

A Compendium of Research on the Common Core State Standards: **Implementation**

Center on Education Policy
Updated February 2015



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UPDATED FEBRUARY 10, 2015

Center on Education Policy

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About This Compendium

In the spring and fall of 2013, the Center on Education Policy (CEP) convened two meetings of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to discuss ideas for a more relevant and coordinated research agenda on the Common Core State Standards. Participants in these meetings identified several needs and made a number of thoughtful suggestions. Many agreed there was a need for a synthesis of existing research on the CCSS and their implementation and impact.

To help meet this need, CEP has put together this compendium, which very briefly summarizes the published research on many different aspects of the CCSS. Our objective was to create an accessible and readable overview of current research that can inform implementation, policy discussions, and the development of future research on the Common Core. Therefore, we have intentionally limited the description for each study to one page that summarizes its focus, methodology, and key findings and includes a URL, where available, or a citation. The compendium is designed to be a living document and will be updated on a rolling basis—this is the second iteration.

Criteria for Including Studies

Although the compendium includes peer-reviewed research published in academic journals and similar outlets, it is not limited to these types of studies. Also included are studies published by government entities, independent organizations, research universities, and individual researchers and graduate students that provide useful information to practitioners, policymakers, and scholars.

To be included in the compendium, each study had to contain the following components:

- An articulated methodology for data collection and analysis so that others could see how the research was conducted
- An empirical approach (derived from observation or experience)
- A specific focus on the CCSS in math or English (research focused on other education issues that have implications for the CCSS was not included)
- A publication date before December 2014, our cutoff for collecting information for the compendium

We recognize that some important research with a bearing on the CCSS may have been omitted, but we wanted to set clear criteria that would yield a manageable number of the most relevant studies. In addition, the studies that are included are complex; to keep the individual summaries concise and practical, we limited the discussion to a few priority areas. We do not purport to have produced a comprehensive summary of all possible research on the CCSS, but we think this is a good starting point. The compendium was first issued in August 2014. This February 2015 update adds new studies to the compendium that were published after May 2015 and other Common Core research that has come to our attention. If you know about research on the CCSS that should be considered for inclusion in an update, please notify us at CEP by email at cep-dc@cep-dc.org.

Verification of Information

Since these are one-page summaries of longer studies that required us to prioritize the information to be included, we felt it was important to contact each study's author (or the lead author for studies with multiple authors). The authors were contacted by email and asked to provide feedback on the summary of their report.

The compendium includes studies from 55 different authors, including reports from CEP. Of the 55 authors contacted to review our summary, 40 responded, for a response rate of 73%. If a respondent made changes or suggestions to the content of our summary, their comments were considered and incorporated into the original draft (in some cases with minor editing).

We are most grateful to the authors who reviewed and verified the summaries for their studies.

How to Use the Compendium

Studies are categorized by topic then presented alphabetically by author within each topic. Studies that fit into multiple categories have been placed in both categories, so there is some duplication. For an alphabetical list of research studies by author and their assigned categories, please see Appendix A.

Please note the information on the studies contained in this compendium does not reflect all of the findings or topics included in a particular study but rather provides is a very brief overview. For example, we have not included a discussion of the limitations addressed in each study report. If you find the summary of a study compelling, we strongly encourage you to use the URL provided to read the study in its entirety.

American Association of School Administrators (2014)

Common Core and Other State Standards: Superintendents Feel Optimism, Concern and Lack of Support

Focus

The purpose of this study was to gauge how the implementation of College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) was progressing across the country.

Methods

AASA surveyed superintendents and administrators across the country and received 525 responses from across 48 states.

Key Findings

- **A large majority of respondents came from states that had decided to adopt a set of CCRS and have started to implement the new standards.** At the time of the survey, 55% of respondents had been implementing their CCRS for two or more years; 7% intended to start implementation in the 2014-15 school year.
- **Superintendents felt directly involved in the implementation of CCRS.** District leaders felt most directly involved in professional development, with 69% directly involved and only 2% not involved. They felt less involved in community support (61% directly involved) and teaching materials (47% directly involved).
- **The majority of districts had administered CCRS-aligned assessments but with difficulty.** Over 60% of districts had started using tests that were aligned to the new standards; of those districts, 60% reported experiencing some or great difficulty with the testing process, while 10% said the testing process was going smoothly.
- **Over 70% of responding districts received state funding for CCRS implementation.** More than half (52%) of responding districts received both state and federal funding for implementation, 22% received state support only, 3% received federal support only, and 22% received neither. Most respondents say state-level support was inadequate.
- **Respondents said that the CCRS are supported by the community.** Over 50% of respondents agreed that the broader community supported the standards. Seventy-eight percent of the participants agreed that the education community supported the CCRS.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/AASA_CCSS_Report.pdf

Center on Education Policy (2014a)

Common Core State Standards in 2014: Districts' Perceptions, Progress, and Challenges

Focus

The purpose of this study was to learn more about districts' strategies and policies for and challenges with implementing the Common Core State Standards.

Methods

In the spring of 2014, researchers surveyed school district officials drawn from a nationally representative sample of districts across the country that were located in states that had adopted the Common Core. Sixty-five percent of the districts contacted responded to the survey.

Key Findings

- **About 90% of school district leaders in CCSS-adopting states agreed that the CCSS are more rigorous than their own state's previous standards in mathematics and English language arts.** This number was a substantial increase from the previous study (see Center on Education Policy, 2011).
- **More than 80% of district leaders agreed that implementing the CCSS will require new or substantially revised curriculum materials and new instructional practices.** This figure was also a substantial increase from the previous study.
- **In more than half of the districts in CCSS-adopting states, leaders do not expect their district to complete important milestones of CCSS implementation until school year 2014-15 or later.**
- **The majority of districts are facing major or minor challenges in implementing the CCSS.** These challenges include providing professional development, securing CCSS-aligned curricula, preparing for CCSS-aligned assessments among others.
- **In 2014, greater proportions of districts indicated that they were experiencing resistance to the Common Core from inside and outside the K-12 education system than reported such resistance in 2011.**
- **Most districts have collaborated with at least one other entity on implementing the CCSS.** Higher proportions of districts reported partnering with other districts in their state or their state education agency than reported partnering with nonprofits, institutions of higher education, or school districts in other states.
- **The majority of responding districts have received some assistance from their state education agencies with one or more aspects of CCSS implementation.** Of those that received assistance, about one-third found it to be very helpful and about two-thirds found it to be somewhat helpful.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=440>

Center on Education Policy (2014b)

Common Core State Standards in 2014: Curriculum and Professional Development at the District Level

Focus

The purpose of this study was to learn more about districts' strategies and policies for, and challenges with, obtaining or developing CCSS-aligned curricula and providing CCSS-aligned professional development services for teachers and principals.

Methods

In the spring of 2014, researchers surveyed school district officials drawn from a nationally representative sample of school districts across the country that were located in states that had adopted the Common Core. Sixty-five percent of the districts contacted responded to the survey.

