A Compendium of Research on the Common Core State Standards

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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.

Topic Categories

Topics are presented at the top of each study summary. The studies have been categorized based on a broad topics identified by researchers, policymakers, and practitioners as the most relevant and useful areas of study.

Communications & Public Opinion

Achieve (2014)
Voter Perceptions: Common Core State Standards & Tests

Focus

The purpose of this study was to monitor voter awareness and support for the Common Core State Standards. This is the third of three polls conducted in 2011, 2012, and 2013.

Methodology

A national survey of 800 registered voters was conducted. Unlike the previous two studies, this study report does not identify how many of the respondents were public school teachers.

Key Findings

- **The majority of respondents support the concept of common standards and assessments across states**. This finding has been true for similar polls conducted by Achieve in 2012 and 2013.

- **Most poll respondents were unaware of the CCSS**. For those who had heard of the CCSS, 37% had a favorable impression and 40% had an unfavorable impression.

  After hearing a brief description of the CCSS, most voters supported the implementation of the standards and assessments aligned to the standards.

- **Poll respondents said that the standards and CCSS-aligned tests should be given time to work**. The majority of participants agreed that a drop in student proficiency on CCSS-aligned assessments is expected and should not justify a disruption in implementation.

- **Most poll participants favored giving students and teachers time to adjust to the new standards and assessments before imposing consequences for test scores**. Thirty-one percent said that consequences should be postponed for one year, 27% for two years, and 18% for three years or more.

- **Most poll respondents said that teacher evaluations and student assessments should continue during the CCSS transition period**. Of the 75% who still wanted teacher evaluations based on student assessment scores to continue, 33% agreed that these types of evaluations are essential for holding teachers and schools accountable.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.achieve.org/files/VoterPerceptionsCCSSandTestsreport2014.pdf

Also see:
Achieve (2011)
Achieve (2012)

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Communications & Public Opinion

Achieve (2012)
Growing Awareness, Growing Support: Teacher and Voter Understanding of the Common Core State Standard & Assessments

Focus

The purpose of this study was to monitor voter and teacher awareness and support for the Common Core State Standards. This is the second of three polls conducted in 2011, 2012, and 2013.

Methodology

A national survey was conducted of 1,000 registered voters and 500 public school teachers.

Key Findings

- **Most survey respondents support common standards and assessments across states**. Voters and teachers support the standards, and this was consistent across age, education level, ethnicity, or party affiliation.

- **Voter awareness of the CCSS remains low.** Seventy-nine percent of voters had heard "nothing" or "not much" about the CCSS. Conversely, teacher awareness had increased since the first Achieve survey: 87% of teachers had heard "some" or "a lot" about the CCSS.

- **The more teachers know about the CCSS, the more favorably they view the standards**.

- **Most respondents support CCSS-aligned assessments**. For example, 74% of all voters said they "strongly favor" or "favor" CCSS-aligned assessments. Teachers' responses were more varied; teachers who were more familiar with the CCSS responded more favorably toward the CCSS-aligned assessments. For example, 70% of teachers who had "a lot" of exposure to the CCSS favored CCSS-aligned assessments, but only 46% of teachers who had "not much" or no exposure to the CCSS favored CCSS-aligned assessments.

- **Survey respondents' views of specific aspects of CCSS-aligned assessments varied, but teachers and voters were "fairly consistent" in which aspects they rated the highest and lowest**. The highest rated aspects included these: "test results are available with 1-2 weeks"; "first optional test will be diagnostic"; and "tests would be the same across states." The lowest rated aspects were these: "required tests will be for accountability purposes"; "tests will be given throughout the year"; and "students will take all the tests on the computer."

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.achieve.org/growingawarenessCCSS

Also see:
Achieve (2011)
Achieve (2014)

Communications & Public Opinion

Achieve (2011)
Strong Support, Low Awareness: Public Perception of the Common Core State Standards

Focus

The purpose of this study was to monitor voter awareness and support for the Common Core State Standards. This is the first of three polls conducted in 2011, 2012, and 2013.

Methodology

A national survey was conducted of 800 registered voters and 160 public school teachers.

Key Findings

- **Improving the quality of public education was extremely or very important to most respondents**. Only 8% of registered voters and 11% of teachers felt that the education system was working pretty well at the time of the poll.

- **Across the board there was strong support for common standards**. This finding held constant regardless of age, education level, race, ethnicity, party affiliation, or if the respondent was a teacher or a registered voter.

- **Awareness of the CCSS was low**. Researchers attributed low levels of awareness to the fact that the CCSS were in the early stages of implementation and noted that teachers had a higher level of awareness than their polled counterparts.

- **Among poll respondents who had an awareness of the CCSS, views of the standards were mixed**. Thirty-seven percent of participants who were registered voters had a favorable opinion of the CCSS, and 34% had an unfavorable opinion; 60% of teachers had a favorable opinion.

- **The poll respondents who were registered voters strongly supported using assessment results for a range of accountability purposes**. Teachers were less supportive of using student assessment results for accountability.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.achieve.org/files/PublicPerception-CCSS-FinalReport.pdf

Also see:
Achieve (2012)
Achieve (2014)

Communications & Public Opinion

Gallup (2014)
This is a synthesis of a series of five publications; findings from all five are summarized below.

Focus

These studies surveyed parents and teachers about attitudes toward the Common Core State Standards.

Methodology

Researchers randomly polled 532 public school K-12 parents and 854 public K-12 school teachers in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. Both samples were weighted to match national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, religion. The parent sample was also weighted by population density and phone status.

Key Findings

- **Parents are divided on the CCSS.**
  - About 33% of respondents had a positive view toward the standards, 35% had a negative view, and 32% had no opinion or had not heard of the standards.
  - A majority of participants favored a single set of national standards for reading, writing, and math and the use of assessments to monitor student progress.
  - Responses favoring the CCSS were split along party lines; 48% of Democrats held positive views and 23% held negative views. Conversely, only 19% of Republicans held positive attitudes toward the standards and 58% held negative attitudes.

- **Teachers are also divided on the CCSS.**
  - About 44% of teachers viewed the CCSS negatively and 40% viewed it positively.
  - Teachers with more experience with the CCSS were more likely to view them positively.
  - Teachers' views of the CCSS also aligned with party affiliation; 53% of those who lean Democratic had positive attitudes compared with 25% who lean Republican.
  - A majority of teachers said linking student test scores to teacher evaluations is unfair (89%).
  - While a majority of teachers (76%) supported one set of national standards in reading, writing, and math, 72% had negative attitudes toward standardized computer-based assessments.

- **More teachers said they were worried (65%) or frustrated (62%) about the CCSS than said they were hopeful (49%) or enthusiastic (20%).** However, these numbers were different for teachers who reported they were getting sufficient support: worried (50%), frustrated (42%), hopeful (68%), and enthusiastic (37%).

- **The majority of teachers said their students were not well prepared for the new computer-based assessments.**

Where to Obtain These Reports

Public School Parents Now Divided on Common Core (October 28, 2014); *U.S. Teachers Offer Split Decision on Common Core* (October 29, 2014); *Teachers Favor Common Core Standards, Not the Testing* (October 29, 2014); *Teachers Feel Worried, Frustrated about Common Core* (October 30, 2014); *Teachers Concerned about Common Core's Computer Testing* (October 31, 2014)

Communications & Public Opinion

Gallup & Education Week (2014)

Understanding Perspectives on American Public Education: Results of a Gallup-Education Week Survey of K-12 School District Superintendents – Survey 2

Focus

The purpose of this study, the second of three planned for 2014, was to understand the opinions of K-12 superintendents on education issues, including the Common Core State Standards.

Methods

Researchers conducted a web survey of a non-weighted and non-nationally representative sample of 1,663 K-12 school district superintendents.

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 of respondents (73%) reported that the Common Core State Standards are just about right for students, in terms of challenge.** Eight percent reported the standards are too challenging, 5% reported they are not challenging enough, and 15% of respondents said they did not know.

- **When asked if more states should pull back from their Common Core assessment consortia, 64% responded no, 20% responded yes, and 16% said they did not know if more states should leave their Common Core consortia.**

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.gallup.com/services/178973/understanding-perspectives-american-public-education-survey.aspx

Communications & Public Opinion

Henderson, M., Peterson, P., & West, M. (2015)
No Common Opinion on the Common Core

Focus

The purpose of this study was to capture public opinion about a variety of education initiatives that include school evaluations, school spending, school choice policies, personnel policies, accountability, and college readiness.

Methods

Researchers conducted a nationally representative, stratified survey of adults with representative oversampling in certain groups including public school teachers, African Americans, and Hispanics. This report is based on a random subsample of 2,269 respondents who were not provided with information on student performance in the local district. Furthermore, the sample for questions specific to the CCSS was also randomly split into two groups in order to examine the effects of question wording (see the second bullet point in Key Findings).

Key Findings

The report included questions and key findings that are not directly related to the CCSS. For brevity, only key findings that are directly related to the CCSS or the CCSS-aligned assessments are presented below.

- **The majority of the public support the CCSS, but support diminished from 2013 to 2014 in all groups polled.** For example, Republican support dropped from 57% to 43%, while Democrat support dropped by only a single percentage point to 63%. Teacher support dropped from 76% to 46%.

- **The 'Common Core' label may be "toxic."** Respondents, regardless of political affiliation, supported the general concept of standards for reading and math that are the same across states. The authors wrote that the sample of people polled was randomly divided into two groups; one group was asked about generic math and reading standards while the other was asked about the Common Core. When asked about generic math and reading standards, public support was at 68% compared to 53% support for the CCSS. The same is true for Republicans; only 43% of Republicans supported the CCSS but 68% supported math and reading standards across states—a number that is not notably different from Democratic support.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://educationnext.org/2014-ednext-poll-no-common-opinion-on-the-common-core/

Communications & Public Opinion

Henderson, M & Peterson, P. (2014)
The 2013 Education Next Survey

Focus

The purpose of this report was to summarize key findings from the 2013 *Education Next* poll of adults' opinions of the United States education system.

Methods

Researchers polled a representative and stratified sample of 1,138 adults. Oversampled subgroups included public school teachers, parents of school-aged children, African Americans, and Latinos.

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 CCSS was supported by the majority of respondents.** Nearly 66% of participants favored CCSS adoption in their state. While the number of respondents in favor of the CCSS remained stable between 2012 and 2013, the number of opponents increased (though only 13% opposed the standards in 2013).

Where to Obtain This Report

http://educationnext.org/the-2013-education-next-survey/

Communications & Public Opinion (also Governance & Leadership)

Kornhaber, M., Griffith, K., & Tyler, A (2014)

It's Not Education by Zip Code Anymore–But What is It? Conceptions of Equity under the Common Core

Focus

The purpose of this study was to ascertain how CCSS "policy entrepreneurs" viewed the role and meaning of equity within the reform.

Methodology

Researchers interviewed 11 CCSS policy entrepreneurs who were active in moving the CCSS from a conceptual reform idea to state adoption. The interview transcripts were coded by three researchers. They devised a framework for characterizing policy entrepreneurs' views on equity:

- An "equal" view, which assumes that equal inputs—especially standards, expectations, opportunities, curriculum resources, and instruction—will generate more equal student outcomes
- An "equalizing" view, which assumes that varying school inputs across educational setting are required to attain more equal educational outcomes
- An "expansive" view, which assumes that achieving more equal outcomes requires broad educational, social, health, and economic inputs that vary with educational contexts.

Key Findings

- **Interviewees defined equity in terms of school inputs that would equalize student outcomes**.

  All participants held an equal view. Several also held an equalizing view. One mentioned an expansive view.

- **Equity played a central role in the CCSS**. All interviewees said that equity for disadvantaged students was a major factor in the formation and goals of the reform.

- **Educational equity was linked with economic benefits**. Interviewees agreed that individuals would benefit from a stronger education, and the nation would benefit from greater international competitiveness. They also held that common standards would create economies of scale and promote more efficient and equitable distribution of school resources They stated that common standards would also promote better teacher preparation and professional development.. However, participants acknowledged that resources and capacity would still be unequal between and within states.

- **The CCSS alone will not fix the problem**. Participants understood that the CCSS alone would not reduce educational inequities and that federal and state funds would need to be targeted to high-risks districts and schools. Participants had conflicting views about whether the CCSS may provide a legal platform for targeting additional resources to high-needs students.

- **The CCSS will not improve equity outside school walls**. Interviewees acknowledged that the CCSS would not likely reduce educational inequity in communities with needs beyond those addressed by K-12 schooling. The authors maintain that to produce more equitable student outcomes, reforms will need to build on an expansive view of equity.

