

Repeal and Replace Common Core and Related Tests Bill

SB 826 & HB 4555

Frequently Asked Questions

April 2016

1. Schools have just finished preparing for tests meeting CCSS's. Now, after just 2 years, they will have to prepare for pre-2009 Massachusetts standards & tests. Is this fair to students & teachers?

The M-Step assessment has not been considered successful and the legislature is discussing the possibility of eliminating it. Additionally, it is not validated and has no basis for trend analysis. The MA assessment is validated and has years of data from MA which can provide a basis for analysis. This legislation puts forward a long term plan and a transition plan to get us back on the right track, with excellence in education as its main goal, and with the proper people and local control back in the driver's seat. The transition plan and the related timing will create as little disruption as possible to Michigan schools.

2. If local school boards are given the option of selecting their own standards, then how can the State reasonably assess?

A state assessment can assess one's education if it is based on solid and proven education standards and methods. The standards and assessment need to be validated and proven predictive. Since we will have control over these standards, since they will be our own MI standards, we can work to improve them and change them. We are the owners and we don't have to answer to outside interests. This also opens doors to the classical education model being used in schools, which if shown to work, could then be adopted in other schools. Every school should always be aiming for best practices in education that best serve each student.

3. If local school boards choose standards other than pre-2009 Massachusetts standards, will the State be able to accredit or rate them? On what criteria?

As long as the standards that are selected are appropriate, not-biased, and based on proven education methods, the state would be able to accredit the schools. If a school district has inappropriate, bias, or poor standards that are based on unproven methods, then they would not be able to be accredited. Student achievement on the state assessment would be an indicator of school performance.

4. Is this legislation inappropriately taking authority away from the State Board of Education?

The legislation respects the authority of the State Board of Education, while opening up the process. More eyes accommodated by the legislative process will help make sure we can change standards and come out with the best solution for student's short term and long term.

5. Should this legislation include more protections for preventing onerous testing, school and teacher evaluation or accountability, or data protections for children?

A fair accountability system for teachers, students and schools must be based on sound standards based on evidence of successful achievement. This legislation puts Michigan back into the "proven best practices" standards. There are sections in the bill that provide protection for children's data, as well as language that addresses the parent's right to educate their children without negative repercussions for their choices in doing so. Separate legislation could be developed to expand on these items if needed.

6. Why use the interim standards for 5 years? What if great standards are developed in two years?

One reason is because schools need time to make this transition. Having proven standards in place for a while will show a trend of success with them. Schools have had so many changes for so many years that moving quickly would be a burden to the school staff and with superior standards standing in the gap – there is no reason to rush.

7. What if a local district chooses to continue using Common Core? Are districts required to use the MA standards for 5 years, after which they can then choose?

Local school districts can choose to use Common Core education practices. MA standards are proven to be superior. The state test will be based on the MA standards

8. Is the legislature constitutionally permitted to establish educational standards?

Some would argue that the legislature can't be this deeply involved in the standards process because that's an executive function under the control of the state board. Constitutionally, the legislature is required to provide oversight to education and has done so with specific legislation like the Michigan Merit Curriculum. This is an extension of that authority.

9. MA spends more per pupil on education than Michigan, which is why their achievement is higher. If MI adopts MA standards, won't we need to increase per pupil funding?

In absolute dollars, MA has spent an average of \$3500 more per pupil since 2008, however the cost of living in MA is higher than in Michigan. When adjusted for cost of living, MA has spent an average of \$475 more per pupil. A more detailed analysis could indicate where this additional spending is focused.

10. It has been asserted that The Common Core standards and MA standards are 94% the same. Isn't this difference insignificant and thus changing unnecessary?

The determination of standards difference and similarity is a complex process. No reference was provided with this assertion, so it could not be verified as true. However, some differences are critical. For example, many of the Common Core standards in the K-3 range are developmentally inappropriate. Placing unreasonable expectations on children causes stress which is what many teachers and parents are reporting. None of the CC standards are validated or benchmarked, but all the MA standards are. There is no evidence that the CC assessments are accurate in terms of determining if students have learned what they need to know to move on to the next level. There is significant evidence that the MA assessments are in fact predictive for future learning success. Differences matter.

11. Do we have to pay MA for their standards & assessments?

No, this material is available on the internet for free. MI will need to contract with a testing firm to develop the materials every year, score the tests and share the results.