Key Findings

- **A majority of school districts have begun to implement CCSS-aligned curriculum but there is still work to be done.** For example, only about 33% of respondents had implemented Common Core-aligned curriculum by the start of this year in *all* schools.
- **Curricular resources are being developed locally.** Over 80% of districts reported that they have obtained or are obtaining CCSS-aligned curricular materials from local sources, either the district itself, other districts in the state, and/or teachers with the district. About 90% of respondents said that developing or identifying curricular materials has posed a major or minor challenge.
- **At least two-thirds of districts reported that the vast majority (90-100%) of their teachers and principals had participated in at least some CCSS-related professional development as of school year 2013-14.** The professional development sessions were related to the content of the CCSS, instructional strategies, and the use of data from CCSS-aligned assessments.
- **School districts and states were among the entities cited by the greatest proportion of districts as providers of CCSS-related professional development for teachers and principals.** Teachers also are providing standards-related professional development for teachers.
- **About one-third of districts said that all of their teachers are prepared to teach the CCSS, while about two-thirds expected it to take until end of the 2014-15 school year or later before all their teachers are prepared to teach the CCSS.** Responses for preparing principals to be instructional leaders around the Common Core were similar to the responses for teachers.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=441>

Center on Education Policy (2014c)

Common Core State Standards in 2014: District Implementation of Consortia-Developed Assessments

Focus

The purpose of this study was to learn more about districts' strategies and policies for, and challenges with, preparing for the CCSS-aligned assessments being developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium or the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

Methods

In the spring of 2014, researchers surveyed school district officials drawn from a nationally representative sample of districts across the country that were located in states that had adopted the CCSS. This report analyzes data only from districts in states that were part of Smarter Balanced or PARCC.

Key Findings

- **School districts in CCSS consortia member states have a wait-and-see attitude about how useful the new assessments will be in improving instruction and providing information to teachers, parents, and students.**
 - Nearly half of these districts said it was too soon to tell whether the consortia-developed assessments will yield data to inform instruction in math or English language arts (ELA).
 - A majority of districts said it was too soon to tell whether the new assessments will be an improvement over their state's current assessments, will drive instruction in positive ways, or will produce results that will be understood by parents and students.
- **As a result of their state's membership in a testing consortium, many districts are planning to revise their own interim and formative assessments in math and ELA, although very few districts (>7%) are considering eliminating these and other types of local assessments.**
 - More than half of these districts are considering revising their formative assessments.
 - About 45% of districts are considering revising their interim assessments.
- **A majority of districts in consortia states foresee challenges with the technological aspects of administering the online consortia assessments.**
 - About 75% of districts report major or minor challenges in having enough computers with adequate processing speed and other characteristics to administer the new assessments.
 - Roughly three-fourths of districts report major or minor challenges with finding a sufficient number of staff at the district or school level who have expertise to address technology-related problems that may arise during test administration.
 - More than half of districts do not expect to have in place the technological infrastructure needed to administer these assessments until school year 2014-15 or later.
- **The majority of districts in consortia states are making plans to target support services for students who may need additional assistance to pass CCSS-aligned assessments.**

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=442>

Center on Education Policy (2013a)

Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: State Education Agencies' Views on the Federal Role

Focus

The purpose of this study was to report states' strategies, policies, and challenges during the third year of Common Core State Standards implementation. This report focuses on how state leaders view the federal role with regard to the CCSS.

Methodology

Researchers sent surveys to state superintendents or their designees in the 46 states that had adopted the CCSS at the time of this study and 40 state administrators responded to the survey. The survey included 43 questions and was used to produce six separate reports.

Key Findings

- **In 37 of the CCSS-adopting states participating in the survey, officials considered it unlikely that their state would reverse, limit, or change its decision to adopt the standards during 2013-14.** In addition, very few respondents said that overcoming various types of resistance to the Common Core posed a major challenge in their state.
- **A majority of CCSS-adopting states indicated support for particular legislative changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that would directly assist state and district efforts to transition to the Common Core.** Thirty states or more responded that legislative changes to authorize and appropriate federal funds for the following activities would help their state's efforts to transition to the CCSS:
 - *Generally assisting states and school districts with CCSS implementation-related activities*
 - *Providing state and district professional development activities for teachers and principals regarding the CCSS*
 - *Helping states with the costs of implementing the CCSS-aligned assessments being developed by the PARCC and Smarter Balanced assessment consortia*
 - *Supporting the updating and maintenance of the CCSS-aligned assessments being developed by the PARCC and Smarter Balanced consortia*
- **Only two survey states reported that they did not want any federal assistance with CCSS implementation.**
- **The Obama Administration's waivers of ESEA/No Child Left Behind Act provisions appear to have helped some states with their efforts to transition to the CCSS and meet federal accountability requirements.**
- **If ESEA is not reauthorized during the 113th Congress, many states that received waivers saw the need for additional non-legislative actions on ESEA to help them implement the CCSS.**

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=420>

Center on Education Policy (2013b)

Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: An Overview of States' Progress and Challenges

Focus

The purpose of this study was to report states' strategies, policies, and challenges during the third year of Common Core State Standards implementation. This report focuses on the progress states have made with implementing the CCSS and the challenges they still face.

Methodology

Researchers sent surveys to state superintendents or their designees in the 46 states that had adopted the CCSS at the time of this study and 40 state administrators responded to the survey. The survey included 43 questions and was used to produce six separate reports.

Key Findings

- **All of the states participating in the survey—39 in math and 40 in English language arts (ELA)—agreed that the CCSS are more rigorous than their previous standards and will improve students' skills in these subjects.** The vast majority of CCSS-adopting states surveyed also recognized that implementing the Common Core will require substantial changes in curriculum and instruction.
- **In 30 survey states, curricula aligned to the CCSS in math and ELA were already being taught in at least some districts or grade levels.**
- **Most survey states had begun to undertake a variety of specific state-level activities related to the CCSS.** These activities included steps to develop and disseminate plans for implementation, and revising and creating curriculum guides or materials aligned to the CCSS, among others.
- **Most survey states were taking specific actions to prepare teachers to teach the CCSS.** These actions included the development and dissemination of professional development materials, and guides aligned to the CCSS and carrying out statewide professional development initiatives, among others.
- **The vast majority of survey states were working with districts and schools on CCSS implementation activities.**
- **States faced challenges in making the transition to the CCSS.** Challenges included finding adequate resources for necessary implementation activities and developing evaluation systems that hold educators accountable for students' mastery of the standards.
- **Despite state struggles with funding and capacity issues, most survey states reported having adequate staff expertise in their state education agencies to carry out CCSS-related activities.**

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=421>

Center on Education Policy (2013c)

Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: Professional Development for Teachers and Principals

Focus

The purpose of this study was to report states' strategies, policies, and challenges during the third year of Common Core State Standards implementation. This report focuses on states' professional development strategies and challenges.

Methodology

Researchers sent surveys to state superintendents or their designees in the 46 states that had adopted the CCSS at the time of this study and 40 state administrators responded to the survey. The survey included 43 questions and was used to produce six separate reports.

Key Findings

- **In more than half of the states surveyed, a majority of K-12 teachers of math and English language arts (ELA) had participated in at least some CCSS-related professional development.** Twenty-two state respondents reported that 50% of their math and ELA teachers had received some professional development; 21 state respondents said that 50% of their principals had received CCSS-related professional development.
- **All 40 states surveyed were providing some type of professional development on the CCSS to teachers, and 39 states were providing these services to principals.** Professional development for teachers and principals was provided by state education agencies, local education agencies, and/or other entities.
- **States were providing various types of professional development on the CCSS.** The most commonly reported methods for providing professional development related to the CCSS include disseminating CCSS-related professional development materials for teacher training, conducting statewide professional development initiatives, and encouraging school and district collaboration on CCSS implementation through professional learning communities.
- **The majority of survey states reported major challenges in providing CCSS-related professional development.** The most commonly cited challenges included providing a sufficient quantity and quality of professional development and other supports to teachers, providing all math and ELA teachers in the state with state-sponsored professional development, and providing principals with state-sponsored professional development.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=422>

Center on Education Policy (2013d)

Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: States Prepare for Common Core Assessments

Focus

The purpose of this study was to report states' strategies, policies, and challenges during the third year of Common Core State Standards implementation. This report focuses on states' preparation for the transition from their previous assessments to the CCSS-aligned assessments that are scheduled to be released in the 2014-15 school year.

