



Graduate School of Education & Human Development

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State K-12 Education Agencies Report Progress on Collaboration, but Face Challenges in Working with Postsecondary Institutions on Common Core Implementation

WASHINGTON, D.C. —Sept. 18, 2013—In most states that have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), state agencies for K-12 education have begun working with postsecondary institutions on various activities to implement the standards, but K-12 officials from 35 states report that these joint efforts are challenging.

Responding to a new survey by the Center on Education Policy (CEP) at The George Washington University, 31 state education agencies (SEA) said colleges and universities in their states were reviewing the Common Core State Standards for math and literacy to determine if mastery of the Common Core indicates college readiness.

Just over half of the states that responded reported that colleges and universities in their states were considering making course placement and remediation decisions based on how students perform on new CCSS assessment tests.

But 27 SEAs said they were finding it challenging “to align the content of college and university teacher preparation programs with the Common Core,” the survey adds. “Given that, in some states, K-12 and postsecondary education have not historically worked together, it is not surprising that forming these new relationships would prove challenging.”

Further, while less than half of the SEAs surveyed report difficulty overcoming resistance to the CCSS from higher education institutions, 35 agencies reported facing major (16 states) or minor (19) challenges in working with higher education institutions on the CCSS transition.

“Most states reported establishing some type of formal partnership between their K-12 agency and postsecondary institutions, which is a great start,” said Jennifer McMurrer, CEP’s senior research associate and co-author of the report. “But working through some of the challenges related to these relationships is going to be key to ensuring the success of the Common Core in the coming years.”

The CEP report, *Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: State Education Agencies’ Views on Postsecondary Involvement*, is based on a survey conducted in the spring

of 2013 to which the state deputy superintendents or their designees in 40 states responded. Forty-six states have adopted the CCSS in math, English language arts, or both, so the findings represent the perspective of state officials overseeing K-12 education in a substantial majority of the CCSS states.

In reviewing the role that higher education is playing in implementing the CCSS, SEA officials in 21 states reported college officials were considering using student performance on CCSS-aligned assessments to make decisions about placing students in courses, while the same number of states responded that college officials were considering using CCSS test scores to exempt students from remedial courses. Twelve SEAs said they weren't sure if their state's postsecondary institutions were considering changing policies for entering students as a result of CCSS adoption.

State education agencies almost uniformly said they were working with institutions of higher education to incorporate the CCSS into teacher preparation programs. In particular, a majority (37 states) has provided or will provide briefings on the CCSS for school of education faculty members. Furthermore, SEAs (33 states) are working with postsecondary education to align the academic content of the teacher preparation programs with the CCSS, or will do so in the future (4 states). But the state leaders also reported major challenges (15 states) or minor challenges (12 states) in aligning the academic content of the CCSS with teacher preparation programs.

"Postsecondary institutions have an enormously important role to play in CCSS implementation for teachers, students and parents," said CEP Executive Director Maria Ferguson. "Putting in place K-12 standards that are meant to validate college and career readiness will have far less impact if postsecondary institutions do not recognize mastery of those standards as a strong indicator of readiness."

The report can be accessed free of charge at 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 at The George Washington University is a national 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.