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At SERVE Center UNC, Greensboro

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Summary

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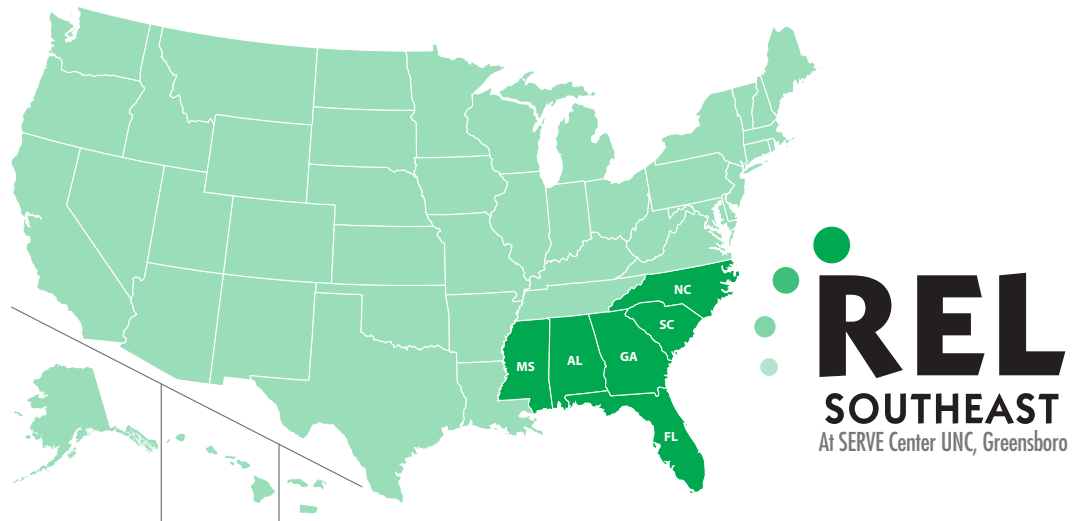## Summary

January 2012

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Issues & Answers is an ongoing series of reports from short-term Fast Response Projects conducted by the regional educational laboratories on current education issues of importance at local, state, and regional levels. Fast Response Project topics change to reflect new issues, as identified through lab outreach and requests for assistance from policymakers and educators at state and local levels and from communities, businesses, parents, families, and youth. All Issues & Answers reports meet Institute of Education Sciences standards for scientifically valid research.

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Anderson, K, Harrison, T., and Lewis, K. (2012). *Plans to adopt and implement Common Core State Standards in the Southeast Region states* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2012–No. 136). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs.

This report is available on the regional educational laboratory website at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs.

Summary

REL 2012–No. 136

Plans to adopt and implement Common Core State Standards in the Southeast Region states

Based on interviews with state officials in the six Southeast Region states, this study describes state processes for adopting the Common Core State Standards (a common set of expectations across states for what students are expected to know in English language arts and math) and plans for implementing the common standards and aligning state assessment systems to them.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort to establish a common set of expectations across states for what K–12 students are expected to know and be able to do in English language arts and math (Common Core State Standards Initiative n.d. a). It is coordinated through the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The Common Core State Standards were released in June 2010. As of November 2011, 45 states (including all six Southeast Region states), the District of Columbia, and two territories had adopted the standards and were planning to implement them and align assessments to them (Common Core State Standards Initiative n.d. b).

This report responds to a request from state education agencies in the six Southeast Region states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina) for information about what other Southeast Region states are doing in their adoption, implementation, and assessment alignment processes. The report is timely for states in other regions as well, since these activities are happening across the country.

This study used interviews with state education agency staff in the Southeast Region to examine three research questions about the Common Core State Standards:

- What processes did the six Southeast Region states use for adopting the common standards?

- What is (or will be) the process for state implementation of the common standards?

- How are the states planning to address the alignment of their assessment programs to the common standards?

The following are the key findings:

- Respondents in all six states reported that one step in the adoption process was state education agency review of the common standards to determine the extent of alignment between the common standards

and existing state standards and to gather information to disseminate to the public.

- Four states (Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina) did not adopt any state-specific standards in addition to the common standards. Alabama and Georgia did.

- Respondents in Florida and Mississippi reported that teachers in their state will begin teaching under the common standards in 2011/12. Respondents in Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina reported that teachers will begin doing so in 2012/13. The respondent in South Carolina reported that teachers will begin doing so in 2013/14. States varied in how they will roll out their teaching timeline—all at once for grades K–12 or phased in over time in different grades.

- All six states reported a general implementation process moving from developing curriculum and instruction resources to training educators to teaching the standards in classrooms. All six states have dedicated 2011/12 to educator training. Some states also plan to develop resources and materials in 2011/12, and Florida and Mississippi will also begin classroom implementation. All six implementation timelines call for teaching the common standards before preparing new assessments aligned with them (expected in 2014/15).

- All six states reported that state education agency staff are training educators on the new common standards, with three states (Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina)

also involving staff at regional professional development agencies. All six state respondents reported that their states will use a combination of approaches to deliver training, including face-to-face training for school staff, online sessions for district staff and teachers, and train-the-trainer sessions for district teams, who in turn will train teachers.

- In four states (Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina), respondents reported that monitoring standards implementation will occur at the local level. North Carolina will tie monitoring of local implementation of the common standards to the statewide evaluation of implementation of the state's Race to the Top initiative. At the time of data collection, Alabama had not yet decided whether the state education agency would monitor local implementation.

- All six respondents reported that their state will follow the timeline and process of the assessment consortium to which they belong. Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina are members of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers consortium; Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina are members of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. Alabama and South Carolina, members of both consortia, have not yet decided which consortium's assessments they will use.

The findings of this study are limited by the small number of interviews conducted—one per state—and cannot be generalized beyond the study period since state-level plans,

policies, and procedures are continually evolving and may have been updated since the completion of data collection. The report is nevertheless useful, because it examines the six states' ongoing work on the Common Core State Standards—itself a new and evolving reform initiative nationwide. Education leaders and policymakers can benefit from learning how other states are approaching this work.

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References

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (n.d. a). *Frequently asked questions (FAQ).* Retrieved July 13, 2010, from www.corestandards.org/frequently-asked-questions.

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (n.d. b). *In the states.* Retrieved July 13, 2010, from www.corestandards.org/in-the-states.