

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

Timothy M. Kaine
Governor

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Contact: Gordon Hickey
Phone: (804) 225-4260
Cell Phone: (804) 291-8977
Internet: www.governor.virginia.gov

Charles Pyle/DOE
(804) 371-2420
www.doe.virginia.gov

**GOVERNOR KAINE COMMITS VIRGINIA TO
STATE-LED EFFORT TO RAISE ENGLISH AND
MATHEMATICS STANDARDS NATIONWIDE**

*~ Multi-state initiative will develop voluntary standards to prepare K-12
students to be competitive in global economy ~*

RICHMOND – Governor Timothy M. Kaine and Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright signed a memorandum of agreement today that commits the Commonwealth to participation in the “State Common Core Standards” initiative, a state-led process to develop K-12 English and mathematics standards that meet international academic expectations. The multi-state initiative will produce a voluntary “common core” of rigorous academic standards to prepare students for postsecondary education and the 21st-century workplace. The effort is being coordinated by the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

“This process respects state sovereignty and our federal system while recognizing that America’s future prosperity hinges on the ability of our public schools to produce young men and women who can hold their own with their brightest peers in the developed and developing worlds,” said Governor Kaine.

“Virginia remains committed to the Standards of Learning (SOL),” said Dr. Wright, who has played a key role since the mid-1990s in the development and enhancement of the Commonwealth’s nationally recognized accountability system. “But commitment to the SOL program does not preclude contributing to an effort to raise standards nationwide and learning from the process.”

The multi-state agreement calls for the development of a core set of high school standards in English-language arts and mathematics by late summer of 2009, and elementary and middle school standards in both subjects by the end of 2009. Signing the memorandum of agreement to participate in the development process does not bind a state to adopting the common core. Individual states will make decisions about the appropriate use of the standards after they are completed.

The process builds on the success of other multi-state efforts to align high school standards with postsecondary and workplace expectations. For example, 35 states – including Virginia – have participated in the American Diploma Project to ensure that their academic standards cover content and skills widely recognized as essential to college and workplace readiness.

The NGA Center for Best Practices and CCSSO will involve Achieve, Inc.—the bipartisan education reform group that sponsored the American Diploma Project—as well as ACT and the College Board in the standards-drafting process, with participating states providing review and input at each step of the process.

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