Methodology

Researchers sent surveys to state superintendents or their designees in the 46 states that had adopted the CCSS at the time of this study and 40 state administrators responded to the survey. The survey included 43 questions and was used to produce six separate reports.

Key Findings

- **Of the states surveyed, 27 had already taken steps to start assessing students' mastery of the CCSS or will do so *before* the consortia-developed assessments are ready in school year 2014-15.**
- **Half of the survey states had begun undertaking activities to prepare teachers to interpret and use the results of the diagnostic assessments being developed by the state testing consortia.**
- **About half of the states surveyed had started working with districts and schools to plan both extra assistance for students who may need help in passing CCSS-aligned exams and remediation for students who fail the exams on the first try.**
- **Only eight survey states were considering temporarily suspending consequences for schools or individuals based on student performance once the CCSS-aligned assessments are administered.**
- **Thirty-three survey states were planning to conduct public relations efforts to help educate parents and other stakeholders about the reasons why students may not perform as well on the CCSS-aligned assessments as on current state tests.**
- **A majority of the survey states that belong to one or both of the state testing consortia expressed positive views about key features of the consortia-developed assessments.**
- **Seventeen of the states surveyed were considering administering CCSS-aligned assessments in addition to or instead of those being developed by Smarter Balanced or PARCC.**
- **A majority of survey states reported facing challenges with various aspects of preparing to administer the CCSS-aligned assessments.** Challenges included adequate Internet access and bandwidth and sufficient numbers of computer to administer the online assessments.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=423>

Center on Education Policy (2013e)

Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: State Education Agencies' Views on Postsecondary Involvement

Focus

The purpose of this study was to report states' strategies, policies, and challenges during the third year of Common Core State Standards implementation. This report focuses on the state education agencies' (SEAs) partnerships with postsecondary education institutions regarding collaboration and partnerships around CCSS initiatives.

Methodology

Researchers sent surveys to state superintendents or their designees in the 46 states that had adopted the CCSS at the time of this study and 40 state administrators responded to the survey. The survey included 43 questions and was used to produce six separate reports.

Key Findings

- **The majority of state education agencies responding to the survey reported that they have forged formal partnerships with postsecondary education officials to implement the CCSS.** Only five states said they have not established any of these types of partnerships.
- **A large majority of the SEAs surveyed said that working with higher education institutions in their state to transition to the CCSS is a major (16 states) or minor (19) challenge.** In addition, 27 respondents indicated that aligning the content of college and university teacher preparation programs with the CCSS was a challenge.
- **Nearly all of the SEA respondents had provided or are preparing to provide briefings on the CCSS for school of education faculty in colleges and universities.** The majority of SEAs also reported they have worked with postsecondary institutions to align the academic content of teacher preparation programs with the CCSS, or are planning to do so.
- **The majority of SEAs surveyed reported that postsecondary institutions have reviewed or will review the CCSS in English language arts and math to determine if mastery of the standards indicates college readiness.** In addition, more than half of the responding SEAs said that postsecondary institutions in their state are considering making decisions about placing students in courses or exempting them from remediation based on their performance on the CCSS-aligned assessments.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=424>

Center on Education Policy (2013f)

Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: Transitioning to CCSS-aligned Curriculum and Assessments for Students with Disabilities

Focus

The purpose of this study was to report states' strategies, policies, and challenges during the third year of Common Core State Standards implementation. This report focuses on the strategies states were using or planned to use to support students with disabilities and their teachers in transitioning from previous state standards and assessments to the CCSS and CCSS-aligned assessments.

Methodology

Researchers sent surveys to state superintendents or their designees in the 46 states that had adopted the CCSS at the time of this study and 40 state administrators responded to the survey. The survey included 43 questions and was used to produce six separate reports.

Key Findings

- **Thirty-three states were providing or planning to provide training and materials to help ensure that Individualized Education Programs (IEP) for students with disabilities are aligned to the CCSS.**
- **In 37 states, officials reported facing challenges with providing professional development to help teachers align instruction for students with disabilities to the CCSS.** No state official said that providing this type of professional development was not a challenge.
- **Most survey states that currently administer alternate assessments based on modified standards to some students with disabilities had begun implementing plans to transition these students to new CCSS-aligned exams.** In particular, 7 of the 11 survey states that assess students based on modified standards have already begun implementing plans for this transition, while 3 states intended to start implementing their plans in school year 2013-14 or later.
- **Survey states were taking various actions to help districts, schools, and teachers prepare students with disabilities for the transition from assessments based on modified standards to new CCSS-aligned assessments.** Nine of the 11 survey states that assess students based on modified standards reported taking one or more of the following actions to help with this transition: revising or creating guidelines to help IEP teams determine assessment options and accommodations for students with disabilities, revising or creating professional development and other supports for teachers, and analyzing the characteristics of students who currently sit for alternate assessments based on modified standards.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=425>

Center on Education Policy (2012)

Year Two of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: States' Progress and Challenges

Focus

The purpose of this study was to report on states' strategies, policies, and challenges during the second year of Common Core State Standards implementation.

Methodology

Researchers surveyed 37 deputy state superintendents or their designees with a 34 question survey.

Key Findings

- **States generally agreed that the CCSS are more rigorous than their previous standards and will improve students' English language arts and math skills.** Respondents also said that implementation of the CCSS will also require substantial changes in curriculum and instruction.
- **States that had adopted the CCSS were taking steps to familiarize key stakeholders with the standards.** All of the CCSS-adopting states in the survey were providing information about the standards to state education agency staff and to school district leaders and staff. Many were also providing information to state leaders, higher education personnel, and parents and community leaders.
- **States that had adopted the CCSS were planning for their implementation and were aligning curriculum, assessment, and teacher policies with the standards.** All of the CCSS-adopting states surveyed had developed or were developing comprehensive state implementation plans, and most were requiring their districts to implement the standards.
- **Although most of the survey states that adopted the CCSS were forging partnerships with higher education institutions to implement the standards, fewer were aligning college admissions requirements or curriculum with the standards.**
- **Most of the survey states that had adopted the CCSS expected to fully implement them by 2014-15.** Only six states expected to have fully implemented the standards by 2012-13.
- **Finding adequate resources to implement the CCSS was a major challenge for states in school year 2011-12.** Twenty-one states cited resource issues as a major challenge to CCSS implementation.
- **Many state respondents foresaw major technology challenges in implementing online assessments aligned with the CCSS.** States cited major challenges in providing an adequate number of computers in schools to implement the new assessments (20 states), having adequate internet access and bandwidth in schools (15 states), and having access to expertise to address assessment-related technology problems (14 states).

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=391>

Center on Education Policy (2011a)

States' Progress and Challenges in Implementing Common Core State Standards

Focus

The purpose of this study was to learn more about states' plans and progress for implementing the Common Core State Standards.

Methodology

Researchers surveyed state superintendents or their designees in 42 states and the District of Columbia.

