

## Sample Message for Constituent Contacts

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led, bi-partisan effort coordinated by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and business leaders to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce.

These standards provide appropriate benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live. They define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education so that they will graduate from high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The standards:

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Are clear about what a student should know and be able to do at every grade level;
- Allow for innovation in instruction and materials;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards; and
- Are evidence-based.

Forty-six states have voluntarily adopted these Math and English standards. Montana was the last state to adopt because we wanted to make sure that the standards were right for Montana students and we were raising the bar for student achievement. Montana educators, school administrators, and business leaders compared these standards to our previous standards. The new standards are higher and clearer than our state's previous standards and will help ensure that Montana students graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

Montana is the only state to integrate learning about the distinct and unique heritage and contributions of American Indians into the Common Core standards. While these standards are more rigorous and set clear benchmarks for what students should know and be able to do at every grade level, they also allow for greater flexibility and innovation in instructional practices. As with all of the content standards in Montana, local school boards and educators will continue to develop curriculum and select textbooks and materials for their community.

**Montana teachers** support these standards because they have the freedom to determine the best curriculum, materials, and resources to use to meet the standards. Teachers can develop their own unique lesson plans and instructional practices to ensure student success.

**Montana parents** support the standards because they provide a clear understanding of what their children are expected to learn at every grade level. Parents are assured that their children are learning at the same high level as students in any other state in the nation. The United States Department of Defense Schools support the Common Core Standards because families

that must move from state to state or country to country will not have to fear sacrificing their children's education.

**Montana business leaders** support the standards because employers want a high-skilled work force to meet the demands of a rapidly changing economy. Montana businesses must be able to effectively compete with businesses across the nation and around the globe. Companies as varied as State Farm Insurance, Boeing, Harley Davidson, and Exxon Mobil support the Common Core Standards. In fact, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is a strong supporter of these standards.

For more information on the Montana Common Core Standards, including specific materials for parents, please go to the MCCS page on the OPI website:

<http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/montCAS/MCCS/index.php>.