Where to Obtain This Article

http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/1308www.edweek.org/link

Communications & Public Opinion

McDonnell, L., & Weatherford, S. (2013a)
Organized Interests and the Common Core

Focus

This article comes from a larger study of the development, adoption, and early implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Drawing on theories of political and policy learning, it examines the role that groups supporting and opposing the CCSS have played, and the reasons why they mobilized.

Methodology

The authors gathered data from interviews from CCSS proponents and opponents; artifacts from national publications, Congressional testimony, and other sources; and participant observations during weekly conference calls with groups involved in CCSS implementation from 2010 until January 2012.

Key Findings

- **The CCSS supporters were a diverse group of organizations and their role in the Common Core initiative was equally diverse**. The researchers placed groups' roles or activities into six categories: 1) promoting an idea, 2) developing the standards, 3) articulating constituent concerns, 4) building support in states, 5) informing constituents and looking toward implementation, and 6) funding the CCSS initiative and building a network.

- **The reasons for supporters' mobilization were also diverse**. Concerns about global economic competitiveness motivated groups that represented policymakers. Members from equity-based organizations spoke about the low quality of state standards and the unequal distribution of student learning opportunities. For some organizations, the CCSS advances their overall advocacy agenda.

- **Most opponents of the CCSS were more ideologically aligned**. Opposition to the Common Core has come primarily from loosely allied, conservative groups that view the standards as an unwarranted federal intrusion and a threat to state autonomy. These organizations have framed their arguments against the CCSS by questioning the evidence base, arguing that some states had standards that were more rigorous than the CCSS, and stressing that the costs of CCSS implementation and assessment are unknown.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://edr.sagepub.com/content/42/9/488.full.pdf+html?ijkey=D3hULCKtNoyTc&keytype=ref&siteid=spedr

Communications & Public Opinion (also Governance & Leadership)

McDonnell, L., & Weatherford, S. (2013b)
*Evidence Use and the Common Core State Standards Movement:
From Problem Definition to Policy Adoption*

Focus

The purpose of this study was to examine how research and other types of evidence were used in the development and adoption of the Common Core State Standards.

Methodology

Researchers interviewed 111 CCSS stakeholders, including leaders of the CCSS, members of the work groups and committees that wrote and validated the CCSS, national and state education policy makers, education policy researchers, and members of groups that are critical of the CCSS. Interview data was categorized by the policy stage in which the interviewee participated. (Three policy stages were used: problem definition/solution, policy design, and policy enactment.) The recorded accounts of types of evidence used were compared to hypotheses that researchers derived from policy analysis literature.

Key Findings

- **The research used to define the problem and pose a potential solution for the CCSS included international comparisons and state standards comparisons**. More specifically, the people associated with initiating the discussion of the CCSS cited low achievement on international assessments; the link between education and global economic competitiveness; national achievement gaps in educational achievement depending on race, social class, or geographical location; and state standards that vary in rigor and depth.

- **Four factors shaped evidence use during the development and validation of standards**. The first was the assertion that the development of the CCSS needed to be driven by research to avoid ideological debates. Second, a lack of peer-reviewed research to help shape the CCSS meant that standards writers would need to use other forms of evidence; the final product was based on "research and evidence." Third, there was a desire to include stakeholders in addition to educational researchers in the CCSS creation process, such as teachers, teacher union leaders, and state department of education personnel. Fourth, "a grounding in the available research and evidence" was one of the guiding principles used by the validation committee. Because of the lack of research some of the decisions made by committee members were based on professional judgment.

- **During the state adoption stage, stakeholders often customized previously used evidence to address various state audiences**. Researchers point out that evidence was tailored to address the need for states to adopt standards quickly to meet federal requirements and the need for state policymakers to see the rigor of the CCSS compared with their previous state standards.

Where to Obtain This Report

McDonnell, L. & Weatherford, S. (2013). Evidence use and the Common Core State Standards movement: From problem definition to policy adoption. *American Journal of Education, 120*(1), 1-25.

Michigan State University (2013c)
Implementing the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics:
What Parents Know and Support

Focus

The purpose of this study was to capture the attitudes and perceptions of parents of school-aged children about education, specifically mathematics.

Methodology

Drawing from a nationally representative sample of parents with children in grades 1-8, researchers conducted two surveys about the parents' perceptions and attitudes toward education and mathematics in general as well as the mathematics education of their own children.

Key Findings

The report included questions and key findings that are not directly related to the CCSS. For brevity, only key findings that are directly related to the CCSS or the CCSS-aligned assessments are presented below.

- **About half the parents had heard of the Common Core State Standards**. Parents in the highest income brackets were more likely to have heard of the CCSS.

- **Almost all parents agreed that studying mathematics was important for their child's future success**. More than 90% of parents said it was important to take math in every school year including four years of math in high school.

- **The majority of parents supported a set of common standards**. Specifically, 68% of parents surveyed supported common standards for mathematics, and 65% supported common standards for English language arts.

- **Parents and teachers most commonly cited the same three reasons for endorsing the common standards:**
  - To provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn
  - To provide a high-quality education to our children
  - To reflect the knowledge and skills students will need for success in college and careers

Where to Obtain This Report

http://education.msu.edu/epc/publications/documents/WP34ImplementingtheCommonCoreStateStandardsforMathematicsWhatParentsKnowandSupport.pdf

Communications & Public Opinion

Phi Delta Kappa International & Gallup (2014)
The 46th Annual PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Towards the Public Schools

Focus

This study reported on the attitudes of the American public regarding public school policies.

Methods

Researchers conducted 1,001 phone interviews with a nationally representative sample of adults.

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 of Americans have heard of the CCSS.** Thirty-four percent of national respondents said they had heard only a little, while 30% had heard a fair amount, and 17% had heard a great deal about the CCSS.

- **Many participants heard about the CCSS through national media sources**. About 49% of the national sample and 38% of the public school parent subsample had heard about the CCSS through television, newspapers, radio, and other media. Other sources of information included teachers (17% of national sample, 23% of public school parent subsample); friends, neighbors, or relatives (11%, 7%); school communications (9%, 22%); and social media (8%, 6%).

- **Opinions about the CCSS were divided by political party.** For example, 76% of Republican respondents opposed the standards, compared with 38% of Democrats and 60% of Independents.

- **The majority of respondents (60%) do not support the CCSS**. The reason most often cited for this opposition was that the CCSS will limit teachers' instructional flexibility (65%). Other reasons were that teachers in the community did not support the CCSS (51%), the CCSS were initiated by the federal government (40%), and the CCSS will lead to a national curriculum (38%).

- **One-third (33%) of respondents supported the CCSS.** The most frequently cited reason for support was that the CCSS will help more students gain the knowledge they need no matter where they attend school (74%). Other reasons were that CCSS-aligned assessments will help parents better understand what students have learned (53%), the CCSS are more challenging than previous state standards (42%), and teachers in the community support the CCSS (40%).

- **About 40% of respondents said the CCSS were not challenging enough, while 36% said the challenge was just about right**. Eighteen percent said that the standards were too challenging. Fifty-one percent of Democrats said the CCSS has just the right amount of challenge for students, compared with 23% of Republicans and 36% of Independents.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://pdkintl.org/noindex/PDK_Poll46_2014.pdf

Communications & Public Opinion

Phi Delta Kappa International & Gallup (2013)
Which Way Do We Go?

Focus

The purpose of this study was to learn and report the opinions of the American public on issues in elementary and secondary education.

Methodology

In a Phi Delta Kappa International and Gallup poll, 1,001 phone interviews were conducted with a nationally representative sample of adults aged 18 or older.

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.

- **Most Americans are unfamiliar with the CCSS**. Sixty-two percent of the respondents had never heard of the CCSS, and 55% of parents of public school children had not heard of the CCSS.

The remaining findings are based on responses from the 38% of participants who had heard of the CCSS.

- **Those who had heard of the CCSS reported that they were "somewhat knowledgeable" about them**. Overall, 51% responded that they were "somewhat knowledgeable," and 15% said they were "very knowledgeable."

- **Only 4 out of 10 respondents said that the CCSS will make the U.S. more globally competitive**. More specifically, 21% said the U.S. would be "less competitive," while 35% responded that the CCSS would "have no effect" on the U.S. global competitiveness.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://pdkintl.org/noindex/2013_PDKGallup.pdf

Communications & Public Opinion

University of Connecticut (2014)
UConn Poll: Americans Who Know about Common Core are Likely to be Skeptical of It

Focus

The purpose of this study was to learn more the public's awareness and perceptions of the Common Core State Standards.

Methods

Researchers polled a nationally representative sample of 1,006 randomly selected adults.

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.

- **Only 39% of participants had heard of the CCSS.**
  - Of those who had heard of the CCSS, 33% said that adopting the CCSS will increase education quality in their communities. Thirty percent said CCSS adoption would be detrimental, and 27% said the CCSS would have no effect.
  - Of those who had heard of the CCSS, 29% said the CCSS will increase the number of students who attend college, and 33% said the standards will mean more Americans will complete college ready to start a career.

- **Thirty-eight percent of participants overall said that it is a good policy, whereas 44% said the Common Core is a bad policy.**

- **The participants' responses to the survey questions fell along political and ideological lines.**
  - More Democrats (54%) than Republicans (30%) said the CCSS is a good policy.
  - More liberals (53%) than conservatives (24%) said the Common Core is a good policy.

- **Most survey respondents supported a set of national goals.** Seventy three percent said that national standards are a good idea, and 64% said that expectations of students should be the same in all states. Furthermore, 68% said that it is important to have a consistently high-quality education regardless of a family's residence.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://poll.uconn.edu/2014/05/05/uconn-poll-americans-who-know-about-common-core-are-likely-to-be-skeptical-of-it/

Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments (also Content, Curriculum, & Alignment)

Brown Center on Education Policy (2014)
How Well Are American Students Learning: A Progress Report on the Common Core

Focus

The purpose of this study was to assess the accuracy of the projection by William Schmidt and Richard Houang (see Schimdt and Houang, 2012) that those states with mathematics standards that were more congruent to the Common Core State Standards in math (CCSS-M) would have higher achievement on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) in math. The research also attempted to further Schmidt and Houang's study by assessing the relationship between a state's level of CCSS implementation and their NAEP gains between 2009 and 2013.

Methodology

Using the congruency rating created by Schmidt and Houang, researchers analyzed trends in achievement on the NAEP 8th grade math assessments for 2009, 2011, and 2013. In a second-step analysis, researchers utilized a 2011 study by the U.S. Department of Education that included a question to states about their stage of CCSS implementation; if a state's implementation status had changed after the 2011 study, researchers accounted for the change.

Key Findings

- **Overall, no clear trends emerged in student achievement**. States whose previous standards had the highest level of congruence to the CCSS-M (Level 5) did not have the largest gains; rather, states whose standards had the lowest level of congruence (Level 1) had the largest gains. However, there was no clear relationship between NAEP score and level of congruence.

- **When states are identified by Group A and Group B[*] (following Schmidt and Houang's research), Group B states made larger gains than Group A states**. The author notes that this result "may indicate regression to the mean." In other words, the states in Group B already had an average NAEP score that was 14.67 points below Group A's average and therefore were in the best position to increase achievement.

- **States with the strongest implementation of the CCSS had the highest achievement gains on NAEP between 2009 and 2013**. During the same time span, states with a medium level of implementation had the next highest gains, and states that did not adopt the CCSS had the smallest gains.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2014/03/18-common-core-loveless

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[*] Group A consists of 37 states that scored higher on the 2009 NAEP assessment. Group B included 13 states with standards that were above average in congruence to the CCSS-M but with a below average score on the NAEP.

Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments

National Center for Educational Statistics (2013a)
The National Assessment of Educational Progress and the Common Core State Standards:
A Study of the Alignment between the NAEP Mathematics Framework and the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics

Focus

The purpose of this study was to assess which clusters and standards of the Common Core State Standards in mathematics (CCSS-M) are represented in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) subtopics and objectives.

Methodology

A panel of experts in mathematics examined representation and alignment between the CCSS-M clusters and standards in grades 3 and 4 and the NAEP Framework's subtopics and objectives for grade 4. They also did the same type of comparison for the CCSS-M in grades 7 and 8 and NAEP in grade 8. Researchers used two criteria for determining the degree of alignment: the extent of content coverage and the grade level at which the content was covered.

Key Findings

- **Overall, the CCSS-M for grades 3 and 4 are represented in the NAEP Framework for grade 4**. However, there are differences between the clusters/standards and the subtopics/objectives in levels of specificity and conceptual understanding.

- **The NAEP Framework for grade 4 was generally well matched with the CCSS-M**. The grade 4 topics tested under NAEP that are least aligned to the CCSS-M include Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability.

- **The CCSS-M for grades 7 and 8 are represented in the NAEP Framework for grade 8**. Like the first finding, there are key differences between the CCSS-M clusters/standards and the NAEP subtopics/objectives in levels of specificity and conceptual understanding.