Key Findings

- **State officials cited educational quality issues more often than they cited federal Race to the Top requirements as important factors in their states' decision to adopt the CCSS.**
States that adopted the CCSS most often cited the rigor of the standards and their potential to guide statewide education improvement as very important or important considerations in their decision.
- **Many states anticipated it would take until 2013 or later to fully implement the more complex changes associated with the CCSS.** Most of these states expected to accomplish changes in professional development programs by 2012 or earlier. But many states did not expect to fully implement major changes in assessment, curriculum, teacher evaluation, and teacher certification until 2013 or later.
- **Although most adopting states have policies requiring school districts to implement the CCSS, the majority of these states do not require districts to make complementary changes in curriculum and teacher programs.** Most of these states are expecting, rather than requiring, districts to undertake such activities as developing new curriculum materials and instructional practices, providing professional development to teachers and principals, and designing and implementing teacher induction programs and evaluations related to the standards.
- **Respondents said that their hope that the CCSS will encourage a seamless system of education from elementary school through college was far from being realized.** Officials from most CCSS-adopting states were unsure whether their state planned to align undergraduate admission requirements or first-year college curriculum with the CCSS.
- **Developing teacher evaluation systems geared to the CCSS and finding funds were most often cited by respondents as major challenges to implementing the standards.** Many states also viewed aligning teacher preparation to the standards, developing curriculum materials tied to the standards, and implementing CCSS-aligned assessments as major implementation challenges.
- **Race to the Top funding appeared to be helping with implementation of the CCSS.** Only a few states that won RttT grants expected funding for standards implementation to be a major challenge, in contrast to other states that participated in study.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=343>

Center on Education Policy (2011b)

Common Core State Standards: Progress and Challenges in School Districts' Implementation

Focus

The purpose of this study was to describe school districts' perceptions about the impact of the Common Core State Standards, districts' progress in implementing the CCSS, and the challenges they face with implementation.

Methodology

Using a nationally representative sample of school districts, researchers surveyed district superintendents or their designees in 315 districts that were located in CCSS-adopting states. Researchers stratified the sample by geography and population density and weighted each response for a particular stratum and question. Only statistically significant findings were reported.

Key Findings

- **Almost three-fifths of the districts in states that had adopted the CCSS viewed these standards as more rigorous than the ones they were replacing and expected the CCSS to improve student learning.** Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the CCSS in math (58%) and English language arts (57%) will be more rigorous than previous state standards.
- **Two-thirds of the districts in CCSS-adopting states had begun to develop a comprehensive plan and timeline for implementing the standards or intended to do so in school year 2011-12.**
Sixty-one percent of the districts had developed and/or were purchasing curriculum materials, and 48% had provided or planned to provide professional development to math and ELA teachers.
- **Adequate funding was a major challenge.** About three-quarters of districts in CCSS-adopting states viewed adequate funding to implement all aspects of the CCSS as a major challenge.
- **About two-thirds of the districts in adopting states cited inadequate or unclear state guidance on the CCSS as a major challenge.**
- **Districts appeared to face relatively little resistance to implementing the CCSS from parents, community members, or educators.**
- **District or school-level staff participated in various state, regional, or district activities in school year 2010-11 to become informed about the common core state standards.** Some of these activities included state, regional, or district meetings to introduce the standards and/or to plan implementation of the standards.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=374>

Center on Education Policy (2010)

CEP Survey Questions on the Common Core State Standards

Focus

The purpose of this study was to take an early look at the status of state implementation of programs under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 that affect elementary and secondary education at the state and local levels. A few items in the survey asked specifically about the Common Core State Standards that were finalized in mid-2010.

Methodology

State Level Survey

Researchers surveyed participants in 44 states and the District of Columbia. Survey respondents included state governors' education policy advisors and deputies of state education agencies.

District Level Survey

Researchers surveyed a sample of local education agency officials, as identified by the superintendent, in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Overall, 290 districts participated in the survey. Researchers stratified the sample by geography and population density and weighted each response for a particular stratum and question.

Key Findings

The report included questions and key findings that are not directly related to the CCSS. Only the key findings that are directly related to the CCSS are presented below.

- **Respondents in 33 states said their state was considering adopting the CCSS.** Seven states were undecided and two states were not considering adopting the standards at the time of the study.
- **District respondents reported that some districts welcomed the CCSS (39%), while others felt that it was too soon to tell (35%).** Twenty-one percent of the district interviewees felt that the new standards would not affect them and 5% felt that they did not need the new standards.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=190>

Consortium for Policy Research in Education (2013a)

The Lived Experience of Standards Implementation in New York City Schools, 2011

Focus

The purpose of this study was to examine the Common Core Learning Standards¹ (CCLS) implementation processes in a sample of New York City schools.

Methodology

Using a representative sample of ten elementary schools, four middle schools, and two K-8 schools that varied on student performance and poverty, researchers conducted interviews with principals and teachers in each school. When possible, researchers also observed teacher team meetings in which the CCLS were discussed. The collected interviews were coded and checked for inter-rater reliability.

Findings

- **Schools followed different implementation strategies.** Ten of the schools were “conservation-oriented,” meaning that they focused on incorporating the CCLS into their existing curricular frameworks. Six schools were “transformation-oriented,” meaning that they made more significant changes to their existing curricular framework to increase alignment with the CCLS.
- **Interviewees reported that examining student work through a CCLS lens revealed the need for substantial improvement in the quality of student work.** However, the methods used to achieve this improvement varied. Conservation-oriented schools emphasized modifying existing curricula and instructional practices to align with the CCLS expectations. Transformation-oriented schools focused on changing what and how they teach to enable students to meet the CCLS expectations.
- **Schools chose CCLS-aligned materials from different sources.** Most conservation-oriented schools chose CCLS-aligned materials from a third party curriculum developer and often inserted CCLS-aligned assessments into existing units. Transformation-oriented schools were more likely to develop their own CCLS-aligned curriculum in ELA with support from administrators or coaches, or to modify prepared math materials from the NYC Department of Education. These materials were adopted in their entirety and replaced existing units, rather than being inserted into them.
- **Overall, teachers in transformation-oriented schools reported having a better understanding of the CCLS and felt more prepared to implement the standards.** Teachers in conservation-oriented schools had varying degrees of understanding of the CCLS, but their understanding rarely seemed connected to pedagogical shifts. These teachers felt less prepared to implement the CCLS. Conversely, teachers in transformation-oriented schools had deeper understandings of the CCLS, talked more about the instructional and curricular changes that would make their students more successful, and felt more prepared to implement the CCLS.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://cpre.org/nyc-report>

¹ Some states that adopted the CCSS added up to 15% of state-specific content to the standards and/or changed the name of the standards. New York did both, and calls its standards the CCLS.

Council of the Great City Schools (2014)

Implementing the Common Core State Standards: Year Two Progress Report from the Great City Schools

Focus

The purpose of this study was to determine progress in implementing the Common Core State Standards in urban school districts.

Methods

Researchers sent a survey to directors of curriculum, research, English Language Learner (ELL) services, special education, and communications in 67 Council-member districts. Staff from 48 districts responded. This is the second such survey on CCSS implementation and includes additional questions from the first.

