



Martha Reichrath, Ph.D.
Georgia Department of Education
Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE
Atlanta, GA 30334

January 9, 2015

RE: Common Core Georgia Performance Standards

Dr. Reichrath,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed changes to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). The Georgia Chamber of Commerce has long supported efforts to ensure that students throughout our state are taught to rigorous academic standards that will prepare them for post-secondary education or the workplace and that will allow our state to remain a globally competitive location for business. The proposed revisions to the Mathematics (Math) and English Language Arts (ELA) standards are relatively minor, do not weaken the existing standards, and indeed represent an improvement to the existing standards. Most importantly, these standards were developed by a team of experts who reside in Georgia and have experience with instruction with Georgia K-12 students and teachers.

In response to criticism and confusion regarding the Common Core, Governor Nathan Deal asked the State Board of Education to conduct a thorough review, which commenced this summer and consisted of public hearings and extensive surveys. The general public, parents, teachers, education policy experts, and elected officials have all had ample opportunities to provide feedback about revising specific standards within CCGPS. Throughout this process, the Georgia Chamber asked state leaders to continue to improve CCGPS, but not to move backwards or lower the bar.

The Georgia Chamber believes that those individuals closest to classroom instruction are in an ideal position to help develop, review, revise, implement, and support these improved higher standards. During the implementation of CCGPS, it became apparent that there were legitimate areas of concern from teachers, curriculum experts, and parents. It is entirely appropriate for these individuals to provide feedback to policy-makers in order to improve the standards. The feedback from classroom teachers time and again has been to stop overhauling

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the standards every few years, and to allow these professionals the opportunity to teach the new standards. The feedback from classroom teachers has also included a desire for expanded opportunities for professional development specifically focused on adapting any new standards to classroom instruction.

The review process undertaken by the State Board of Education and the Department of Education has been a thorough and exhaustive analysis of both the Math and ELA Standards within CCGPS. A committee of teachers, college professors, and curriculum specialists reviewed the feedback received from hundreds of participants in order to develop specific recommendations, which are now being considered by the State Board of Education. The process by which the Department of Education has engaged the general public, Regional Education Service Agencies, and classroom teachers to gather feedback on CCGPS should serve as the model for future review of standards. The result of that process has not only improved the Math and ELA standards, but also will help future efforts to assist teachers as standards are revised.

The Georgia Chamber commends Governor Deal, the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, and the legislative leaders who supported this thorough review. We believe that the proposed revisions are a positive step forward. We look forward to continuing to provide feedback from the business community as state leaders work to improve Georgia's K-12 education system.

Regards,



Chris Clark
President & CEO
Georgia Chamber of Commerce



Susan Bell
Managing Partner, EY Atlanta
Chair, Education & Workforce Policy

Cc: Georgia Board of Education
State Schools Superintendent Richard Woods