- **All content areas in the NAEP Framework for grade 8 were covered in the CCSS-M**.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/NAEP_Validity_Studies_combined_report_updated_9-19-13_0.pdf

Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments

National Center for Educational Statistics (2013b)
The National Assessment of Educational Progress and the Common Core State Standards:
A Study of National Assessment for Educational Progress Reading and Writing Frameworks and Assessments
in Relation to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts

Focus

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the alignment between the CCSS-ELA and the reading and writing frameworks and test items of NAEP. The goal was to evaluate whether NAEP can continue to serve as an independent monitor of student achievement following the implementation of the CCSS-ELA.

Methodology

Panels of experts in reading and writing compared a) NAEP reading and writing Frameworks to CCSS-ELA documents (i.e. standards and exemplars); b) NAEP reading passages, writing prompts, scoring guides, and anchor papers to the CCSS-ELA documents; and c) NAEP reading items/writing prompts to CCSS-ELA anchor/grade level standards at grades 4, 8, and 12.

Key Findings
Overall
- **NAEP should retain its independence from any specific curriculum, including CCSS-ELA**. With attention to specific issues identified in the report and a systematic program of special studies, NAEP could continue to serve as an independent monitor of student achievement in the U.S.

Reading
- **Many aspects of NAEP are consistent with the conceptualization of reading found in CCSS-ELA**.
- **NAEP reading selections for grades 4 and 8 are aligned with the CCSS-ELA recommendations regarding text**. At grade 12, NAEP texts are generally less complex and discipline-focused than CCSS-ELA recommendations. NAEP does not currently include digital texts called for by CCSS-ELA.
- **CCSS-ELA places more emphasis than NAEP does on building knowledge from reading discipline-specific texts**. NAEP uses informational texts across disciplines, stressing general comprehension.
- **CCSS-ELA takes a broader perspective on vocabulary than NAEP**. The CCSS-ELA emphasizes word meaning in the context of reading passages and does not address discipline-specific vocabulary.

Writing
- **CCSS-ELA and NAEP address the same domains of writing and emphasize the same characteristics of effective writing**. The domains include development of ideas, organization, language facility, and conventions.
- **CCSS-ELA emphasizes writing about reading and writing based on research; NAEP does not**.
- **CCSS-ELA addresses the special skills and domain-specific vocabulary associated with writing in the disciplines, while NAEP does not**.
- **CCSS-ELA expects college- and career-ready students to strategically use technology and digital media**. NAEP limits the role of technology to students' use of computers to compose and edit.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/NAEP_Validity_Studies_combined_report_updated_9-19-13_0.pdf

Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments (also Content, Curriculum, & Alignment)

Schmidt, W. & Houang, R. (2012)
Curricular Coherence and the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics

Focus

The purpose of this study was to assess if the Common Core State Standards in mathematics (CCSS-M) have the focus and coherence[*] that are characteristic of curricular standards in countries that were high-achieving on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Also, researchers analyzed the alignment of previous state standards to the CCCS-M to predict future achievement on NAEP.

Methodology

Researchers analyzed the focus and coherence of the CCSS-M. Next they compared the congruence[†] and focus of the CCSS-M and of the previous state standards for school year 2008-09 with that of the math standards of high-scoring countries on TIMSS (A+ standards). They also examined the relationship between a) the congruence of previous state standards to the CCSS-M and b) states' performance on the 2009 NAEP in grade 8 math.

Key Findings

- **The CCSS-M are coherent and focused**. The CCSS-M are "very consistent with the international benchmark" (A+ standards) and can be characterized as "world-class standards."

- **State standards varied in their focus and congruence to the CCSS-M**. The states whose math standards had the greatest congruence to the CCSS-M included AL, CA, FL, GA, and IN; the states with the least congruence included AZ, IA, KS, KY, and LA.

- **States whose standards had the greatest amount of congruence to the CCSS-M had higher predicted achievement on the NAEP**. This analysis was conducted by separating the states into two groups. Group B included 13 states with standards of above average congruence to the CCSS-M but below average scores on NAEP; Group A included all other states.

- **The degree of implementation of standards is an important factor when analyzing the relationship between the state standards and student achievement**.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://edr.sagepub.com/content/41/8/294.full.pdf+html?ijkey=Ci4h9RZMnVAuE&keytype=ref&siteid=spedr

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[*] "Focus" is defined in TIMSS as the number of topics covered at each grade that was also aggregated over the first eight grades. The fewer total topics that are covered in grades 1 through 8, the more focused the standards are. "Coherence" is defined by as a logical and sequential progression of topics over time that reflects, when appropriate, the natural hierarchy of a subject or topic.

[†] "Congruence" is the product of five indicators that signified a deviation from the CCSS-M: 1) a topic was introduced earlier; 2) the number of times a topic was covered in a different grade level; 3) a topic was not covered in the grade level intended by the CCSS-M; 4) a topic was introduced later; and 5) a topic had a break in coverage between grades.

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment (also Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments)

Brown Center on Education Policy (2014)
How Well Are American Students Learning: A Progress Report on the Common Core

Focus

The purpose of this study was to assess the accuracy of the projection by William Schmidt and Richard Houang (see Schimdt and Houang, 2012) that those states with mathematics standards that were more congruent to the Common Core State Standards in math (CCSS-M) would have higher achievement on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) in math. The research also attempted to further Schmidt and Houang's study by assessing the relationship between a state's level of CCSS implementation and their NAEP gains between 2009 and 2013.

Methodology

Using the congruency rating created by Schmidt and Houang, researchers analyzed trends in achievement on the NAEP 8th grade math assessments for 2009, 2011, and 2013. In a second-step analysis, researchers utilized a 2011 study by the U.S. Department of Education that included a question to states about their stage of CCSS implementation; if a state's implementation status had changed after the 2011 study, researchers accounted for the change.

Key Findings

- **Overall, no clear trends emerged in student achievement**. States whose previous standards had the highest level of congruence to the CCSS-M (Level 5) did not have the largest gains; rather, states whose standards had the lowest level of congruence (Level 1) had the largest gains. However, there was no clear relationship between NAEP score and level of congruence.

- **When states are identified by Group A and Group B[*] (following Schmidt and Houang's research), Group B states made larger gains than Group A states**. The author notes that this result "may indicate regression to the mean." In other words, the states in Group B already had an average NAEP score that was 14.67 points below Group A's average and therefore were in the best position to increase achievement.

- **States with the strongest implementation of the CCSS had the highest achievement gains on NAEP between 2009 and 2013**. During the same time span, states with a medium level of implementation had the next highest gains, and states that did not adopt the CCSS had the smallest gains.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2014/03/18-common-core-loveless

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[*] Group A consists of 37 states that scored higher on the 2009 NAEP assessment. Group B included 13 states with standards that were above average in congruence to the CCSS-M but with a below average score on the NAEP.

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

Brown Center on Education Policy (2011)

How Well are American Students Learning? NAEP and the Common Core State Standards

Focus

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree of alignment between the Common Core State Standards grade-level recommendations and the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) questions for 8th grade mathematics.

Methodology

Using publicly released NAEP test questions, researchers coded 171 items from the algebra and number strands of the 8th grade assessments to the grade in which the CCSS recommend teaching an item.

Key Findings

- **Over 90% of the material covered in the NAEP number strand items was below the CCSS-recommended 8th grade standard.** However, the researchers note that this doesn't mean the assessment was easy for test takers; the average item was answered correctly only 58.6% of the time.

- **When the NAEP items in the number strand were aligned to the CCSS-recommended grade level, the median grade level for the assessment items was 5th grade**. In this study, 37 items were below 5th grade, 44 items were above 5th grade, and 17 items were at 5th grade level. The average grade level was 5.2.

- **When the NAEP items in the algebra strand were aligned to the CCSS-recommended grade level, the median grade level for the assessment items was 6th grade**. In this study, 15 items were below 6th grade, 31 items were above 6th grade, and 27 items were at the 6th grade level.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/reports/2011/1/11%20naep%20loveless/0111_naep_loveless.pdf

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment (also Implementation)

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

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

College Board (2011)
Common Core State Standards Alignment: Advanced Placement

Focus

The purpose of this study was to examine alignment between the Common Core State Standards and related Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The courses used for comparison are AP English Literature and Composition, AP English Language and Composition, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, AP Statistics, and AP Computer Science A.

It is important to note that many AP courses are currently undergoing a review and revision process and that these alignment findings are based on the course content from 2011. Furthermore, the intent of this alignment study is not to show a one-to-one relationship between standards and elements of AP courses. The authors caution the reader that alignments between the CCSS and AP courses should not be interpreted as showing a link between the two but as areas where there is a bridge from one framework to the other.

Methodology

The researchers used four principles of alignment when comparing the CCSS to AP courses:
1) The full intent and scope of each standard statement must be given "deep and careful consideration," with direct attention given to content and skill components.
2) Alignments must be as specific as possible.
3) The course materials used to establish alignment must "clearly and explicitly" frame the course's objectives and expectations for student performance.
4) Consideration must be given to alignment of content and rigor.

Key Findings

- **The CCSS is aligned to AP English Literature and AP English Language**. As expected, there is a lower concentration of alignment between AP English Literature and the Reading Standards for Informational Text because the focus of the AP Literature course is "imaginative literature." Researchers also note that there is less alignment between the Speaking and Listening Standards and both English courses because these skills are considered prerequisites and are not emphasized in the AP course materials.

- **The CCSS is aligned to AP Calculus, AP Statistics, and AP Computer Science A**. The CCSS is strongly aligned to the Standards for Mathematical Practice, conceptual categories of Number and Quantity, Algebra, Functions, and Geometry between grades 6 and 12.

- **Students following a CCSS-aligned curriculum would be prepared for the AP courses in this study**. Researchers found that the CCSS alignment with the AP courses, especially in math, demonstrate a logical progression of courses from regular high school courses to AP courses.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/research/RR2011-8.pdf

Dingman, S., Teuscher, D., Newton, J., & Kasmer, L. (2013)
Common Mathematics Standards in the United States

Focus

This study examines the similarities and differences in content between the Common Core State Standards in mathematics (CCSS-M) and previous state standards in mathematics for grades K-8.

Methodology

Using data and a coding scheme from a previous study of state math standards, researchers conducted an analysis of the CCSS-M using the same categories and labels as the older study. There were seven categories (number and operation, algebra, geometry, measurement, probability and statistics, reasoning, and technology use), and each had its own methodology based on the labels used previously. Results from this analysis of the CCSS-M were compared with the results from the previous state standards study.

Key Findings

- **In most categories, there were similarities and differences between the CCSS-M and previous state standards**. For example, in algebra, both the previous state standards and the CCSS-M focused to a greater extent on symbolic algebra than on functions, but they differed on timing—the CCSS-M delayed an emphasis on functions until grades 6-8.

- **In two categories, reasoning and technology use, the similarities were very limited**. In reasoning, the CCSS-M were addressed in the Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP) and therefore "explicit reasoning for verification standards connected to content standards was reduced." Only twice did the CCSS-M mention the use of calculators and technology; the authors concluded that there was a "decreased emphasis on calculator/technology use within the standards."

- **There were four key changes between the previous state math standards for grades K-8 and the CCSS-M**.
  - *Changes in the timing of content delivery*. Under the CCSS-M some concepts will be taught earlier, such as the multiplication of fractions, while other concepts will be presented in a later grade, such as attention to probability and statistics.
  - *Changes in the frequency of a particular mathematic topic across grades*. For instance, the addition and subtraction of whole numbers was previously addressed to three grade levels, but under the CCSS-M it is addressed in five grade levels. Conversely, fewer grade levels devote attention to fraction computation in the CCSS-M than in past state standards.
  - *Changes in topic emphasis*. At some grade levels, certain topics receive greater emphasis and others receive less emphasis—for example, the CCSS-M delayed emphasis on algebraic functions until grades 6-8.
  - *Changes "in the nature and level of reasoning expectations."* For example, the percentage of standards that call on students to evaluate statistical processes has doubled compared with expectations under the pre-CCSS-M standards.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.jstor.org/stable/info/10.1086/669939

Educational Policy Improvement Center (2011a)
Lining Up: The Relationship between the Common Core State Standards and Five Sets of Comparison Standards

Focus

Researchers compared the Common Core State Standards with five sets of standards in math and English language arts and literacy (chosen for their rigorous instruction program, explicit focus on college readiness, or identification as exemplary) to determine the extent of alignment between the CCSS and selected standards.[*] Three types of alignment were used for analysis: knowledge and skill alignment (match), cognitive complexity alignment (depth), and content covered alignment (breadth).