Key Findings

- **Surveyed districts may be accelerating their implementation plans.** Thirty-four percent of participants responding to this survey indicated that the CCSS would be fully implemented by the end of the 2013-14 school year—an increase of nine percentage points over the first survey.
- **According to district curriculum directors, central office curriculum personnel were very prepared to implement the CCSS.** However, the same respondents reported that other central office and school personnel were less well prepared to implement the standards.
- **Over half of district ELL directors agreed that their districts have aligned English-proficiency standards with the CCSS.** About a third of these respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their districts prioritized supporting ELLs to meet the rigor of the CCSS.
- **Sixty-four percent of district special education directors agreed that their districts prioritized supporting ELLs to meet the rigor of the CCSS.** The same respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that their district was successful at identifying students with special needs (71%), but only 14% of the special education directors agreed that general education teachers were prepared to help special education students meet the rigor of the CCSS.
- **Most district research directors responded that their districts have made excellent progress in creating data systems to store and share information and in providing timely data to school leaders.** However, a major challenge reported by district research directors was obtaining classroom-level information for thousands of teachers.
- **The majority of district communications directors agree that their districts are informing education stakeholders and building public support for the CCSS.**

Where to Obtain This Report

http://cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/4/CCSS%20Implementation%20Report%20Year%20Three_FINAL.pdf

See also:

The Council of Great City Schools (2012)

Council of the Great City Schools (2012)

Implementing the Common Core State Standards in Urban Public Schools — 2012

Focus

The purpose of this study was to measure the extent of implementation of the Common Core State Standards in urban school districts.

Methodology

Researchers sent surveys to all 67 member school districts, and 36 districts responded. Researchers also partnered with ACT to predict future student achievement on the ACT in reading and algebra, in districts where the ACT is the primary assessment to determine college readiness.

Key Findings

- **ACT's analysis predicted that roughly 25% of students that attend schools in large cities will be able to meet or exceed ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks.**
- **By the 2014-15 school year, 32 of the responding urban districts planned to fully implement the CCSS.** Nine percent of districts expected to fully implement the CCSS by school year 2015-16, and three percent plan to fully implement the standards after 2016.
- **Over half the survey respondents have assessed the alignment between their previous curriculum and the new CCSS-aligned curriculum.**
- **At the time of this report, 61% of responding urban districts were developing new criteria for evaluating teachers so that evaluations are aligned to the CCSS.** Twenty-three percent of the participants had already aligned their evaluations to the CCSS.
- **At the time of this report, most urban districts were developing a strategy for communicating with key stakeholders to provide information about the CCSS implementation.**
- **In terms of professional development, "building a shared understanding of the CCSS among staff" was the most emphasized activity for English language arts and math.**

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/87/Implementing%20the%20Common%20Core%20State%20Standards.pdf>

Also see:

The Council of Great City Schools (2014)

Education First & Editorial Projects in Education (2013)

Moving Forward: A National Perspective on States' Progress in Common Core State Standards Implementation Planning

Focus

The purpose of this report was to better understand how states were developing or implementing plans to help local educators transition from previous state standards to the Common Core State Standards, including learning about the substance, depth, and nature of these planning efforts. This survey is a follow up to a study conducted in 2012.

Methods

Researchers surveyed state education agency representatives in all states; 49 states and the District of Columbia responded. Respondents were also asked to provide supporting documentation relevant to their planning activities. Researchers utilized the same survey instrument as in their 2012 report. One state did not directly answer the survey questions but provided resources about their planning activities; using these documents, researchers completed the survey for that state. In particular, the survey asked state officials to detail any plans for aligning curriculum guides or instructional materials to the CCSS, aligning teacher professional development to the CCSS, and creating or revising teacher-evaluation systems to hold educators accountable for students' mastery of the CCSS.

Key Findings

- **Compared to findings from the 2012 report, states made progress toward developing implementation plans in all three of the following categories: teacher professional development, curriculum guides and instructional materials, and teacher evaluation systems.** Forty-four of the responding and CCSS-adopting states reported they had fully developed plans at least one of those categories; 21 states had fully developed plans in all three categories.
- **In each category, the majority of states had a fully developed plan.** Thirty-seven states had a fully developed plan for aligning teacher professional development to the CCSS, 30 states had a fully developed plan for aligning curricular resources to the CCSS, and 30 states had a fully developed plan to align teacher-evaluations systems to the Common Core.
- **Not all states progressed at the same pace with implementation planning.** Most of the responding states (32) had made progress in at least one category, but 12 states had not made progress compared with the previous year. Six states had experienced setbacks in their implementation planning during the previous year and reported that there was more work to do in at least one of the categories.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.edweek.org/media/movingforward_ef_epe_020413.pdf

Also see:

Education First & Editorial Projects in Education (2012)

Education First & Editorial Projects in Education (2012)

Preparing for Change: A National Perspective on Common Core State Standards Implementation Planning

Focus

This report sought to better understand how states were developing or implementing plans to help local educators to transition from previous state standards to the Common Core State Standards, including learning about the substance, depth, and nature of these planning efforts.

Methods

Questions specific to the CCSS were incorporated into an annual survey administered by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center. The entire survey was completed by state education officials in 45 states and the District of Columbia.² Respondents were also asked to provide supporting documentation relevant to their planning activities. In particular, the survey asked state officials to detail any plans for aligning curriculum guides or instructional materials to the CCSS, aligning teacher professional development to the CCSS, and creating or revising teacher-evaluation systems to hold educators accountable for students' mastery of the CCSS.

Key Findings

- **Forty-six of the adopting states had formal plans for implementing the CCSS.** Wyoming was the only adopting state that had no formal implementation plan but it was developing a plan.
- **States were in different stages of implementing their plans.** Seven responding states had completely developed implementation plans for all three categories explored in the survey (teacher professional development, curriculum guides or instructional materials, and teacher-evaluations systems); 18 states had not completely developed plans in any of these categories.
 - **States had been most attentive to planning for professional development.** Twenty states had completely developed their transition plans, 25 states were developing their plans, and one state reported no activity with professional development planning.
 - **States varied in their progress in planning for instructional materials.** Seventeen responding states had completely developed their plans to align instructional materials, 18 states were in the process of planning, and 11 states reported no progress.
 - **Plans to create or revise teacher-evaluation systems were well underway at the time of the survey.** Fifteen states had already had put into place fully developed plans for teacher evaluations based on the CCSS, and 23 states were in the planning process. Eight responding states did not report any activity in this category. Researchers also noted a considerable degree of variation among states' plans for these evaluation systems.
- **5 of the 7 states with fully developed implementation plans received Race to the Top Funding.**

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://www.edweek.org/media/preparingforchange-17standards.pdf>

Also see:

Education First & Editorial Projects in Education (2013)

² Montana adopted the CCSS after the survey was closed; it is represented in some items as an adopter but not included in other items.

Education Week Research Center (2014)

From Adoption to Practice: Teacher Perspectives on the Common Core

Focus

The purpose of this study was to better understand educators' views on the Common Core State Standards and their preparedness to put the standards into practice.

Methods

In October 2013, *Education Week* invited randomly selected registered website users who had previously identified themselves as classroom teachers to participate in a web survey. The study is based on responses from 457 qualified K-12 teachers and instructional leaders in CCSS-adopting states.

