# National Standards for US Schools Gain Support From States

This is the VOA Special English Education Report.

Americans have never had ..... education standards. Goals for what ..... schools should teach are set by state and local school boards. Their members are often elected.

But some Americans say the lack of national standards is wrong in a competitive ..... economy. Former president Bill Clinton said it was as if somehow school boards "could legislate differences in algebra or ..... or reading."

President George W. Bush and Congress expanded federal intervention. His education law, still in effect, required states to show yearly ..... in student learning as measured by the states' own tests.

Now, the Obama administration supports what ..... known as the Common Core State Standards. These ..... developed in a year-long process led by state governors and chief state school officers. Texas and Alaska were the only states not to ..... part.

The standards are in two subject areas, English-language arts and ..... They establish goals for each ..... from kindergarten through grade twelve. The aim is for students to finish high school fully prepared for college and careers.

The developers considered standards in other countries, along with almost one hundred thousand public comments.

One way the Education Department is trying to persuade states is with ..... States are competing to share in almost three and a half billion dollars as part of a school reform competition. They ..... earn extra points in the Race to the Top if they approve the standards by August second.

States are trying to ..... from the recession. There are concerns that some could accept the standards and then lack the money to follow them.

The final standards were released June second. A new report says about half the states have ..... them already.

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute is an education group in Washington. It says the standards are clearer and stronger than ..... used in three-fourths of the states. But the ..... also found that existing English standards are "clearly stronger" in California, Indiana and the District of Columbia.

States that approve the new standards have a right to add up to fifteen ..... of their own.

In California, the State Board of Education plans to vote on August second to accept or ..... a new set of standards. These are based ..... on the common core, but also existing California standards.

And that's the VOA Special English Education Report, written by Avi Arditti. I'm Bob Doughty.

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