



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

April 29, 2015

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

I want to let you know that I have changed the way I refer to our new academic standards in speeches and written materials. I am no longer using the term "Common Core." Instead, I am calling them the new "California Standards."

As you know, I am a strong supporter of the new standards in English language arts and mathematics and believe they are going a long way toward updating our education system to meet the challenges of the 21st century. But I believe the term "Common Core" has outlived its usefulness.

Why? It confuses some people and has polarized people in other parts of the country.

But more importantly, it doesn't tell the whole story. It only includes English language arts and math. By contrast, the term "California Standards" covers, in addition to English and math, the Next Generation Science Standards, English Language Development Standards and, in two years, the new social science standards.

Referring to new California Standards as "rigorous" lets people know we are upgrading virtually all of the key subjects California students need to succeed in 21st century careers and college. In addition, it conveys the context for these standards, making it clear they have been developed and reviewed by California educators.

The term and brand "Common Core" will be with us for some time, but I want to share my thinking about how I describe some of the exciting changes we are implementing together to transform education in California. Working together as a team, we are creating the new "California Way" and building on the huge assets present in our students, teachers, and districts statewide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Torlakson".

Tom Torlakson

TT:ba

2015-03236