Key Findings

- **A large majority of respondents were familiar with the CCSS (84% in math and 94% in English language arts), but fewer were familiar with the aligned assessments being developed by the Smarter Balanced or PARCC consortia (56% in math and 65% in ELA).** Nearly half (49%) were familiar with the PARCC or Smarter Balanced practice tests and sample items, but 39% said they were “not familiar with any materials related to those assessments.”
- **About 41% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their textbooks and other curricular resources were aligned to the CCSS.** The percentages that reported having “access to high-quality, CCSS-aligned materials” ranged from 31% for textbooks to 54% for digital and multimedia resources. Respondents were more likely to trust statements about curricular alignment from teachers and independent panels of experts than from curriculum providers and publishers.
- **About 68% of respondents said they had received some professional development (PD) related to the CCSS but wanted more.** Nineteen percent had received some PD and did not want more. Of the 14% of respondents that had not received PD, the majority wanted some.
- **The majority of respondents agreed that the PD offered was helpful.** The most helpful PD sessions included collaborative planning time with colleagues (89%) and structured formal training sessions (70%). The least helpful activities were online webinars or videos (64%) and other forms of PD (62%). Fifty-three percent of respondents also agreed that their training was high-quality.
- **Only 16% of respondents said they were very prepared to teach the CCSS.** Few said that their school was very prepared to implement the standards (10%) or aligned assessments (5%), or that their students were very prepared to master the CCSS (4%) and aligned assessments (2%).
- **A large majority (69%) agreed that the CCSS would improve their instruction and classroom practice.** A majority (65%) also said the CCSS would improve student learning. However, respondents were less confident that the CCSS-aligned assessments would improve their instruction and classroom practice (54%) or student learning (45%).

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.edweek.org/media/ewrc_teacherscommoncore_2014.pdf

McLaughlin, M., Glaab, L., & Carrasco, I. (2014)

Implementing the Common Core State Standards in California: A Report from the Field

Focus

This study examined early implementation of the Common Core State Standards in California districts.

Methods

Researchers interviewed educators and administrators from 10 county Offices of Education, 20 school districts, four Charter Management Organizations, and two state-level organizations.

Key Findings

- **Educators and administrators are “uniformly enthusiastic” about the CCSS.** This enthusiasm seems to be coupled with anxiousness about proper implementation of the standards, however.
- **CCSS implementation has helped to create new partnerships and relationships.** These include collaborations among teachers, between local schools and/or school districts, and between school districts and local businesses or community colleges.
- **Two universal challenges to CCSS implementation include insufficient time and “broader ambiguities and uncertainties associated with the CCSS.”**
- **Interviewees also cited other challenges to and concerns about CCSS implementation:**
 - **Curriculum and materials:** California’s Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) gave school districts more responsibility for a unified implementation plan, professional development, and instructional resources, while limiting the state’s role. Interviewees said they were unsure how reliable or helpful privately developed instructional materials were. Many districts are relying on teachers to make decisions about instruction and materials—a role traditionally carried out by central offices in California.
 - **Capacity:** Participants agreed that the CCSS would require a dramatic shift in teaching styles and techniques, and many worried that teachers had not yet developed the necessary skills. Affluent districts were concerned with students’ ability to utilize technology, while high-poverty and small districts raised concerns about technological infrastructure. Interviewees reported a lack of knowledge about CCSS-aligned assessments and how to evaluate student performance or use data from formative assessments. They also said that simultaneously addressing the requirements of new state finance policies exacerbated capacity issues.
 - **Preparation:** Interviewees saw a need for professional development for both administrators and teachers. Administrators wanted professional development to help them understand the CCSS and facilitate standards implementation and support teachers. Teachers wanted more hands-on accessible professional development on concrete instructional practices.
 - **Other concerns** cited by interviewees include pushing middle school students to prepare them for high school, integrating and aligning curriculum across schools in the same district, and accommodating the rigor of the new math standards.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://www.edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/PACE%20CCSS%20McLaughlin.pdf>

Michigan State University (2013a)
*Implementing the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics:
A Comparison of Current District Content in 41 States*

Focus

The purpose of this study was to assess district curriculum directors' awareness and familiarity with the Common Core State Standards in mathematics (CCSS-M) and to document the progress of local efforts to implement the CCSS-M.

Methodology

Through surveys administered online or by phone, researchers gathered data from 698 district curriculum directors (CDs) about their awareness of the CCSS-M, their level of knowledge about the CCSS-M topics, and their districts' progress in implementing the new math standards. The sample of CDs came from the 41 states that had adopted the CCSS-M by the spring of 2011 and was drawn to be proportional to district size and to be representative of each state.

Key Findings

- **Most CDs said that common standards were a good idea.** When prompted with frequently cited benefits of CCSS-M implementation, most CDs focused on those items that benefited students. For example, 88% of CDs agreed that the CCSS-M were extremely important in order to “provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn.”
- **Ninety-three respondents reported having read the CCSS-M. Of this group, 58% thought that the new standards were “somewhat” or “pretty much” similar to their previous state mathematics standards.** Nearly half of CDs also reported that their districts' current practices were only “moderately different” from the practices required by the CCSS-M, and 28% said there were “major” or “large” differences between the practices based on the two sets of math standards.
- **CDs expressed concerns about the alignment of assessments to the new standards during the transition period.** Thirty-five percent of respondents anticipated this as a challenge because misaligned assessments would not provide adequate feedback to teachers on their classroom practices. Furthermore, at the time of the study, assessments created by PARCC and Smarter Balanced were still underway and “little information about the assessments under development had been made public.”
- **Overall, there is a lack of alignment between what is taught or intended to be taught and the CCSS-M grade level recommendations at all grades.** For example, the CCSS-M task of representing and solving mathematical problems that involve addition and subtraction is recommended only in grades 1 and 2. However, between 50% and 70% of CDs report covering that topic in grades 3 and 4, and between 10% and 49% of CDs report covering that topic in grades 5 through 12. This finding varied by district.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://education.msu.edu/epc/publications/documents/WP32ImplementingtheCommonCoreStateStandardsrevised.pdf>

Public Policy Institute of California (2014)
*California's Transition to the Common Core State Standards:
The State's Role in Local Capacity Building*

Focus

The purpose of this study was to evaluate California's efforts, at the state level, to implement the Common Core State Standards.

Methodology

Researchers compared the implementation strategy in California with those in Kentucky, New York, and Tennessee. These states were similar in student populations, implementation timelines, and test scores on national assessments, but had different implementation strategies. Four specific areas of implementation were studied: professional development, instructional materials, assessments, and funding.

Key Findings

- **California's professional development implementation around the CCSS was more limited than that in the other states.** At the time of the study, curriculum frameworks and an online professional support network were available in California and starting to "bear fruit." California's professional development on the CCSS may extend beyond 2014-15. In contrast, the other three states in the study had other forms of professional development available, such as district or school network teams in Kentucky and New York.
- **California's adoption process for textbooks may have missed the mark for mathematics.** By January 2014, the state had adopted a series of textbooks for mathematics. Researchers cited a state website said adoption may have come too soon and may not fully align with the new standards. However, another cited resource argued that adoption may have come too late, forcing districts to move ahead with their own curricular resources. The CCSS-ELA textbooks are scheduled to be adopted in 2015-16.
- **By cancelling statewide assessments in 2013 and 2014, California missed an opportunity to provide teachers, principals, district leaders, and educational community members with valuable feedback.** The other three states included CCSS-aligned questions in their statewide assessments and used the tests to inform educators about the upcoming changes with the CCSS.
- **All four states significantly invested in CCSS implementation, although their funding levels differed.** California's funding structure was also different. Unlike Kentucky, New York, and Tennessee, where implementation was more centralized, the California Department of Education received no funding—instead the money went directly to school districts for implementation.
- **California's implementation strategy may slow the state's transition to the CCSS.** Factors that may slow the implementation of the CCSS include the state's approach to the transition as a local issue, early efforts focused on reviewing instructional materials rather than staff development, and a delayed start to preparing for implementation compared with the other states.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=1092>

Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast (2012)

Plans to Adopt and Implement Common Core State Standards in the Southeast Region States

Focus

The purpose of this study was to support cross-state learning about the processes of adoption and early implementation of the Common Core State Standards in six states in the Southeast Region. The six participating states were Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The study took place in 2011, prior to full state implementation of the standards. Specifically, researchers sought to answer three questions:

1. What processes did the states use for adopting the common standards?
2. What is the process for state implementation of the common standards?
3. How are the states planning to address the alignment of their assessment programs to the standards?

