

The California Collaborative on District Reform

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June 16, 2011

Dear Collaborative Members and Guests,

We are looking forward to seeing all of you in Los Angeles on June 30 and July 1 for the sixteenth convening of the California Collaborative on District Reform. The meeting, which will be co-sponsored by the California Office to Reform Education (CORE), will pick up where our last gathering in Garden Grove left off—on the role of assessment in moving instructional practice and student learning. We will do so by focusing on the CORE districts' efforts to jointly develop and use assessments aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as a key component of in their roll-out of the CCSS. We thank Los Angeles Unified School District for offering to host this meeting, entitled *Digging Into the Standards: Assessment and the Common Core*.

Over the course of the meeting, we will have the opportunity to explore assessment as both a means of exemplifying for educators the knowledge and skills called for by the new standards and as a means for monitoring student progress and determining the appropriate instructional response. We will consider the implications of our discussions for the work of CORE and other districts as they approach the implementation of the CCSS.

Overview of Meeting Agenda

The meeting agenda is located behind the first tab in this briefing binder, with the readings organized by session and topic in the tabs that follow. As is customary, we have included an annotated list of the readings for each discussion directly behind the relevant tab and have indicated which are priority readings to peruse before the meeting. The binder also includes additional background readings, supplemented with materials included only on the enclosed CD, that we hope you find useful both before and after the meeting. (As a reminder, we also include a full list of the literature and resources in this binder on our website—www.cacollaborative.org.)

We will begin the first day by discussing *why* districts are focusing on assessment and task development as part of their CCSS implementation strategy and how this focus relates to CORE's strategic direction. We will place these efforts in the context of the resources being developed through several other local and collaborative efforts, including the two national assessment consortia, PARCC and SMARTER Balanced. (As you are probably all aware, California just became a governing member in SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium and so we will pay particular attention to the plans of this group.)

In the afternoon, we will work together to unpack sample standards and associated tasks in both mathematics and English/language arts in order to understand the kinds of tasks that exemplify the standards by providing opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know and can do relative to those standards. One goal of this session is to explore how assessment development and use can be helpful for teachers' efforts to understand the nature of the standards and their implications

The California Collaborative on District Reform (www.cacollaborative.org) joins researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and funders in ongoing, evidence-based dialogue and collaborative activity to improve instruction and student learning for all students in California's urban school systems.

for instruction. We are excited that Jason Zimba, who joined us last June for our first meeting about the CCSS, will be able to join us again for these discussions.

On the second day, we will turn our attention the concept of learning progressions (also called learning trajectories) as the basis for understanding student progress toward the standards, assessing that progress, and responding in instructionally appropriate and effective ways. Learning progressions, which are significant and recognizable clusters of concepts and connections in students' thinking, play a critical role not only in the grade-by-grade structure of the standards themselves but also in the day-to-day formative assessment practices of classroom teachers. Margaret Heritage and Fritz Moesher will lead us in a discussion and activity about how learning progressions can inform both instruction and assessment and what this might mean for implementing the CCSS.

As usual, there will also be opportunities for networking and collective relaxation at the group dinner on Thursday evening.

If you have any questions regarding the meeting logistics, please don't hesitate to contact Suzanne Claussen at 650.843.8192 or sclaussen@air.org. I look forward to seeing you all at the end of the month!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jennifer O'Day".

Jennifer O'Day, Collaborative Chair
American Institutes for Research