Methodology

Sixteen raters examined the content and levels of cognitive demand in the CCSS and the five selected standards and assessments in order to establish a means for comparison.

Key Findings

- **In terms of knowledge and skills alignment, the CCSS and the five sets of comparison standards have "substantial concurrence."** Math showed more overlap between the CCSS and the five comparison standards (25 topics out of 25 topics overlap) than English Language Arts (ELA) and literacy (36 topics out of 40 topics overlap).

- **In terms of depth, the CCSS are generally consistent with the comparison standards**. The levels of cognitive depth between the CCSS math standards and the comparison math standards are "somewhat greater" than those between the CCSS ELA standards and the comparison ELA and literacy standards.

- **In terms of breadth, the CCSS were aligned with the comparison standards**. As with the previous two findings, ELA and literacy standards were less likely to be aligned than the math standards. In ELA and literacy there was strong coverage within 37 of the 40 topics between the comparison standards and the CCSS. There was strong coverage in 25 of 25 math topics.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED537877.pdf

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[*] ELA standards: California State Standards (grades 11-12), Massachusetts State Standards (grades 11-12), Texas Cross-disciplinary College and Career Readiness Standards, Knowledge and Skills for Universal Success College and Career Standards, International Baccalaureate Standards (grades 10-12).

Mathematics standards: California State Standards (grades 8-12), Massachusetts State Standards (grades 9-12), Texas Cross-disciplinary College and Career Readiness Standards, Knowledge and Skills for Universal Success College and Career Standards, International Baccalaureate Standards (grades 10-12).

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

Educational Policy Improvement Center (2011b)
Reaching the Goal: The Applicability and Importance of the Common Core State Standards to College and Career

Focus

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which the knowledge and skills contained in the Common Core State Standards are applicable to and important for college and career readiness.

Methodology

Researchers surveyed a national sample of postsecondary instructors from a range of institutions and courses (based on 25 course categories) who were recommended by the institution's leadership. Instructors rated each Common Core standard for math and English language arts on its applicability and, if the standard was applicable, they also rated the standard's importance for their course. A total of 1,897 instructors responded to the survey.

Key Findings

- **The Common Core State Standards for English language arts (CCSS-ELA) for non-literary reading and writing were applicable to most courses**. This was also true of the standards relevant to speaking and listening and language. The Common Core State Standards for mathematics (CCSS-M) in mathematical practices were also rated as applicable to their course by most instructors. Other CCSS-M standards were more subject-specific.

- **When instructors rated a standard as applicable to their postsecondary course, they considered it to be important**. Most standards were rated "more important" (rated 3 out of 4 points on a Likert scale). Twenty-five of the 200 math standards were rated below 2.5 for importance and two of the 113 English language arts standards were rated below 2.5 for importance.

- **The CCSS-ELA varied in importance based on subject**. For example, most respondents who rated Reading Standards in History/Social Studies as important were social science instructors. The standards relating to language were highly applicable to most subjects but received low importance ratings. Finally, CCSS-ELA standards related to comprehension of nonfiction texts were rated as highly important.

- **The CCSS-M also varied in importance based on the subject**. The majority of respondents who rated Number and Quantity, Algebra, Functions, and Geometry as important were math and science instructors. The majority that rated Statistics as important taught science and social science. The math standards rated highest in importance were related to reasoning quantitatively and interpreting functions. Finally, Standards for Mathematical Practice were rated as important across the subjects.

- **The standards are broadly applicable to entry-level college courses**. Ninety-six percent of survey respondents replied that the standards as a whole were "sufficiently cognitively challenging" to prepare students for postsecondary classes.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.epiconline.org/publications/documents/ReachingtheGoal-FullReport.pdf

Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2014)
Student and Teacher Perspectives on a Close Reading Protocol

Focus

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of students and teachers on the instructional practice of "close reading," which is aimed at meeting the first of the anchor standards for the CCSS-ELA in reading.

Methods

Researchers interviewed a sample of 45 teachers in grades 4-12, and conducting 51 focus groups with 327 purposefully selected students at 17 schools in this phenomenological study. The teachers and students came from four districts that had provided professional development in the use of close reading.

Key Findings

- **The texts for close reading are generally more engaging for students than typical reading assignments.** All of the student focus groups reported that they found close-reading texts interesting—even though the texts are often more demanding. Nearly every teacher (43 of 45) also reported their students were more engaged during close reading sessions.

- **Close reading can be cognitively demanding and even physically exhausting.** Most student focus groups (72.5%) and teachers (86.7%) described the experience of close reading as draining, tiring, or exhausting for students. Teachers, however, indicated this is a possible benefit of the method, encouraging higher-order thinking skills critical to meeting the CCSS-ELA.

- **Teachers struggled to select appropriate texts and develop questions for the material.** More than half of teachers reported that they struggled to find appropriate texts, and 82.2% identified developing appropriate questions about the text as the hardest part of close reading. Many said lesson planning for these projects was particularly difficult.

- **Some students struggled with not knowing the "right" answer.** Approximately 21% of students raised the issue of the right answer and "expressed impatience with exploring nuances." Nearly 40% of teaches also raised this issue, and considered it an artifact from traditional pedagogy.

- **Some teachers were concerned about the needs of special education students and English Language Learners.** More than half (55.6%) of teachers raised concerns over how to support these students during these difficult lessons.

Where to Obtain This Report
Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2014). Student and teacher perspectives on a close reading protocol. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, *53*(1), pp. 25-49.

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

Gamson, D., Lu, X., & Eckert, S. (2013)

Challenging the Research Base of the Common Core State Standards: A Historical Reanalysis of Text Complexity

Focus

The purpose of this study was to analyze textbooks from the last century to refute or support previous research that suggests text complexity in school textbooks had declined over the past 10 years, a signature premise in the Common Core State Standards.

Methodology

Researchers collected data from important or popular textbooks from 187 third grade reading textbooks and from 71 sixth grade reading textbooks that were used in elementary school between the 1890s and 2008. They analyzed 100-word or more segments from these textbooks using lexical difficultly (LEX), word frequency band (WFB), mean length of sentences (MLS), and the New Dale-Chall readability index.

Key Findings

- **The results of the four analyses do not confirm a decline in text complexity.**
  Grade 3:
  - *Both the average LEX scores and the WFB scores for the 2000s were significantly higher than all other decades.* The average LEX scores and WFB scores in the 1940s were significantly lower than all other decades.
  - *The texts from the 2000s had significantly higher readability on the New Dale-Chall index than all of the decades from the 1950s through 1990s.* But the texts from the 1910s had a significantly higher readability index than all other decades.
  - *The average MLS for the texts in the 2000s was significantly higher than for the 1950s through 1990s*. But the highest average MLS was in the 1910s.

  Grade 6
  - *The average LEX scores in the 1920s were significantly higher than all other decades*. LEX scores declined between the 1920s and the 1940s but then stabilized through the 2000s.
  - *The highest WFB scores were from the 1920s and 1990s.* However, like the LEX scores, researchers found that sixth grade texts were "largely stable."
  - *The 1920s had a significantly higher New Dale-Chall Readability Index than all other decades*. The 1940s had a significantly higher readability index than the readability indexes of the 1960s, 1980s, and the 1990s. The 2000s readability index was similar to the 1940s index.
  - *The MLS analysis revealed that the 1920s had a significantly higher MLS than all other decades*. The 1940s had a significantly higher MLS than the MLS of the 1960s, 1980s, and 1990s. The 2000s MLS was similar to the 1940s MLS.

- **Over the past century, text complexity in third grade texts has increased, while text complexity for sixth grade text has remained stable.** Authors cite the richness (10 million words), longevity (100 years of artifacts), and depth of analysis (four different measurement tools) of their study, along with other research, to refute the claim that text complexity has declined.

Where to Obtain This Report
http://edr.sagepub.com/content/42/7/381.abstract

Nagle, C. & Moore-Russo, D. (2014)

Slope Across the Curriculum: Principles and Standards for School Mathematics and Common Core State Standards

Focus

The purpose of this study was to compare the mathematical concept of slope as represented in two sets of standards, the Principles and Standards for School Mathematics (PSSM) and the Common Core State Standards in Math (CCSS-M).

Methods

Researchers independently coded the PSSM, the CCSS-M, and all supporting documents using the eleven conceptualizations of slope.[*] Then the researchers collaboratively coded the documents by discussing their individual coding and resolving any coding disagreements as they proceeded.

Key Findings

- **Overall, the two sets of standards were similar with regards to total number of slope references, and the most common conceptualizations of slope were consistent between the PSSM and the CCSS.** The PSSM referenced slope 57 times, compared with 53 references in the CCSS. The most common conceptualizations included functional property, linear constant, and real world solution.

- **Researchers found differences between the PSSM and the CCSS when comparing slope references by grade band.**
  - *Grades 3-5:* The PSSM referenced functional property, real world situation, and physical property conceptualizations of slope. The CCSS did not reference any conceptualizations of slope in this grade band.
  - *Grades 6-8:* Both standards give slope the most attention in this band and include 9 of 11 conceptualizations in these grades. The authors write, "Thus, where the core of instruction on slope is concerned, there is a general consensus between [CCSS-M] and PSSM standards regarding the focus and sequencing of instruction."
  - *Grades 9-12:* The CCSS-M has a more focused representation of slope in this band: five conceptualizations compared with the eight conceptualizations in PSSM.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://eric.ed.gov/?q=slope+across+the+curriculum&id=EJ1027058

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[*] The 11 conceptualizations of slope include geometric ratio, algebraic ratio, physical property, functional property, parametric coefficient, trigonometric conception, calculus conception, real world situation, determining property, behavior indicator, and linear constant.

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

Polikoff, M. (2014)

How Well Aligned Are Textbooks to the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics?

Focus

The purpose of this study was to measure the extent of alignment of three "Common Core aligned" 4th grade mathematics textbooks to the Common Core State Standards and to textbooks aligned to previous state mathematics standards.

Methodology

Using data from the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum in mathematics, researchers analyzed the CCSS-M, the Florida Sunshine State Standards in math, six math textbooks designed for 4th grade instruction in Florida (three aligned to previous state math standards and their new versions that are reportedly aligned to the CCSS-M), and a textbook that is explicitly not aligned to any state's math standards or the CCSS-M. The researchers used two methods to determine alignment: a main method, which requires exact proportional agreement, and a less stringent alternative method.

Key Findings

- **Depending on the alignment method, all three CCSS-M-aligned textbooks are modestly aligned to the CCSS**. Using the main method, the study found that 27% to 38% of the content was aligned, which the author notes "far exceeds that which would be expected by chance." Using the less stringent method, the study found that "a large majority" of the content emphasized in the textbooks is aligned to the CCSS-M, between 63% and 79% alignment.

- **Content in the CCSS-M-aligned textbooks is not evenly distributed across CCSS-M objectives**. Based on the finding above, the disparity between methods demonstrates that some CCSS objectives are repeatedly covered in the textbooks.

- **The areas of misalignment between the CCSS-aligned textbooks and the CCSS can be largely attributed to a lack of conceptual skills in the textbooks**. Some of the conceptual skills with the largest gaps are memorization and procedures, which account for 88% to 92% of the CCSS-M-aligned textbooks but only 60% of the CCSS-M.

- **The CCSS-M-aligned textbooks are better aligned to previous textbooks than to the CCSS-M**. The analysis found that the CCSS-M-aligned textbooks are highly aligned to their previous counterparts, between 62% and 67% alignment. Using the alternative method, the alignment between older textbooks and their newer CCSS-M-aligned versions increased to between 91% and 96% alignment. The alignment of the older textbooks used in Florida with the CCSS-M-aligned textbooks is unexpectedly high since the CCSS-M were not well aligned to the Florida Sunshine State Standards.

Where to Obtain this Report

http://www.pelhamschools.org/download.axd?file=4b3d1f3d-d615-4798-ab7f-f4eae52ce1bc&dnldType=Resource

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

Porter, A., McMaken, J., Hwang, J., & Yang, R. (2011)
Common Core Standards: The New U.S. Intended Curriculum

Focus

This study compared the content of the intended curriculum as represented by the Common Core State Standards in math and English Language Arts (ELA) Reading with the content of standards in selected states and other countries and with state assessments, as they existed at the time of the study.

Methodology

Researchers examined standards from a selection of states and countries, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards, and the CCSS using the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum. The math and ELA Reading standards and assessments were coded by specialists in both subjects. The degree of focus in these sets of standards was measured two different ways: 1) by the number of cells[*] that contain 80% of the total content, and 2) by the number of cells that contained 1% or more of the total content.