Methodology

For each state in the study, researchers interviewed one state official who was knowledgeable about their state's work on the CCSS. The interview data were transcribed and checked and the data was analyzed for similarities and differences across the six states. Findings were drafted by a first researcher and the draft was then reviewed and revised as needed by a second and third researcher. State participants also had the opportunity to review the draft and provide comments.

Key Findings

- **States had some similarities in their approaches to adopting and implementing the CCSS.** These similarities included a review of the CCSS to check the extent of alignment between the CCSS and previous state standards; the timelines for educator training and delivery of new CCSS-aligned assessments; and a combination of planned implementation approaches that included face-to-face training, online sessions, and train-the-teacher models. In addition, all six states reported that they planned to follow the assessment timeline prescribed by their respective assessment consortia.
- **States also had some differences in their approaches to adopting and implementing the CCSS.** The differences included whether other state-specific standards were added to those in the CCSS (four states added state-specific standards); the timeline for implementation and beginning of classroom instruction of the CCSS; and the entities responsible for monitoring the implementation of the CCSS (state education agencies or local education agencies).

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED528960.pdf>

Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2014)

Primary Sources: Update: Teachers' Views on Common Core State Standards

Focus

The purpose of this study was to report on the changing views, thoughts, and opinions of public school teachers on the subject of the Common Core State Standards.

Methods

In July, 2014, researchers surveyed public school classroom teachers. All teachers surveyed had previously been part of the 2013 study (see Scholastic & the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013). The research excluded six states which, at the time of the research, were not implementing either the math or English language arts standards—1,676 teachers completed the online survey. Responses were weighted to better match the teaching population.

Key Findings

- **Comparison findings based on questions from both the 2013 and 2014 survey (includes only the statistically significant differences found when comparing the 2014 data to the 2013 data after excluding the six states):**
 - Classroom implementation of the CCSS is more complete (65% in 2014; 46% in 2013)
 - More respondents said they felt prepared to teach the CCSS (79%; 71%)
 - More respondents said they believe implementation of the CSS is/was going well (68%; 62%)
 - More teachers agreed that implementation is/will be challenging (81%; 73%)
 - Fewer teachers said the CCSS would be positive for most students (48%; 57%)
 - Fewer teachers said they were enthusiastic about CCSS implementation (68%; 73%)
- **Unique findings (not compared to the 2013 study):**
 - **More teachers in elementary schools than in middle school or high schools reported positive changes in students' abilities due to implementing the CCSS.** For example, 62% of elementary teachers said their students' ability to think critically and use reasoning skills was very positively or positively impacted by the CCSS compared with 47% for of middle school teachers and 37% of high school teachers.
 - **Many teachers said external factors had created problems with CCSS implementation.** The top two problems selected by teachers were having student results on new tests be a factor in teacher evaluations (59%) and uncertainty about assessments their state will use (51%).
 - **CCSS-aligned instructional materials (86% of teachers) and quality professional development (84%) were most often cited as critical resources for implementing the CCSS.**

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/PrimarySources-2014update.pdf>

Also see:

Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2012)

Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2013)

Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2013)
Primary Sources: America's Teachers on Teaching in an Era of Change

Focus

The purpose of this study was to share teachers' voices, thoughts, and opinions about education reform with the public, the media, and education leaders.

Methods

In July, 2013, researchers surveyed public school classroom teachers from across the nation and 20,157 teachers completed the online survey. Sample responses were weighted to better match the teaching population. This report includes comparisons to the 2012 survey and state-level data is available from this report.

Key Findings

This poll included questions and key findings that are not directly related to the Common Core State Standards. For brevity, only key findings that are directly related to the CCSS or the CCSS-aligned assessments are presented below.

- **Nearly all respondents (97%) were aware of the CCSS. Among teachers in state that had adopted the standards at the time of the survey, 100% were aware of the CCSS.**

All the following data are based on respondents in the 46 states and District of Columbia that had adopted the CCSS in either English language art and/or mathematics at the time of the survey.

- **CCSS implementation was still underway for core academic subjects.** Mathematics and English language arts teachers were asked about their specific subject, but science and social studies teachers were asked about CCSS implementation in general:
 - **Math teachers:** 16% responded that CCSS implementation in math was fully complete, 35% said it was underway and mostly complete, and 41% said it was in its early stages.
 - **ELA teachers:** 13% said implementation of the CCSS in ELA was fully complete, 35% said it was underway and mostly complete, and 45% said it was in its early stages.
 - **Science teachers:** 5% said CCSS implementation was fully complete, 23% said it was underway and mostly complete, and 58% said it was in its early stages.
 - **Social studies teachers:** 5% said CCSS implementation was fully complete, 26% said it was underway and mostly complete, and 60% said it was in its early stages.
- **More respondents who taught elementary school said that CCSS implementation in math was either fully complete, or underway and mostly complete, than did middle school or high school teachers.** Responses were more similar across grade levels for ELA.
- **The majority of teachers (57%) said that the CCSS will be positive for most students.** Thirty-five percent of respondent said the standards would not make much of a difference, and 8% said the CCSS would be negative for most students.
- **Overall, respondents said that the CCSS would have positive effects on various CCCS goals, once the standards are implemented.** Within each of the categories below, teachers who said their school was further along with CCSS implementation had a more favorable view of the positive effects of the standards:
 - **Consistency** in learning goals for students from different schools and/or different states (25% very positive, 47% positive, 2% negative, 1% very negative)

- **Clarity** about what students are expected to learn (17%, 48%, 3%, 1%)
 - The overall **quality** of the education students receive (15%, 45%, 4%, 1%)
 - The degree to which students will be **prepared for college** (15%, 43%, 3%, 1%)
 - The degree to which students will be **prepared for careers** (12%, 39%, 3%, 1%)
 - Students' preparedness for **competing in a global economy** (12%, 38%, 3%, 1%)
 - Students' ability to **think critically and use reasoning skills** (24%, 50%, 1%, 1%)
 - Students' ability to **effectively present their ideas based on evidence** (21%, 50%, 1%, 1%)
 - Students' ability to **read and comprehend informational texts** (20%, 48%, 2%, 1%)
- **Seventy-three percent of respondents agreed strongly or agreed somewhat that 1) CCSS implementation is/is going to be challenging and 2) they were enthusiastic about implementation in their classrooms.** The level of enthusiasm was related to the stage of implementation: 86% of teachers in schools that had fully implemented the CCSS were enthusiastic compared with only 49% of teachers in schools where implementation had not started.
 - **The majority of participants (62%) agreed that CCSS implementation was going well.**
 - **Seventy-two percent of respondents felt very or somewhat prepared to teach the CCSS.** Among elementary school teachers and teachers who taught middle or high school math or ELA, 75% said they were prepared and 25% said they were unprepared. The in an increase from 2011 when 59% of these teachers said they were prepared, while 23% said they were unprepared and 19% were not aware of the standards. In 2013, teacher preparation was higher in schools that had fully implemented the CCSS (85%) than in schools where implementation had not started (40%).
 - **Seventy-four percent of teachers agreed that the CCSS will require them to change their teaching practice.** More teachers in schools that had fully implemented the CCSS (81%) said the standards have required them to change practices than teachers in schools where implementation had not started (61%).
 - **Teachers said they needed tools and resources in order to successfully implement the CCSS.** The most needed resources included additional planning time to find materials and prepare lessons (76%) and quality professional development (71%). Only one percent of respondents said they did not need any of the nine resources listed in the survey.

