standards: What You Need to Know*

Presenter: Emilie Amundson, CCSS team member, Department of Public Instruction



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Department of Public Instruction

During 2009 and 2010, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) worked methodically on efforts to create new standards for mathematics and English/language arts. The 2011-13 biennial budget reviewed by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Walker in the summer of 2011 directed the DPI to adopt student assessments that “measure mastery of the common core standards.”

Three years later, the Common Core State Standards have been criticized by the far political right and left (for different reasons), been subjected to months of legislative scrutiny and discredited by critics because, allegedly, interested parties had been left on the sidelines while the standards were developed and adopted. Regardless of the backstory, in the final analysis it is important to understand what will be expected of students for future assessments.

Emilie Amundson, the DPI’s Common Core State Standards team director, walked attendees through the process used by the DPI, as well as key elements in the standards — a sort of

Common Core State Standards 101.

Amundson explained that in 2008 the Council of Chief State School Officers and the bipartisan National Governor’s Association brought together teachers, content experts, researchers and others to begin crafting new standards. Amundson spent much of her discussion helping people understand what the standards are and what they are not.

“The Common Core State Standards do not mandate a particular book. We have never had a book list in Wisconsin — that’s a local decision. We are a proud local control state.” Amundson emphasized this won’t change with the new standards. She said CCSS provided suggested books related to text complexity, but not specific books for content.

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Amundson echoed what Rep. Steve Kestell (R-Elkhart Lake), chairman of the Assembly Education

Committee told a gathering of WASB members in November — over 90 percent of information coming into his office related to Common Core is erroneous.

“We had to fight back against a lot of myths being propagated — and it was an active misleading of the facts,” she said.

Amundson gave kudos to local education partners.

“We had unbelievable support from the school districts in Wisconsin — unparalleled!” She suggested that, “The misinformation campaign against the Common Core State Standards is best fought at the local level.”

Commenting on the WASB Delegate Assembly’s overwhelming passage of a resolution supporting the Common Core, Amundson said, “We really want to thank our partners.”

For more resources related to the Common Core State Standards, visit DPI’s website www.dpi.gov. Click on “Common Core” in the “Quick Links” section of the department’s homepage. ■

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