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## **District Officials View Common State Standards as More Rigorous, Expect New Standards to Improve Learning**

*Districts Taking Action to Implement Common Standards, Though Funding is a Concern*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Sept. 14, 2011)· The common core state standards in math and English language arts are moving closer to implementation at the school district level in states that have adopted them, according to a new study by the Center on Education Policy (CEP). The results are based on a nationally representative survey of school districts conducted in the winter and spring of 2011.

Fifty-seven percent or more of the districts in states that have adopted the common core standards agree that the new standards in math and English language arts are more rigorous than the ones they are replacing, the study found. A similar proportion of districts expect the common core standards to improve students' skills in these subjects.

Moreover, district officials see relatively little resistance to the standards from parents, community members, and local educators, according to the study. Only 10 percent of districts in the adopting states consider resistance from teachers and principals to be a major challenge in implementing the standards, and just 5 percent view resistance from parents and community members as a major challenge.

Advocates have been concerned about the extent to which the common standards would be embraced locally, so it's good news that most district officials have positive views about the standards' rigor and learning potential and that they anticipate little community and educator resistance, said Diane Stark Rentner, CEP's director of national programs and a co-author of the study.

The report, *Common Core Standards: Progress and Challenges in School Districts' Implementation*, details districts' views about the impact of the common core standards and their progress and challenges in implementing the standards. Data were drawn from a survey administered to a nationally representative sample of school districts from February through April of 2011. All responses came from districts in the 44 states that had adopted the standards at the time of the analysis. To date, 44 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the common core standards, which were released in June 2010 by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Districts are also taking actions to implement the standards, the study found. Sixty-six percent of the districts in the adopting states have begun to develop a comprehensive plan and timeline for implementing the standards or intend to do so this school year. Sixty-one percent are developing and/or purchasing curriculum materials aligned to the standards or plan to do so this school year. Forty-eight percent are providing or plan to provide standards-related professional development to math and English language arts teachers. Less than one-third of the districts are undertaking other activities related to implementing the common standards, such as aligning teacher evaluation or induction programs or assigning resource teachers to help teachers integrate the standards into their instruction.

While many districts are taking steps to implement the standards, some may be waiting for additional state guidance and support before tackling the more complex steps, such as developing local assessments or revising teacher evaluation systems, said Nancy Kober, a CEP consultant and co-author of the study.

District officials are concerned about the adequacy of funding to implement the common core standards and what they see as a lack of clarity in state guidance, the study noted. About three-quarters of districts saw adequate funding to implement all aspects of the standards as a major challenge, and another 21 percent viewed this as a minor challenge. About two-thirds of the districts cited inadequate or unclear state guidance on such issues as modifying teacher evaluation systems to conform to the standards and aligning local assessments with the standards as major challenges.

The common core state standards are one of the most hopeful developments in education, said Jack Jennings, CEP president and CEO. This survey confirms that the standards will lead to more rigor in education, and that there is momentum at the district level for implementing them.

The report can be accessed free of charge at [www.cep-dc.org](http://www.cep-dc.org).

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*Based in Washington, D.C., and founded in 1995 by Jack Jennings, the Center on Education Policy is a national independent advocate for public education and for more effective public schools. The Center works to help Americans better understand the role of public education in a democracy and the need to improve the academic quality of public schools. The Center does not represent special interests. Instead, it helps citizens make sense of conflicting opinions and perceptions about public education and create conditions that will lead to better public schools.*