



## 21<sup>st</sup> Century State Collaborative Prospectus

*“We keep talking about teaching ‘new’ skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as if it were still years away ... the reality is that the future is here and we either meet these challenges or we explain to our children why we failed them.”*

*~ G. Thomas Houlihan, Executive Director—CCSSO*

*“We owe our students nothing less than a top quality 21st Century education ... we can do it, we look forward to doing it.”*

*~ Steven L. Paine, West Virginia State Superintendent of Schools*

This prospectus outlines a new CCSSO strategic initiative on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills attainment that will be instrumental in “defining the parameters of teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (Aim #1). Currently two (2) states (West Virginia and North Carolina) have adopted new skills and content as part of their relationship with the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (P21) and are redefining the context for learning as it relates to attaining new skills for the new century. Several other states are interested in the progress these two states will be making and/or have similar initiatives underway in their own states and are interested in learning from their colleagues; creating products and tools to meet the challenges of educating students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; and establishing a community of practice to support and encourage each other in the development of new and innovative teaching practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

This initiative springs out of CCSSOs partnership with P21 and will seek to assist states as they define new standards of learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, develop assessments of those skills, and provide the professional development for teachers necessary to deliver these skills at the classroom level. In addition, this initiative has and will continue to attract the interest, both professional and financial, of businesses that will be the beneficiary of better trained, better equipped, and better prepared graduates.

This initiative goes beyond what some traditionally think of as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics or STEM) and includes those “soft skills” (e.g., self-directed learning, problem solving, critical thinking, etc.) which are equally important components of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning. As the education community responds to the request from business and higher education to produce graduates ready to step into the “real world” of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, whether through continuing education at the high school level or directly into the workforce, these skills – both STEM and interpersonal – will be the core competencies of the workers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF INITIATIVE

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There has been accelerating interest in defining and supporting 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning over the past several years, following the creation of the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

- 26 different businesses, many of them high tech, computer, and education related companies (Apple, Microsoft, Dell, Intel, Pearson Education, etc.) are now members of the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

- Two states, West Virginia and North Carolina have become pioneer states in the development and implementation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills into the content and curriculum and several others including Wisconsin, Kansas, and Texas are considering such membership.

There has also been considerable movement among states — including Arizona (Governor Napoletano’s school technology platform), Delaware (2015 Initiative), and Iowa (Governor Vilsack’s New Skills for a New Century campaign) — in developing frameworks that advance and support the notion of increased skills attainment for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; clearly as states continue to look for resources in their efforts there is a role for CCSSO to play.

This initiative would meet the need to bring clarity to the field in the context of defining the skills, content, and context for 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning; determining how to assess these skills; and providing a means for the development and dissemination of new methods of professional development that make the attainment of 21<sup>st</sup> Century knowledge not simply an add on, but the delivery vehicle for all learning. CCSSO would coordinate the currently diverse efforts into a coherent and sustained movement in support of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, real world student learning and achievement. It envisions a practitioner-based research and implementation agenda that would create products and services for immediate results and benefits in the short term and a sustained effort that will continue to add to the knowledge base of chiefs, deputies, and SEA staff in this growing field of education reform.

## RESEARCH AND IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA

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The Council is uniquely qualified to define and achieve this agenda by using two of its leading “best practice” models for effective, results-oriented, and customer-focused technical assistance and professional development:

- 1) the SCASS model that is highly successful in bringing together members and national experts in carrying out cutting-edge research and providing technical assistance and leadership opportunities crafted to meet members needs; and
- 2) the Chiefs Forum model that has become one of the preferred professional development delivery vehicles for providing new information to chiefs (and their key staff) through a tightly targeted agenda; relevant speakers, researchers, and guest experts; and business and professional partners to share the latest research and information on topics critical to advancing teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The following represents staffs initial thoughts on possible agenda items in the areas of research, technical assistance and capacity building, professional and leadership development

### **Research:**

- Provide an up-to-date literature review of key happenings in the field of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, assessment, and professional development
- Conduct research on the impact of statewide efforts to include 21<sup>st</sup> Century content into the curriculum and its impact on student achievement; graduation and retention rates; college entrance; and other relevant indicators
- Establish clear standards, guidance, and definitions for what constitutes 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and content
- Identify “best practice” features of 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning
- Benchmark “best practice” high-quality professional development opportunities for educators

