

INTRODUCTION

Common Core State Standards and North Carolina Essential Standards

In 2011, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) provided an intense, blended professional development effort for district-level and charter school teams as part of the *Accountability Curriculum and Reform Effort (ACRE)*, and *Race to the Top (RttT)*. This effort focused on the transition from the current *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* to the new *Common Core State Standards* (for English Language Arts and Mathematics) and *North Carolina Essential Standards* (for Arts Education, English Language Development, Healthful Living, Information and Technology, Science, Social Studies, and World Languages).

New standards for all content areas will be implemented during the 2012-13 school year, with the exception of the *English Language Development Standards*, which were implemented in 2008, and *Information and Technology Essential Standards*, which will be implemented in 2011-12. *Information and Technology Essential Standards* are to be delivered by classroom teachers in all curriculum areas and grade levels. It is the expectation that all of the above standards are interwoven into professional development and implementation of all content areas.

On-going Blended Professional Development

As North Carolina transitions to the implementation of the *Common Core State Standards* and *North Carolina Essential Standards*, ongoing professional development is necessary for all educators. Over the next several years, the NCDPI and local districts and charter schools will develop and implement a systemic, blended approach for effective professional development that is:

- high-quality,
- job-embedded,
- research-driven,
- data-informed, and
- aligned to the Race to the Top initiatives.

A blended approach to professional development addresses the needs of districts, charter schools, and individual educators through the use of face-to-face sessions and online resources, such as learning modules or webinars.