



IB and the Common Core State Standards

In the US, over 40 states have adopted and are currently implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes and the CCSS share certain aspects in common. This fact sheet was developed in response to frequently asked questions from IB parents.

In what respects are the IB and the CCSS similar?

- The IB and the CCSS are both focused on setting high standards that seek to challenge and engage students, promote deeper learning and develop critical-thinking skills. In fact, the IB standards were one of five international benchmarks used to compare against the CCSS in an influential study conducted by the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC).
- CCSS and the IB share a mutual emphasis on career and college readiness. Neither the IB nor the CCSS is a curriculum. A curriculum is the detailed plan for day-to-day teaching. Curriculum decisions, including which textbooks and programmes to use, are made by the school or district, not by the IB or the CCSS.

How do the IB programmes and the CCSS differ?

- The effectiveness of IB programmes has been validated by research and by over 40 years of practical experience teaching and assessing student work.
- IB standards and practices are not learning outcomes; they provide a set of criteria that set out specific approaches to teaching and learning. They focus on how learning occurs.
- The CCSS are learning outcomes that specify skills and knowledge that must be acquired by grade level. The CCSS focus on what outcomes should be reached.
- The IB emphasizes student-centred learning, focusing on the social, emotional and academic needs of the whole child.
- An IB education incorporates an understanding and appreciation of other cultures and points of view, and a world language competency—precisely the skills in demand by the current global economy.

Will IB programmes change at all in states that have adopted the CCSS?

- IB programmes are taught in schools in over 140 countries in a wide variety of national and state education systems. They are flexible enough to allow for local adaptations in order to meet all US federal, state and local requirements.

I heard that the CCSS is a federal programme. What about the IB?

- The nation's governors and education commissioners, through their representative organizations, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), led the development of the CCSS.
- The IB in the US is brought on by schools and increasingly by school districts at the behest of local boards of education. The CCSS was brought on by governors of states and adopted via a legislative process.
 - CCSS is not a federal program; however, for states to become eligible for a share of the US\$4.35 billion Race to the Top (RTTT) funds, states had to promise that they would fully adopt a set of common college- and career-ready standards supplemented with only 15% of their own standards.

Will my child's IB school have difficulty implementing the CCSS because of the IB programme?

- Feedback from teachers tells us that IB World Schools have an advantage when implementing the CCSS. CCSS represents a shift in teaching from covering a wide breadth of content to a greater focus on depth of understanding and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning. These very characteristics define what makes an IB education so effective.
- IB teachers receive specialized training to teach in IB classrooms that prepares them to incorporate the CCSS into their instruction.

Will students in IB programmes still have to take CCSS tests?

- Yes, if the school is part of a district that is committed to undertake the CCSS assessments.
- Most students in US public school systems already take state-mandated tests. IB students will continue to take IB exams and state-mandated exams, the same as in the past.

Additional resources

For more information about IB and the CCSS:

<http://www.ibo.org/en/about-the-ib/the-ib-by-region/ib-americas/connecting-ib-to-the-common-core/>

To learn more about an IB education in-depth go to this link:

<http://ibo.org/globalassets/digital-toolkit/brochures/what-is-an-ib-education-en.pdf>

You can find samples of IB examinations here:

<http://www.ibo.org/en/programmes/diploma-programme/sample-exam-papers/>

The Common Core State Standards Initiative:

www.corestandards.org/

Common Core State Assessments: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC):

<http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc>

www.smarterbalanced.org/

If your questions aren't answered here, please contact us at: <https://ibanswers.ibo.org/> or call us on 301-202-3025.