



Criticism 1: The CCSSM standards are “developmentally inappropriate”

Some critics argue that the CCSSM are “developmentally inappropriate,” meaning they are too challenging for the age of the student.

- This is perhaps the most widespread content-focused critique of the CCSSM (Supovitz, Daly, & del Fresno, 2015). It usually refers to standards in the early grades.
- Critics often base their argument in the developmental stage theories of Jean Piaget (1936). While disputed (Baillargeon & DeVos, 1991; Dasen, 1994; Keating, 1979; Vygotsky, 1978), Piaget’s theories have been influential for decades.
- When the CCSSM were first released, an early childhood researcher (Main, 2012) expressed concern that a kindergarten standard about place value (K.NBT.1) was inappropriate.
- A mathematician expressed doubt that 1st grade students understand enough about area to divide a figure into equal parts (Milgram, 2010).

Criticism 2: The CCSSM standards do not work for students with learning disabilities

Some critics argue that the needs of students with learning disabilities were not reflected in the standards, and schools will not be able to give these students the support they need to meet the standards.

- The CCSSM sets the same goals and expectations for all students and are not differentiated for students with learning disabilities.

Criticism 3: The CCSSM standards set learning goals too low

Some critics argue that some CCSSM standards set goals that do not keep pace with those in other countries or underestimate the abilities of students.

- A mathematician claimed that “a large number of the arithmetic and operations, as well as the place value standards are one, two or even more years behind the corresponding standards for many if not all the high achieving countries” (Milgram, 2010, p. 1). The same mathematician argued that the expectation that students should fluently add and subtract within 20, a CCSSM 2nd grade standard, should instead be a 1st grade standard (Milgram, 2010).
- Although not specific to the CCSSM, some researchers warn that focusing on age-level targets instead of a continuous progression of development can lead to underestimating the abilities of students (Lehrer, 2009).

Critique 4: The CCSSM lacks a clear high school path to postsecondary STEM

Some critics argue that the high school CCSSM standards do not prepare students for rigorous STEM programs at selective universities.

- The high school CCSSM standards do not include calculus or other courses above Algebra 2, which are the gateway course for STEM majors and careers (Bressoud, 2014; Milgram / FreedomProject Media, 2013).
- The high school CCSSM are not divided by grade level or course, and relies on an appendix to guide teachers and schools in the creation and sequencing of curriculum (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).
- By a CCSSM author’s own admission, the CCSSM prepares students for entrance into a community college (Milgram / FreedomProject Media, 2013).



- The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics has recognized a need to improve high school mathematics and has created a task force to do this work (Larson, 2016; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2016).

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