Where to Obtain This Report

<http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/PrimarySources3rdEditionWithAppendix.pdf>

Also see:

Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2012)

Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2014)

Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2012)
Primary Sources 2012: America's Teachers on the Teaching Profession

Focus

The purpose of this study was to share teachers' voices, thoughts, and opinions about education reform with the public, the media, and education leaders.

Methods

In July, 2011, researchers surveyed public school classroom teachers from across the nation and 10,212 teachers completed the online survey. Sample responses were weighted to better match the teaching population.

Key Findings

This poll included questions and key findings that are not directly related to the Common Core State Standards. For brevity, only key findings that are directly related to the CCSS or the CCSS-aligned assessments are presented below.

- **The majority (64%) of participants said common academic standards across all states would improve student achievement.** Twenty-nine percent of respondents said common standards would have a very strong impact, and 35% said they would have a strong impact. Teachers were less optimistic about the impact of common assessments on student achievement: 20% anticipated a very strong impact and 29% a strong impact.
- **Seventy-eight percent of teachers who taught in the 46 states and the District of Columbia that had adopted the CCSS in either English language arts and/or mathematics at the time of the survey had heard of the CCSS.**
 - ***Of those respondents in CCSS adopting states who had heard of the CCSS and taught elementary, middle, or high school math or ELA:***
 - Twenty-two percent were very prepared to teach the standards, 51% were somewhat prepared, and 27% were somewhat/very unprepared.
 - Many said they needed new resources to effectively implement the CCSS:
 - ✓ Student centered technology and resources (64% of all respondents; 55% of very prepared teachers, 67% of unprepared teachers)
 - ✓ New formative assessments (61%; 50%, 66%)
 - ✓ New summative assessments (56%; 46%, 61%)
 - ✓ New CCSS-aligned learning tools and curricula (59%; 41%, 69%)
 - ✓ Professional development focused on CCSS requirements (63%; 38%, 77%)
 - ✓ Professional development on how to teach parts of the standards (60%; 35%, 71%)

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/pdfs/Gates2012_full.pdf

Also see:

Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2013)

Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2014)

Southern Regional Education Board (2014)

State Implementation of Common Core State Standards: Summary Report

Focus

This study reports on the efforts of states to support local implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The Summary Report discussed here is accompanied by five reports with detailed state profiles on 1) timeline and approach to standards and assessments, 2) CCSS-aligned teaching resources, 3) professional development, 4) evaluation of teachers and leaders, and 5) accountability.

Methodology

Researchers collected and reviewed publicly available information about 15³ states' CCSS implementation and conducted interviews with people familiar with CCSS implementation strategies in their state. Interviewees included state department of education leaders, principals, teachers, local superintendents, governors' staff, and union leaders, among others. The data represents states' work between 2010 and the fall of 2013. The report describes states' efforts in each of the five areas listed above.

Key Findings

- **All 15 states were taking comprehensive steps to guide and support CCSS implementation.** Researchers identified Kentucky and New York as leaders in the category of timeline and approach to standards and assessments.
- **All 15 states were working to support districts and schools in their use of high-quality resources aligned to the CCSS.** Leaders in the category of CCSS-aligned teaching resources were Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, and New York.
- **All 15 states were engaged in providing educators with professional learning opportunities to support successful implementation of the CCSS.** Leaders in the professional development category were Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and Tennessee.
- **All 15 states plan on having their new evaluation system in place by 2015-16.** Colorado, Louisiana, and Tennessee were identified as leaders in evaluation of teachers and leaders.
- **All 15 states administer annual, summative assessments in English language arts and mathematics.** These assessments are or will soon be aligned to the CCSS. A majority of states also reported administering CCSS-aligned English language proficiency assessments to English language learners. Georgia, Kentucky, and North Carolina were identified as leaders in accountability.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.sreb.org/page/1600/benchmarking_ccss.html

³These included 12 southern states (Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia) and 3 other states (Colorado, New York, and Pennsylvania).

Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2014)

Common Core in the Districts: An Early Look at Early Implementers

Focus

The purpose of this study was to inform the education community about implementation practices for the Common Core State Standards by looking at the strategies used by a group of “early implementer” districts.

Methodology

Using publicly available sources and experts, researchers identified a sample of districts based on a series of criteria. Districts were considered if they were well underway with CCSS implementation, had strong district leadership, had the potential to instruct or lead the field, were able to illustrate lessons in key areas of study, and were likely to participate in the study. Researchers conducted one-on-one and focus group interviews and reviewed relevant artifacts. All data was coded for themes.

Key Findings

- **In communities, the “faces and voices” for the CCSS are the teachers and principals.** This “voice” shapes parents’ perceptions of the CCSS. Districts that provide advanced information about the CCSS and then reinforce their message throughout implementation have minimized misinformation about and the politicization of the CCSS.
- **Implementation of the CCSS is strengthened when leaders make the standards a central component of instruction, professional learning, and accountability systems within a school.** Districts and schools that incorporated instructional practices into leadership roles were better prepared to support teachers with instructional shifts.
- **Districts are working to create their own high-quality CCSS-aligned materials.** Researchers found that district officials were wary of non-vetted CCSS-aligned curriculum and materials provided by publishers. In districts that used internal curriculum and materials, teachers had a greater sense of ownership and greater buy-in to the CCSS.
- **CCSS-aligned professional development is essential for successful implementation.** However, the authors noted that for professional development to be effective it must provide in-depth experience with the standards in practical applications.
- **Effective implementation of the CCSS will be difficult until assessments are fully aligned to the standards.** Accountability systems for students and educators are dependent upon strong alignment between standards and assessments. And without aligned assessments, education leaders will not know if their CCSS implementation strategies were effective.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.edexcellence.net/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs/Common-Core-In-The-Districts-Full-Report_0.pdf

Credits and Acknowledgements

Studies included in this compendium were compiled and summarized by Matthew Frizzell, CEP research associate and Tara Dunderdale, CEP graduate research assistant. Nanami Yoshioka, CEP graduate research assistant, checked the summaries for accuracy. Diane Stark Rentner, deputy director, Jennifer McMurrer, senior research associate, and Nancy Kober, editorial consultant, reviewed and edited the compendium. Maria Ferguson, CEP's executive director, provided advice and assistance on the compendium's content.

We are tremendously grateful to the authors of the original studies who took time to review and respond to the summaries. Thank you for providing critical feedback and helping us ensure that we are accurately reflecting the content of your research.

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The Center on Education Policy receives nearly all of its funding from charitable foundations. We are grateful to the George Gund Foundation and the Phi Delta Kappa International Foundation who provide CEP with general support funding that assisted with this endeavor. The statements made and views expressed are solely the responsibility of the Center.

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