Key Findings

Degree of alignment

- **There was low-to-moderate alignment among the CCSS, the state standards, and the NCTM standards.**

- **Alignment with the CCSS was stronger when state standards in math and reading were aggregated to grade bands (e.g. grades 3-6).**

- **For math, the CCSS represented a modest shift toward higher levels of cognitive demand.** In ELA Reading, the CCSS placed more emphasis on analysis than the aggregate state standards; the states, in the aggregate, emphasized "perform procedures" and "generate."

Degree of focus

- **When focus was measured by examining the number of cells that contain 80% of the total content, the CCSS was more focused than the aggregate of state standards in both math and ELA Reading.** However, the standards of the individual states, on average, are more focused than the CCSS, although the extent of focus varies greatly among states.

- **When focus was measured by examining the number of cells that contained 1% or more of the total content, the CCSS was more focused than the aggregate of state standards in both math and ELA Reading.** However, the standards of individual states, on average, are more focused than the CCSS, although the extent of focus varies greatly among states.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://edr.sagepub.com/content/40/3/103

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[*]A cell is equivalent to the intersection of a standard's topics and cognitive demand. For example, the mathematical topic, factoring, may intersect with three types of cognitive demand: memorize, perform procedures, and demonstrate understanding. According to the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum, there are 217 topics in mathematics and 163 in ELA Reading and five cognitive demands for both subjects. In mathematics, there are 1,085 distinct cells. There are 815 distinct cells in ELA Reading.

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment (also Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments)

Schmidt, W., & Houang, R. (2012)
Curricular Coherence and the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics

Focus

The purpose of this study was to assess if the Common Core State Standards in mathematics (CCSS-M) have the focus and coherence[*] that are characteristic of curricular standards in countries that were high-achieving on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Also, researchers analyzed the alignment of previous state standards to the CCCS-M to predict future achievement on NAEP.

Methodology

Researchers analyzed the focus and coherence of the CCSS-M. Next they compared the congruence[†] and focus of the CCSS-M and of the previous state standards for school year 2008-09 with that of the math standards of high-scoring countries on TIMSS (A+ standards). They also examined the relationship between a) the congruence of previous state standards to the CCSS-M and b) states' performance on the 2009 NAEP in grade 8 math.

Key Findings

- **The CCSS-M are coherent and focused**. The CCSS-M are "very consistent with the international benchmark" (A+ standards) and can be characterized as "world-class standards."

- **State standards varied in their focus and congruence to the CCSS-M**. The states whose math standards had the greatest congruence to the CCSS-M included AL, CA, FL, GA, and IN; the states with the least congruence included AZ, IA, KS, KY, and LA.

- **States whose standards had the greatest amount of congruence to the CCSS-M had higher predicted achievement on the NAEP**. This analysis was conducted by separating the states into two groups. Group B included 13 states with standards of above average congruence to the CCSS-M but below average scores on NAEP; Group A included all other states.

- **The degree of implementation of standards is an important factor when analyzing the relationship between the state standards and student achievement**.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://edr.sagepub.com/content/41/8/294.full.pdf+html?ijkey=Ci4h9RZMnVAuE&keytype=ref&siteid=spedr

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[*] "Focus" is defined in TIMSS as the number of topics covered at each grade that was also aggregated over the first eight grades. The fewer total topics that are covered in grades 1 through 8, the more focused the standards are. "Coherence" is defined by as a logical and sequential progression of topics over time that reflects, when appropriate, the natural hierarchy of a subject or topic.

[†] "Congruence" is the product of five indicators that signified a deviation from the CCSS-M: 1) a topic was introduced earlier; 2) the number of times a topic was covered in a different grade level; 3) a topic was not covered in the grade level intended by the CCSS-M; 4) a topic was introduced later; and 5) a topic had a break in coverage between grades.

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2013)
Common Core in the Schools: A First Look at Reading Assignments

Focus

The purpose of this study was to identify texts used by teachers in English language arts (ELA) assignments, teacher practices in ELA classes, and complexity of the texts in use early in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Methodology

Researchers surveyed 1,154 English teachers in elementary grades 4 and 5, middle schools, and high schools in the 46 states that had adopted the CCSS as of 2013 (including Minnesota, which adopted only the ELA standards, and the District of Columbia).

Key Findings

- **Survey respondents reported that their reading lessons were focused on skills**. Of the participants who taught elementary school, 73% focused on skills; the same was true for 56% of middle school teachers and 46% of high school teachers.

- **Text assignment in elementary classrooms was largely based on students' current reading ability**. Sixty-four percent of participants who taught ELA in elementary schools selected texts based on students' reading levels. Middle school teachers were split between selecting texts based on student ability (38%) or based on grade level (37%), while high school teachers were more likely to select texts based on grade level (47%).

- **Teachers who participated in the survey responded that they are already incorporating informational texts into their lessons**.

- **Most respondents felt that the CCSS would have learning benefits for their students**. However, 11% said that the CCSS would not lead to learning gains in ELA, and 18% said it was too soon tell what impact the CCSS might have on student achievement.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.edexcellence.net/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs/20131023-Common-Core-in-the-Schools-a-First-Look-at-Reading-Assignments.pdf

Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2010)
The State of State Standards—and the Common Core—in 2010

Focus

This study compared the rigor and clarity of the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics standards in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and the Common Core State Standards.

Methodology

Using pre-established criteria, three content experts (one in ELA and two in math) reviewed 102 sets of state standards and the CCSS and assigned each set of standards a "content and rigor" score and a "clarity and purpose" score. The two scores were added to create a final score that was translated into a letter grade. To be considered "clearly superior" or "clearly inferior," a set of state standards had to score 2 points above or below the CCSS (which scored an 8 out of 10 for ELA and a 9 out of 10 for math). A set of standards that was 1 point away from the CCSS was considered "too close to call."

Key Findings

English language arts

- **Two states and D.C. had "clearly superior" standards, and 11 states had standards that were "too close to call. All other states' standards were "clearly inferior."**
  - *While state ELA standards have improved over a decade there are still problems*. These include a focus on metacognition instead of essential content, skimpy expectations, a lack of American literature, inadequate or no specific reading lists, and vague expectations for student writing.
  - *The CCSS has improved on previous state standards but still has some pitfalls*. The CCSS included exemplar texts, stronger expectations for student writing and examples, and a decreased focus on metacognitive reading strategies. However, they are still limited in their focus on American Literature and lack specificity with genres and subgenres.

Mathematics

- **Eleven states and D.C. had standards that were "too close to call," and no state had "clearly superior" standards. All other states' standards were "clearly inferior."**
  - *State math standards also have problems in many or most states*. In particular, a) arithmetic is not a priority; b) standard algorithms are undermined when states offer alternative means of solving particular problems; c) states do not offer specific methods for working with fractions (only 15 states mention "common denominator"); d) language about the use of calculators is vague; and e) functions are introduced to students without context and often too early.
  - *The CCSS in math are "exemplary in many ways."* They focus on the most important math content, include clear guidance, and require appropriate levels of sophistication from elementary students. But the high school math standards lack clarity and focus.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.edexcellence.net/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs/SOSSandCC2010_FullReportFINAL_8.pdf

WestEd (2013)

Implementing the Common Core State Standards:
Articulating Course Sequences across K-12 and Higher Education Systems

Focus

This study examined the course sequencing strategies and variations of strategies used by Core to College states.[*] For the purposes of the study, course sequences were defined as "the patterns by which students move from one course to the next on an efficient trajectory, building deeper content and fluency as they progress from grade to grade."

Methodology

A 36-question survey was sent to the Alignment Directors (ADs) who are responsible for overseeing the development of Core to College work in their state. A total of 11 ADs participated. The survey focused on Core to College initiatives that are guided by the Common Core State Standards and the CCSS-aligned assessments scheduled for implementation in the 2014-15 school year.

Key Findings

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

- **At the time of the study, the CCSS were not a major element in course sequencing discussions**. Most respondents said that their states did not, at the time of the study, have thoroughly developed plans at the local or state level for talking about K-12 and postsecondary sequencing alignment in relation to the CCSS. Only one state had a well very developed plan to discuss course sequencing and the CCSS at the state level, and no AD reported very well developed plans at the local level.

- **Most ADs said that discussions about course sequencing were a lower priority than other CCSS alignment topics**. Most ADs reported that they were not heavily involved in discussions about course sequencing.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.wested.org/wp-content/files_mf/1379447958C2C_Implementing_Common_Core_State_Standards.pdf

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[*] The member states in the Core to College Initiative are Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington.

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

Williamson, G., Fitzgerald, J., & Stenner, J. (2013)
The Common Core State Standards' Quantitative Text Complexity Trajectory:
Figuring Out How Much Complexity Is Enough

Focus

The purpose of this study was to have a more nuanced discussion of the recommended trajectory of student exposure to text complexity that is presented in the Common Core State Standards. Since multiple text-complexity trajectories can lead to the CCSS end-of-high-school target, knowledge of the multiple trajectories, in conjunction with a set of guiding principles for decision making, can support educators' and policy makers' implementation of the CCSS.

Methodology

For this report, text complexity is measured in Lexile units.[*] The authors established an equation that represented the complexity of the texts to which students are currently exposed from grades 1 through 12 and the recommended level of exposure needed for students to achieve college and career readiness according to the CCSS for grade 12. Using the equation, researchers developed alternate trajectories of text complexity to achieve the CCSS-recommended level of text understanding by 12th grade. (See the study report for more detailed methodology.)

Key Findings

- **There are multiple alternative trajectories for text complexity exposure**. Some trajectories reflect substantially increased complexity in earlier grades while other trajectories emphasize raising text-complexity levels in later grades.

- **Each trajectory has benefits and drawbacks**. For example, introducing complex texts too early in a student's academic career may thwart later progress in reading; however, waiting until middle or later grades to increase text complexity may frustrate some students, especially those who are struggling readers.

- "**The CCSS quantitative standard for text complexity exposure provides educators and policy makers some decision-making flexibility**." This flexibility allows districts, schools, or classroom teachers to better tailor text complexity exposure to the unique situation of their students.

- **Educators' decisions about choice of trajectory should be guided by three principles.** Educators should have an evidence-based understanding about how much challenge is beneficial to students for particular reading outcomes; consider the impact of raising text-complexity expectations at specific grade levels in relation to what is known about how learning to read develops over time; and account for local considerations.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://edr.sagepub.com/content/42/2/59.abstract

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[*] The Lexile scale ranges from below 200 to above 1600; a level of 300 Lexiles or below is roughly associated with 1st grade, and a Lexile range of 940 to 1210 is roughly associated with grades 11 and 12.

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment (also Governance & Leadership)

Wohlstetter, P., Buck, B., Houston, D., and Smith, C. (In Press)
Common Core, Uncommon Theory of Action: CEOs in New York City

Focus

With attention focused on three foundational pillars that were designed to facilitate the autonomy of principals (called "CEOs"), researchers analyzed New York City's efforts to implement the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).[*]

Methodology

Researchers conducted roughly 30 semi-structured interviews across the entire NYC education system between 2011 and 2013. Interviewees included NYC Department of Education (DOE) staff; Children First Network (CFN) cluster leaders, individual leaders, and coaches for English, math, special education, and English language learners; and CEOs, school administrative personnel, and teachers. Interviews were transcribed and coded; the resulting analysis was triangulated with archival documents and policies.

Key Findings

- **Two NYC DOE policies facilitated the role of the CFNs in supporting schools' implementation of the CCSS**. The first, a set of Citywide Instructions Expectations (CIE), placed a priority on important reforms and provided yearly outlines for implementation strategies. The second policy was a shift in the Quality Review process that reflected the CIE requirements as they pertained to the CCLS. These two policies provided clarity and consistency to schools as they implemented the CCLS.

- **The CFNs played key roles in supporting schools with CCLS implementation**. The first role the CFNs played was to improve communication between NYC DOE and individual schools; researchers found that the CFNs enhanced communication in both directions—from the top-down and bottom-up. The second key role the CFNs played was to develop and provide professional development supports for individual schools as they implemented the CCLS.

- **Researchers found two main challenges with CCLS implementation**. First, the NYC DOE placed too much emphasis on student assessment tools but not enough emphasis on curriculum support. Second, the relationships between CFNs and individual schools were complicated by structural and organizational features of the program; researchers specifically cited geography and the large number of member schools in some CFNs as challenges.

Where to Obtain This Report

Wohlstetter, P., Buck, B., Houston, D., & Smith, C. (In Press). Common Core, uncommon theory of action: CEOs in New York City. In A. Daly & K. Finnigan (eds.) *Thinking systematically: Improving districts under pressure.* Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

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[*] 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.

Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

Wolf, M.K., Wang, Y., Huang, B.H., & Blood, I. (2014)
Investigating the Language Demands in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Learners: A Comparison Study of Standards

Focus

The purpose of this study was to examine the similarities and differences in the language skills and tasks between the Common Core State Standards for English language arts (CCSS-ELA) and other state ELA and ELP (English Language Proficiency) standards for grade 8. This study also looked at teachers' interpretation of the CCSS and their perceived challenges with teaching the content in the CCSS to English language learners.