### **Technical Assistance and Capacity Building:**

- Develop products and services as defined by member needs, including interactive training videos and DVDs, train-the-trainer programs, and professional development district packages
- Develop a model toolkit that can be used by Chiefs and SEAs in describing the need for 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills that includes, sample PSAs, PowerPoint’s, op-ed materials, brochures, DVD’s and other promotional materials to be used by chiefs and their key staff in the discussion of why these skills are necessary

- Develop a web-based community of practice and knowledge sharing portal for communication, coordination, and collaboration among members, using state-of-the-art technology

**Leadership and Professional Development Opportunities:**

- Provide an ongoing collaborative community of state members, experts, and partners through the new SCASS.21, supported by NET LC or other state-of-the-art collaborative online software
- Convene the SCASS.21 meetings to identify and carry-out a research and technical assistance agenda, including workshops and training by leading experts in 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills attainment, assessment, and professional development

**Policy:**

- Work closely with the Chiefs, Aim Team One (the team responsible for achieving the Aim of teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century), and the Advocacy Team to identify policy implications and needs from the SCASS.21 initiative that are relevant for the larger national discussion on teaching and learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Develop findings and recommendations for incorporating 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills attainment, assessment, and professional development in other appropriate CCSSO supported efforts.

**COSTS AND FEES**

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As with all SCASS projects, the fees for SCASS.21 will cover state travel costs for up to two (2) members of a state team for three (3) meetings annually – additional members of a state team may attend at their own expense. Often times SCASS projects will be able to attract additional grant or private funding to assist in the development and publication of consortium products and toolkits. Associate memberships are available on a limited basis to select university, business, or other partners – these associate members pay a membership as well as their own travel and lodging expenses to all SCASS meetings.

Typical annual fees for SCASS projects are \$15,000 per state team which cover travel, meetings, and staff support of the project.

## Preliminary Timeline

The following is a timeline designed to maximize the respective missions, expertise, strengths, and resources of the CCSSO SCASS and Large-Scale Assessment Conference models in bringing them together in a unique and powerful new way for the Council (this timeline is approximate at this point and will be finalized after the “charter” states are established).

Activity	Date
Form CCSSO Leadership Team (Scott Montgomery and Michael DiMaggio)	February <b>2006</b>
Consult outside “experts” (P21 Board Meeting, WIN business partnership, etc.) and gauge interest of business community in participating, and assisting in the funding of this state consortium.	March-April
Obtain approval for continued SCASS.21 efforts from CCSSO Board of Directors	April
Begin to identify and recruit Project Advisory Group from states, business partners, and other qualified experts.	May - June
Initiate project with Advisory Group via conference call	May (TBD)
Convene Advisory Group if needed via follow up conference calls	June (TBD)
Develop and disseminate a series of communications to maximize awareness and interest among CCSSO members and the business community	July
Build and recruit “charter” membership for 2006-2007 SCASS Program Year	June-September
Start partnership with NET LC to develop SCASS.21 Community of Practice, Knowledge Management, and other state of the art development tools	September-October
Convene first SCASS.21 meeting, develop work plan, and form subgroups	November
Convene second SCASS.21 meeting (report on work plan progress), in conjunction with other SCASS projects at CCSSO MEGA-SCASS	February <b>2007</b>
Convene third SCASS.21 meeting in conjunction with Large-Scale Assessment Conference (report on work plan progress)	June
Report on SCASS.21 work progress and deliverables to CCSSO Board of Directors	July
Build and recruit larger membership for 2007-2008 Program Year	June-September

## SUMMARY

This unique initiative seeks to establish CCSSO as a visionary leader in the discipline of defining the parameters of teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Aim #1). In addition to the immediate value-add of enabling states to use SCASS.21 as a powerful tool to drive teaching and learning reforms in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century this initiative will also:

- Provide a community of practice for states who have already adopted, or are considering adopting, a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills platform;
- Will serve to inform and enrich the decision making process regarding 21<sup>st</sup> Century content standards, assessment, and professional development;
- Allow states to interact with state colleagues and business professionals to assure that the skills needed in the real world are translated through this initiative; and
- Provide professional development and technical assistance to Chiefs, deputies, and SEA staff in the area of 21<sup>st</sup> Century curriculum and assessment design.