



Public Comments

Submitted on behalf of the  
Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry

---

## **Common Core Standards**

Before the  
**Pennsylvania Board of Education**

Presented by:

Jim Willshier  
Manager, Chamber Relations & Special Projects  
The Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry

Harrisburg, PA  
June 30, 2010

417 Walnut Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1902  
717.720.5471 phone  
<http://www.pachamber.org>

Good morning. My name is Jim Willshier, and I am the Manager of Chamber Relations and Special Projects for the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry.

The PA Chamber is the largest broad-based business advocacy organization in the state, representing nearly 50 percent of the private workforce. The PA Chamber represents businesses of all sizes and across all industry sectors. On behalf of the thousands of PA Chamber member businesses, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed common core academic standards that Pennsylvania is considering adopting.

By adopting these standards, Pennsylvania will be consistent with other states that have already done so. This nationwide consistency will enable higher education institutions and employers to have a better understanding of the core issues students should have learned in public schools, better preparing students for the educational and vocational opportunities they will face after secondary school.

The systematic improvement to the sub-disciplines of mathematics is well-structured and more defined than the current standards.

In our observation, these standards are more aligned with college expectations than technical education or career ready students. Mathematics is well structured for moving on to higher education and helps to lay down the foundation for courses in engineering, physics, and others requiring such skills. Proficiency in math is also necessary for students to be successful upon entering the workforce after high school graduation or pursuing a career and technical education after high school.

While these core academic standards represent forward progress, more development is necessary in the near future to build upon this foundation. The proposed standards include statistics but do not include other math and science skills, for example calculus or physics. Academic standards should also include foreign languages within language arts. These are some of the skills increasingly desired by employers, and will be necessary for students to attain in order to be more successful as they advance into higher education and professional careers. These skills are also essential if Pennsylvania students are to successfully compete with students from other nations.

Under language arts, core standards must also ensure that students master written and verbal communications. The ability to effectively and articulately communicate with coworkers, clients and customers is an essential career skill that the majority of employers today need and desire.

In closing, all graduating Pennsylvania students should have confidence in their knowledge of mathematics and English reading comprehension; and should possess strong communication and critical thinking skills. The development of core academic standards will help to accomplish these goals as a student progresses through their academic career and ultimately their chosen profession.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our membership's feedback.