Methods

The researchers developed a coding structure derived from the CCSS-ELA. This structure was used to compare language skills and tasks found in the CCSS-ELA to the ELA and ELP standards in California, Florida, and New Jersey. In addition, they conducted a focus group with three English as a second language (ESL) and two ELA Grade 8 teachers from middle schools in New Jersey.

Key Findings

- **The extent of overlap between the states' standards and the CCSS-ELA varied with a low to moderate level of similarities.** The amount of overlap ranged from 21% to 85%, depending on the standards and the skill.

- **The ELA standards had more overlap with the CCSS than the ELP standards did.** The CCSS reading skills and tasks that appeared in all standards include (1) analyzing the development and interaction of characters, events, and ideas, (2) comprehending words and phrases in context, (3) analyzing how word choices shape meaning or tone, (4) analyzing the structure/organization of texts, (5) integrating content from multiple resources, and (6) comparing and contrasting texts of similar themes or topics. For listening and speaking, none of the CCSS-derived skills and tasks was observed across all three states' ELA standards.

- **The CCSS had fewer objectives but more higher-order language skills and tasks than the state standards.**

- **ELL students will need more opportunities to practice higher-order academic language skills to meet the CCSS standards.** The teachers in the focus group identified two major challenges to meeting the new standards:
  - ELLs need to acquire foundational language skills (decoding, fluency, and word recognition) while performing higher-order (evaluating, synthesizing, and analyzing) skills expected in the standards.
  - Economically disadvantaged ELL students may not have access to all the tools and technology that would allow them to achieve all objectives of the CCSS.

Where to Obtain This Report

Wolf, M. K., Wang, Y., Huang, B.H., & Blood, I. (2014). Investigating the language demands in the Common Core State Standards for English language learners: A comparison study of standards. *Middle Grades Research Journal*, *9*(1), pp. 35-52

Cost Analysis

Pioneer Institute (2012)
National Cost of Aligning States and Localities to the Common Core Standards

Focus

The purpose of this study was to engage education stakeholders and policymakers in an informed dialogue about the likely cost of Common Core State Standards implementation.

Methods

Researchers focused on specific components of CCSS implementation, including assessment, professional development, instructional materials, and technology infrastructure and support. They also structured their cost analysis around three categories of expenses: one-time costs, year 1 operational costs, and ongoing annual operational costs for years 2-7. While the primary sources of data were "assumptions drawn from experience-based cost estimates by state or local school officials," data collection for each expense category differed. Researchers tried to present the middle-of-the-road costs and only included mandatory expenses (for example, they included summative assessments but not optional interim assessments offered by testing groups).

Key Findings

- **Professional development: $5.26 billion across CCSS-adopting states**
  - This is a one-time projected cost for experienced teachers and can be phased in over a period of years leading up to assessments intended to hold students accountable for learning the standards. This figure does not include professional development estimates for new teachers, and it is assumed that teacher training programs will take responsibility for preparing teacher candidates for the CCSS.

- **Instructional materials: $2.47 billion across CCSS-adopting states**
  - This is a one-time projected cost and should be secured before teachers are expected to implement the CCSS in their classrooms. Researchers did not consider this an ongoing expense because textbooks and instructional materials need to routinely be replaced regardless of the standards.

- **Assessments: $177.2 million for consortia-member states.**
  - This is the projected total cost of assessment per year for states that are members of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) or the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. These anticipated costs are annual rather than one-time and do not include the start-up costs that were funded by the federal government.

- **Technology infrastructure and support: $6.87 billion for consortia-member states**
  - The projected $6.87 billion includes $2.8 billion in one-time costs, $326 million in year 1 operational costs, and $624 million in ongoing costs for years 2-7. This component includes computers, wiring and bandwidth, training and technical support, and power.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.accountabilityworks.org/photos/Cmmn_Cr_Cst_Stdy.Fin.2.22.12.pdf

Cost Analysis

Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2012b)

Putting a Price Tag on the Common Core: How Much Will Smart Implementation Cost?

Focus

This report outlines various approaches to implementing the Common Core State Standards and evaluates the potential costs and advantages of each approach.

Methodology

Data was collected from seven school districts[*], state Race to the Top applications (1st and 2nd round), state School Improvement Grants plans, state Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver applications (first round), budgetary data from state and district websites, and interviews with organizations associated with education or curriculum development. Researchers used this data to examine the cost of developing new instructional materials; administering, scoring, and reporting the results of new CCSS-aligned assessments; and providing professional development to principals, teachers, and support staff. These three costs were then categorized under three approaches to implementation: "business as usual," "bare bones," and "balanced implementation."[†]

Key Findings

- **Business as usual (also known as the "traditional" model) was the most expensive implementation model**. The least expensive model was the bare bones. Balanced Implementation fell in between the other two models.

- **Business as usual implementation of the CCSS would equal about 3% of yearly K-12 spending.** This figure could potentially drop to 1.5% if states' implementation strategies took advantage of technology to replace costs associated with purchasing hard-copy textbooks and providing in-person professional development. Since implementation is likely to span several years, these figures would be spread across all implementation years, further reducing the annual cost.

- **Regardless of the implementation model, the current expenditures for developing instructional materials; administering, scoring, and reporting the results of state assessments; and conducting professional development will comprise a significant share of CCSS implementation costs.**

- **The CCSS may give states the chance to evaluate and redesign standards implementation and/or the delivery of education as a whole.** These changes could include collaboration across states, across schools, or between traditional and charter schools.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.edexcellence.net/publications/putting-a-price-tag-on-the-common-core.html

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[*] The seven districts that participated in this study were Albuquerque, Atlanta, Boston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Chicago, Cleveland, and Jefferson County (Kentucky). .

[†] Because this was a transitional look at CCSS implementation, researchers purposely omitted the costs of remedial services, innovations in personnel management, development of assessment tools, upgrading of schools of education, realignment of learning expectations in early childhood education and postsecondary education, and any technological infrastructure needed to accommodate online assessments.

Achieve (2013)
Closing the Expectations Gap

Focus

The purpose of this study is to examine states' K-12 policies regarding content standards, graduation requirements, assessments, and accountability and data systems.

Methodology

Researchers sent surveys to 50 states and the District of Columbia, and 49 states and D.C. responded.

Key Findings

The report included questions and 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.

- **Forty-five states and the District of Columbia had adopted the Common Core State Standards**. The researchers distinguished between adoption and implementation, and report that most states expected that after the standards were adopted it would take three to four years before the CCSS would be fully implemented. The majority of states expected to have implemented the CCSS or their own version of college- and career-readiness (CCR) standards by school year 2013-14.

- **Most states had not raised graduation requirements to the college- and career-readiness level**. Nineteen states and the District of Columbia had adopted graduation requirements that call on students to take courses that prepare them to meet the CCSS or other CCR standards. Of these, seven states and D.C. will require students to participate in courses aligned to the CCR standards to graduate by 2016. (Five of those seven states and D.C. had adopted the CCSS in mathematics and English language arts (ELA), and one state had adopted the CCSS in ELA only.) Twelve states place 9th graders into a CCR course of study as the "default" curriculum but allow students to *opt out* of this curriculum or individual courses. An additional seven states offer diplomas or courses of study that are geared to the CCR level, but students must *opt into* them; the default graduation course requirements in these states are below the CCR level.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.achieve.org/files/2013ClosingtheExpectationsGapReport.pdf

Governance & Leadership (also Implementation)

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

Governance & Leadership (also Implementation)

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:

  o *Generally assisting states and school districts with CCSS implementation-related activities*

  o *Providing state and district professional development activities for teachers and principals regarding the CCSS*

  o *Helping states with the costs of implementing the CCSS-aligned assessments being developed by the PARCC and Smarter Balanced assessment consortia*

  o *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

Governance & Leadership (also Implementation; Teacher Preparation)

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

Consortium for Policy Research in Education (2013b)
Slowing Entropy: Instructional Policy Design in New York City, 2011-12

Focus

The purpose of this study was to look at how New York City designed and implemented its Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIEs), which gave principals and teachers specific tasks or activities related to implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards[*] (CCLS).

Methodology

The researcher coded the 2011-12 CIE policy statement and identified specific elements that reflected "deliberate decisions" by policymakers to influence implementation. Interviews were also conducted with eight central office employees who were instrumental in developing the CIE policy. The interviews were conducted as a foundation for another study (see Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2013a).

Key Findings

- **In the 2011-12 CIE policy, the researcher identified eight components where policymakers used deliberate phrasing to influence the implementation of the CCLS**. These phrases explicitly encouraged principals and teachers to—
  - Work as teams
  - Emphasize student work
  - Connect student work to the CCLS
  - Get all students to experience two CCLS-aligned tasks, one in math and one in ELA
  - Incorporate the CCLS within their curriculum
  - Focus on specific Common Core standards
  - Reiterate emphasis on collaborative inquiry
  - Share lessons learned

- **Based on the analysis of the 2011-12 CIE policy and interviews, the researcher found five attributes that might make instructional policy more resilient and less likely to disintegrate during implementation.** These include—
  - Focusing on a few manageable goals
  - Focusing the policy toward activities that are likely to encourage meaningful change in instructional practices
  - Designing activities so that implementers have an understanding of the larger instructional process
  - Having focused goals and activities that align with previous districtwide reforms
  - Anticipating the needs of the implementers and beginning to build resources and support structures to meet the need

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.cpre.org/slowing-entropy

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[*] 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.

Gallup & Education Week (2013)
Gallup-Education Week Superintendent Panel – Inaugural Survey Findings

Focus

The purpose of this study was to track and understand the opinions of K-12 superintendents on important educational topics. This is the baseline survey, and future surveys will take place every quarter.

Methods

Gallup administered 2,586 online surveys to a sample of school district leaders throughout the country.

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 (58%) of respondents said that the CCSS will improve the quality of education in their district.** Fewer participants said that the CCSS would decrease the quality of education (8%) or have no effect on education (30%).

- **The majority (54%) of district participants disagreed that the CCSS would prevent individualized learning.** Conversely, 21% of respondents agreed that the CCSS would prevent individualized learning, while 22% selected a neutral response.

- **Most respondents (80%) said that the federal government was not providing adequate funding to implement the CCSS.** Only 5% responded that their district had received adequate federal support for CCSS implementation, and 10% selected a neutral response.

- **The majority (68%) were not collaborating with local postsecondary institutions around CCSS implementation.** About a quarter (28%) of respondents were working with local postsecondary institutions around the implementation of the CCSS.

- **The majority (56%) of district respondents said that the CCSS would help make education in the U.S. more globally competitive**. Only 5% said the CCSS would make the U.S. less globally competitive, and 33% foresaw no impact on the global competitiveness of U.S. education.

- **Most district officials (75%) responded that the CCSS would provide more consistency in the quality of education across school districts and states.** Twenty-one percent of the respondents said that the CCSS would not provide more consistency.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.gallup.com/strategicconsulting/162926/gallup-superintendents-panel-inaugural-report.aspx

Governance & Leadership

Kendall, J., Ryan, S., Alpert, A., Richardson, A., & Schwols, A. (2012)
State Adoption of the Common Core State Standards: The 15 Percent Rule

Focus

The purpose of this study was to identify how states and other regions that have adopted the Common Core State Standards are engaging their freedom to add 15% of their own content to the CCSS.

Methods

Researchers examined CCSS-adoption policies in all states and regions that had adopted the standards. Information culled from policies was coded. This process was completed twice, once when researchers were focused explicitly on references to the 15% rule and again when researchers reviewed websites and documents without explicit reference to the 15% rule.

Key Findings

- **Most states and regions had not yet added content to the CCSS.** Thirty states and regions that had adopted the CCSS had not publicly stated their intention to employ the 15% rule, and their standards do not contain additional content. Eight states have publicly available statements saying they decided to not implement the 15% rule—four of those states have reserved the right to add content to their standards in the future.

- **Eleven CCSS-adopting states had taken advantage of the 15% rule.** The states that added content are Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, New York, and New Mexico.

- **There is no prescription for how standards are to be added.** Since states are able to add different content in a variety of ways, there is variance between what states added and how they chose to incorporate new content. For example, states may have added content to one set of standards but not the other, or states may have added content that was designed to be targeted to a subgroup of students through optional courses and are not required of all students.

- **Researchers included a list of the specific academic content that was added by each state to the CCSS under the 15% rule.**

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.mcrel.org/products-and-services/products/product-listing/01_99/product-17

Governance & Leadership (also Communications & Public Opinion)

Kornhaber, M., Griffith, K., & Tyler, A (2014)
It's Not Education by Zip Code Anymore–But What is It? Conceptions of Equity under the Common Core

Focus

The purpose of this study was to ascertain how CCSS "policy entrepreneurs" viewed the role and meaning of equity within the reform.

Methodology

Researchers interviewed 11 CCSS policy entrepreneurs who were active in moving the CCSS from a conceptual reform idea to state adoption. The interview transcripts were coded by three researchers. They devised a framework for characterizing policy entrepreneurs' views on equity:
- An "equal" view, which assumes that equal inputs—especially standards, expectations, opportunities, curriculum resources, and instruction—will generate more equal student outcomes
- An "equalizing" view, which assumes that varying school inputs across educational setting are required to attain more equal educational outcomes
- An "expansive" view, which assumes that achieving more equal outcomes requires broad educational, social, health, and economic inputs that vary with educational contexts.

Key Findings

- **Interviewees defined equity in terms of school inputs that would equalize student outcomes**. All participants held an equal view. Several also held an equalizing view. One mentioned an expansive view.

- **Equity played a central role in the CCSS**. All interviewees said that equity for disadvantaged students was a major factor in the formation and goals of the reform.

- **Educational equity was linked with economic benefits**. Interviewees agreed that individuals would benefit from a stronger education, and the nation would benefit from greater international competitiveness. They also held that common standards would create economies of scale and promote more efficient and equitable distribution of school resources They stated that common standards would also promote better teacher preparation and professional development.. However, participants acknowledged that resources and capacity would still be unequal between and within states.

- **The CCSS alone will not fix the problem**. Participants understood that the CCSS alone would not reduce educational inequities and that federal and state funds would need to be targeted to high-risks districts and schools. Participants had conflicting views about whether the CCSS may provide a legal platform for targeting additional resources to high-needs students.

- **The CCSS will not improve equity outside school walls**. Interviewees acknowledged that the CCSS would not likely reduce educational inequity in communities with needs beyond those addressed by K-12 schooling. The authors maintain that to produce more equitable student outcomes, reforms will need to build on an expansive view of equity.

Where to Obtain This Article

http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/1308www.edweek.org/link

Governance & Leadership (also Communications & Public Opinion)
McDonnell, L. & Weatherford, S. (2013b)
Evidence Use and the Common Core State Standards Movement:
From Problem Definition to Policy Adoption

Focus

The purpose of this study was to examine how research and other types of evidence were used in the development and adoption of the Common Core State Standards.

Methodology

Researchers interviewed 111 CCSS stakeholders, including leaders of the CCSS, members of the work groups and committees that wrote and validated the CCSS, national and state education policy makers, education policy researchers, and members of groups that are critical of the CCSS. Interview data was categorized by the policy stage in which the interviewee participated. (Three policy stages were used: problem definition/solution, policy design, and policy enactment.) The recorded accounts of types of evidence used were compared to hypotheses that researchers derived from policy analysis literature.

Key Findings

- **The research used to define the problem and pose a potential solution for the CCSS included international comparisons and state standards comparisons**. More specifically, the people associated with initiating the discussion of the CCSS cited low achievement on international assessments; the link between education and global economic competitiveness; national achievement gaps in educational achievement depending on race, social class, or geographical location; and state standards that vary in rigor and depth.

- **Four factors shaped evidence use during the development and validation of standards**. The first was the assertion that the development of the CCSS needed to be driven by research to avoid ideological debates. Second, a lack of peer-reviewed research to help shape the CCSS meant that standards writers would need to use other forms of evidence; the final product was based on "research and evidence." Third, there was a desire to include stakeholders in addition to educational researchers in the CCSS creation process, such as teachers, teacher union leaders, and state department of education personnel. Fourth, "a grounding in the available research and evidence" was one of the guiding principles used by the validation committee. Because of the lack of research some of the decisions made by committee members were based on professional judgment.

- **During the state adoption stage, stakeholders often customized previously used evidence to address various state audiences**. Researchers point out that evidence was tailored to address the need for states to adopt standards quickly to meet federal requirements and the need for state policymakers to see the rigor of the CCSS compared with their previous state standards.

Where to Obtain This Report

McDonnell, L. & Weatherford, S. (2013). Evidence use and the Common Core State Standards movement: From problem definition to policy adoption. *American Journal of Education, 120*(1), 1-25.

Governance & Leadership (also Implementation)
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

Governance & Leadership (also Implementation)

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

Governance & Leadership (also Implementation)

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 15[*] 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

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[*]These 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).

Watt, M. (2011)
The Common Core State Standards Initiative: An Overview

Focus

The purpose of this study was to detail national and state decision-makers' choices throughout the creation, development, diffusion, and adoption of the Common Core State Standards.

Methods

The researcher reviewed documents and verified the analysis through communication with national and state officials involved with the CCSS. The analysis was shaped by a decision-oriented evaluation model that included decisions at four stages: planning, structuring, implementing, and recycling.

Key Findings

- *Planning decisions:* Multiple organizations made different but significant contributions at the planning stage, including convening conferences, producing research, and publishing recommended next steps. Watt highlights as key actors the American Diploma Project, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the International Benchmarking Advisory Group, the National Research Council of the National Academies, the James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy, and the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government.

- *Structuring decisions:* This stage was led by CCSSO and the National Governors Association (NGA), which together developed a process and timeline for standards creation and implementation and an agreement that established the purpose, background, and benefits to participating states.

- *Implementing decisions:* The implementation stage consisted of multiple segments:
  - The work of *developing college and career ready standards* was coordinated by CCSSO and NGA, and content experts were drawn primarily from Achieve, ACT, and the College Entrance Examination Board. Draft standards were internally and publicly reviewed.
  - The work of *developing K-12 standards* was coordinated by CCSSO and NGA, and content experts were drawn primarily from schools, state education agencies, and postsecondary institutions. Drafts were internally and publicly reviewed, and the final set of standards was validated by a panel of national and international experts selected by governors and chiefs.
  - The standards were *disseminated* through conferences of the National Association of State Boards of Education, National Parent Teacher Association, and Council of State Governments.
  - Many education stakeholders were involved in *adopting the CCSS*, including CCSSO, NGA, Achieve, the Alliance for Excellent Education, local organizations which developed curricula and assessments, and the Albert Shanker Institute, among others.

- *Recycling the initiative decisions:* This stage was spearheaded by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, which funded five papers about governance models that could influence the CCSS during and after implementation, and made recommendations for future governance.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED522271.pdf

Governance & Leadership (also Content, Curriculum, & Alignment)

Wohlstetter, P., Buck, B., Houston, D., and Smith, C. (In Press)
Common Core, Uncommon Theory of Action: CEOs in New York City

Focus

With attention focused on three foundational pillars that were designed to facilitate the autonomy of principals (called "CEOs"), researchers analyzed New York City's efforts to implement the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).[*]

Methodology

Researchers conducted roughly 30 semi-structured interviews across the entire NYC education system between 2011 and 2013. Interviewees included NYC Department of Education (DOE) staff; Children First Network (CFN) cluster leaders, individual leaders, and coaches for English, math, special education, and English language learners; and CEOs, school administrative personnel, and teachers. Interviews were transcribed and coded; the resulting analysis was triangulated with archival documents and policies.

Key Findings

- **Two NYC DOE policies facilitated the role of the CFNs in supporting schools' implementation of the CCSS**. The first, a set of Citywide Instructions Expectations (CIE), placed a priority on important reforms and provided yearly outlines for implementation strategies. The second policy was a shift in the Quality Review process that reflected the CIE requirements as they pertained to the CCLS. These two policies provided clarity and consistency to schools as they implemented the CCLS.

- **The CFNs played key roles in supporting schools with CCLS implementation**. The first role the CFNs played was to improve communication between NYC DOE and individual schools; researchers found that the CFNs enhanced communication in both directions—from the top-down and bottom-up. The second key role the CFNs played was to develop and provide professional development supports for individual schools as they implemented the CCLS.

- **Researchers found two main challenges with CCLS implementation**. First, the NYC DOE placed too much emphasis on student assessment tools but not enough emphasis on curriculum support. Second, the relationships between CFNs and individual schools were complicated by structural and organizational features of the program; researchers specifically cited geography and the large number of member schools in some CFNs as challenges.

Where to Obtain This Report

Wohlstetter, P., Buck, B., Houston, D., & Smith, C. (In Press). Common Core, uncommon theory of action: CEOs in New York City. In A. Daly & K. Finnigan (eds.) *Thinking systematically: Improving districts under pressure.* Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

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[*] 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.

Wohlstetter, P., Houston, D., & Buck, B. (2014)
Networks in New York City: Implementing the Common Core

Focus

This study described how networks facilitated early implementation of the Common Core State Standards in New York City in order to uncover how different network structures advance large-scale institutions.

Methodology

Researchers conducted interviews with organizational and instructional leaders at two Children First Networks (CFNs) and two charter management organizations (CMOs), Empire and Liberty. Both CFNs were part of an ongoing study and worked with schools with average student performance compared with schools in other CFNs.

Key Findings

- **The CFNs were better designed to support schools in navigating city policies than to help them establish and implement curriculum aligned to the CCSS.** The CFNs were successful at clarifying district expectations, prioritizing policies for school leaders, and piloting new CCSS-aligned rubrics. However, they were less helpful with curriculum and professional development designed to help teachers create curriculum—something many school leaders requested. CFNs used a "coach-the-coaches" model to reach the most teachers with limited CFN staff, and achievement coaches conducted in-school professional development sessions. Other challenges faced by CFNs included limited district resources, too little time to develop implementation strategies tailored to schools, and long travel times to reach schools that were far apart.

- **The Empire CMO set implementation targets and served as a resource for curriculum and instructional materials, but allowed school leaders to decide the best methods for meeting the targets.** Empire's curriculum and instruction department created CMO-wide instructional expectations and assessments that matched the scope and sequence of the CCSS. The process included "star teachers" who wanted to be involved. Empire also arranged workshops provided by a third-party, and the curriculum and instruction department hosted weekend retreats that offered professional development opportunities. A survey conducted by the CMO showed that teachers liked the support because it allowed them to focus on teaching.

- **Liberty CMO, which did not have the equivalent of a curriculum and instruction department, afforded individual schools much more autonomy with CCSS implementation.** Liberty's central office did not have a defined plan for implementation and focused on teacher-led professional development through a coach-the-coaches model. The CMO also used third-party providers and held workshops every Friday with instructional specialists. With limited support from the central office and a reliance on trickle-down instructional strategies, Liberty "had difficulty finding the right balance of authority and relative autonomy within their networks."

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.cpre.org/sites/default/files/journal/2039_educationalpolicy-2014.pdf

Implementation (also Governance & Leadership)

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

Implementation

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

Implementation (also Professional Development)

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

Implementation (also Testing & Assessment)
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

Implementation (also Governance & Leadership)

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

Implementation

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

Implementation (also Teaching & Professional Development)

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

Implementation (also Testing & Assessment)

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

Implementation (also Governance & Leadership; Teacher Preparation)

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

Implementation (also Content, Curriculum, & Alignment)

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

Implementation

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

Implementation

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

Implementation

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

Implementation

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

Implementation

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 Standards[*] (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

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[*] 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.

Implementation

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)

Implementation

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)

Implementation

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)

Implementation

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.[*] 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)

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

Implementation

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-thee 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

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Implementation (also Governance & Leadership)

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

Implementation (also Governance & Leadership)

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

Implementation

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

Implementation

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)

Implementation

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:

- o **Consistency** in learning goals for students from different schools and/or different states (25% very positive, 47% positive, 2% negative, 1% very negative)
- o **Clarity** about what students are expected to learn (17%, 48%, 3%, 1%)
- o The overall **quality** of the education students receive (15%, 45%, 4%, 1%)
- o The degree to which students will be **prepared for college** (15%, 43%, 3%, 1%)
- o The degree to which students will be **prepared for careers** (12%, 39%, 3%, 1%)
- o Students' preparedness for **competing in a global economy** (12%, 38%, 3%, 1%)
- o Students' ability to **think critically and use reasoning skills** (24%, 50%, 1%, 1%)
- o Students' ability to **effectively present their ideas based on evidence** (21%, 50%, 1%, 1%)
- o 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)

Implementation

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)

Implementation (also Governance & Leadership)

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 15[*] 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

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[*]These 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).

Implementation

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

Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning at WestEd (2012)
CenterView: Willing But Not Yet Ready: A Glimpse of California Teachers' Preparedness for the Common Core State Standards

Focus

The purpose of this study was to determine if teachers in California were prepared to teach the Common Core State Standards.

Methodology

Researchers brought together six focus groups that included teachers from Sacramento, San Francisco, and San Diego. The focus groups were designed to represent elementary school teachers with fewer than 10 years of classroom experience and elementary school teachers with more than 10 years of classroom experience, as well as middle and high school teachers of mathematics, science, history/social studies, and English language arts.

Key Findings

- **Participants were not very familiar with the CCSS**. Once the teachers received a brief description of the CCSS, they expressed appreciation for the standards' focus on critical thinking, real world relevance, and consistency of the standards across grades. The most skeptical participants were elementary school teachers with more than 10 years of classroom experience, who were unsure of the lasting power of the new standards.

- **While generally enthusiastic about the standards, teachers did express some concerns**. When talking about the transition from the previous California standards to the CCSS, teachers talked about the need for greater autonomy in teaching, increased interdisciplinary readings, progressively complex texts, and an emphasis on the reading process over content. Science teachers specifically cited concerns about losing time for hands-on activities as the CCSS shift the focus of instruction toward reading and understanding informational texts.

- **Middle and high school mathematics and science teachers said they would need additional training**. Specifically, mathematics teachers said they have never been taught math in the manner required by the CCSS, had never taught in the manner required by the CCSS, and were unsure how to teach in that way.

- **Elementary school teachers with less than 10 years of classroom experience wanted guidance in the early stages of implementation**. Teachers in this group wanted to make sure that they were on the right track when transitioning from the previous California standards to the CCSS. Elementary school teachers with more than 10 years of classroom experience said they were prepared and agreed that less experienced elementary school teachers would need guidance. Middle and high school math teachers expressed the view that all elementary school teachers would need guidance because students taught under the previous standards were entering middle and high school unprepared for the rigor of the math curriculum.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.wested.org/wp-content/files_mf/139932138032106february12.pdf

Teacher Preparation (also Governance & Leadership; Implementation)

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

Teacher Preparation (also Teaching & Professional Development)

Consortium for Policy Research in Education (2014)
From the Inside In: An Examination of Common Core Knowledge and Communication in Schools

Focus

This study explored how the dissemination of knowledge and influence of the Common Core Learning Standards[*] (CCLS) may help teachers engage with and influence the implementation of these standards.

Methodology

Using the same sample as a previous CPRE study (see 2013a), researchers selected three schools that were highly engaged in CCLS activities, three that were moderately engaged, and three with low levels of CCLS engagement (one school withdrew). Data was collected through a school faculty survey that focused on faculty's CCLS knowledge, understanding, and implementation of the standards. The analysis was conducted on individual administrators, coaches, and teachers; grade-level teams for elementary school; and subject-matter teams for middle school. When analyzing teams, researchers focused on the number of advice-seeking connections between team members (density), the number of times teachers on a team sought advice from a team member (frequency), and the impact of the given advice (influence).

Key Findings

- **Knowledge of the CCLS varied by subject and position**. School faculty scored higher on CCLS knowledge tests for English language arts (CCLS-ELA) than on CCLS knowledge tests for math (CCLS-M). Administrators and coaches scored higher than classroom teachers did.

- **Knowledge of the CCLS-ELA was related to seeking resources outside of the school**. This was not true for CCLS-M, however. The people most likely to seek resources outside of the school were administrators and coaches. English teachers in middle schools were also more likely to seek resources outside of the school than the math teachers in those schools.

- **In elementary and middle schools, team knowledge and communication about the CCLS varied**. Researchers also found little connection between team knowledge and team advice seeking. However, there was a connection between seeking knowledge outside of schools and requests for information. Researchers also found that teachers were able to identify and use sources of knowledge within their school.
  Across the eight schools, 37 out of 456 respondents were more likely than other participants to receive requests for assistance about the CCLS and aligned-assessments. These people were more likely to have higher knowledge about the CCLS-ELA and the CCLS-M and to seek resources outside the school. Roughly two-thirds of these people were administrators or coaches, and the remaining third were classroom teachers.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.cpre.org/fromtheinsidein

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[*] 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.

Teacher Preparation

Graybeal, C. (2013)
Learning to Look for the Standards for Mathematical Practice

Focus

The purpose of this study was to examine how the use of the "Common Core Look-fors" iPad application affected pre-service teachers' understanding of the Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP) related to teaching the Common Core State Standards in mathematics (CCSS-M), as well as their ability to identify and collect evidence of students' engagement with the SMP.

Methodology

Twenty-two pre-service teachers of early education and special education who were enrolled in the same elementary mathematics methods course were provided with an iPad and instructions on how to load and use the "Common Core Look-fors" application. The pre-service teachers used the application in their own class sessions and in their internships at local elementary schools when they implemented four open-ended problems with their students.

Key Findings

- **Pre-service teachers reported that the application helped them to become more knowledgeable about the SMP**. Most respondents, 77%, felt that the application increased their knowledge "some" or "a great deal."

- **The majority of pre-service teachers said that the application increased their ability to identify instances of student engagement with the CCSS-M SMP**.

- **Less than half of the pre-service teachers felt that the application helped them collect evidence of student engagement with the CCSS-M SMP**. However, because of local policies, 6 of the 22 teachers were not allowed to use the photo or video components of the application, which may account for the percentage.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1015759.pdf

Teacher Preparation

Michigan State University (2013b)
Implementing the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics: What We Know about Teachers of Mathematics in 41 States

Focus

The purpose of this study was to assess teachers' awareness of the Common Core State Standards in mathematics (CCSS-M) in order to provide information to state, district, and school leaders that would help them implement the CCSS-M.

Methodology

Researchers drew results from a survey of 12,000 mathematics teachers in grades 1 through 12 who worked in states that had adopted the CCSS-M by the spring of 2011. The study was designed to sample teachers that are representative of the state in which they taught. The number of teachers sampled in each state was roughly representative of the state's population.

Key Findings

- **Teacher awareness of the CCSS varied by state**. In at least one state 68% of teachers had heard of the CCSS, but in at least one other state 100% of respondents had heard of the CCSS. The percentage of teachers who had read the CCSS-M for their grade varied similarly among states.

- **After having seen the CCSS-M for their grade, 77% of the math teachers said these standards were "somewhat" or "pretty much" the same as their previous state mathematics standards**. Before the math teachers were presented with the CCSS-M for their grade, a lower percentage (57%) said the two sets of standards were similar.

- **The majority of respondents at all grade levels said their teaching was primarily determined by state standards**. Fewer chose district standards, the adopted textbook, or other options.

- **Surveyed teachers liked the idea of having common standards across states**. The percentage of teachers supporting common standards varied little among states, ranging from 88% to 98%.

- **Most teachers reported that they currently taught topics that were covered by the CCSS-M in their grade level**. When given a list of topics that included a series of grade level topics, two topics above grade level, and two topics below grade level, between 76% and 85% of teachers, depending on grade level, reported teaching the on-grade CCSS topics.

- **Teacher preparedness varied by grade level**. For example, thirty-one percent of 1st grade teachers and 51% of 8th grade teachers reported that they already taught and felt comfortable with grade level CCSS-M content, while 52% of 1st grade teachers and 30% of 8th grade teachers said they already taught grade level CCSS-M content but did *not* feel comfortable with it. Fifteen percent of 1st grade teachers and 20% of 8th grade teachers said they did not teach grade level CCSS-M content.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://education.msu.edu/epc/publications/documents/WP33ImplementingtheCommonCoreStandardsfor MathematicsWhatWeknowaboutTeacherofMathematicsin41S.pdf

Teacher Preparation (also Teaching & Professional Development)

Simpson, A. & Linder, S.M. (2014)

An Examination of Mathematics Professional Development Opportunities in Early Childhood Settings

Focus

The purpose of this study was to examine the pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities for teachers of early childhood education (birth to five) in mathematics.

Methods

This study utilized a multi-phased mixed methods model, conducting surveys and interviews with both providers and recipients of professional development for early childhood mathematics education. The sample of providers included 815 participants and 320 of them completed surveys (a 39% response rate) and researchers conducted 20 follow-up interviews. The sample of recipients included 1,127 survey-responding participants (no response rate provided) and researchers conducted 27 follow-up interviews. To measure alignment to the Common Core State Standards in mathematics, the researchers collected program descriptions, course descriptions and syllabi, and programs of study from 17 two-year and 27 four-year institutions providing degrees in early childhood education for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Key Findings

This study 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.

- **Half of the providers interviewed mentioned the CCSS-M as a focus of their professional development.** Of these, only two worked with pre-service educators in a college or university. The majority of these worked with school districts and in-service teachers.

- **Most institutions in the study did not have pre-service courses aligned with the CCSS-M.** Only 3 two-year and 11 four-year institutions had course content that was aligned with the CCSS-M.

Where to Obtain This Report
Simpson, A. & Linder, S. (2014). An examination of mathematics professional development opportunities in early childhood settings. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *42* (5), pp. 335-342.

Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2012a)
Future Shock: Early Common Core Implementation Lessons from Ohio

Focus

This report looked at Common Core State Standards implementation in Ohio. Some of the general questions that guided the research include: How are Ohio's educators preparing themselves for this big change? Who is doing this work well and what can other schools and districts learn from the early adopters? What are the lessons, hopes, and fears facing those on the frontlines who have to lead Ohio's embrace of significantly more rigorous academic standards?

Methodology

Researchers interviewed a total of five superintendents, one assistant superintendent, two principals, three curriculum specialists, and four teachers from districts throughout the state.

Key Findings

- **Professional development that explicitly explains why the CCSS are essential was underway in Ohio at the time of this study.**

- **Professional development is most effective in small, collaborative learning communities, and ideally occurs peer to peer**.

- **State and district communication with schools and teachers must be consistent**. Researchers found that consistent communication was needed to stress the importance of the CCSS and the significant changes they necessitate.

- **Teachers want concrete tools and resources that help them understand the rigor of the CCSS**. Many of the interviewees commented that there was a lack of good models at the time of the study and that the available materials were not rigorous enough for the CCSS.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.edexcellence.net/publications/future-shock-early-common-core-lessons-from-Ohio-implementers.html

Teaching & Professional Development (also Testing & Assessment)

Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning at WestEd (2013)
Preparing for the Common Core: Using Performance Assessment Tasks for Professional Development

Focus

This study monitored implementation of a professional development pilot program designed to prepare teachers for the Common Core State Standards by having them develop performance assessment tasks to measure students' mastery of the math and English language arts (ELA) concepts in the CCSS. The pilot was implemented in member districts of the California Office to Reform Education (CORE).[*] The professional development activities studied were conducted during three days in June 2012, and the teacher-designed performance assessment tasks were implemented in classrooms in school year 2012-13.

Methodology

Using a protocol, researchers interviewed educators in three CORE districts about their experiences piloting the assessment tasks. Interviewees included 62 teachers, 15 school administrators including principals and instructional coaches, and 3 district administrators.

Key Findings

- **Performance assessments tasks supported teachers' understandings of the CCSS by**:
  o *Helping teachers understand the CCSS' expectations for students*. Participating teachers said the CCSS in ELA placed more emphasis on writing, speaking, and listening skills did than the previous California ELA standards. Math teachers said that the assessment tasks required a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts than did the previous standards.
  o *Helping teachers realize the gaps and alignment between the CCSS and students' knowledge*. Participating educators said that many students were not currently performing at a level necessary to succeed on the CCSS assessment tasks and were unprepared for the academic rigor of the CCSS, and that some students who were successful with previous assessment tasks struggled with the CCSS assessment tasks. They also said that students' knowledge and skills aligned with some of the CCSS expectations, and that performance tasks, by requiring students to demonstrate what they knew, allowed teachers to award partial credit.
  o *Helping teachers understand the changes needed in their instructional practice to meet the demands of the CCSS*. Study participants noted that the tasks with which students struggled the most were not a focus of their current instruction. Teachers also reported that it would take a lot of work to make a successful transition to the CCSS from their previous standards.

- **Teachers and principals said they need support from their districts with implementing the CCSS.** Their needs included clear communication about the district's vision for the CCSS, professional development that shows CCSS-aligned instruction in action, and time for common planning.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.wested.org/resources/preparing-for-the-common-core-using-performance-assessments-tasks-for-professional-development/

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[*] At the time of the study, CORE consisted of eight school districts: Clovis, Fresno, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Sanger. Since then, Garden Grove and Santa Ana Unified have joined.

Teaching & Professional Development (also Implementation)

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

Teaching & Professional Development (also Implementation)

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

Teaching & Professional Development (also Teacher Preparation)

Consortium for Policy Research in Education (2014)
From the Inside In: An Examination of Common Core Knowledge and Communication in Schools

Focus

This study explored how the dissemination of knowledge and influence of the Common Core Learning Standards[*] (CCLS) may help teachers engage with and influence the implementation of these standards.

Methodology

Using the same sample as a previous CPRE study (see 2013a), researchers selected three schools that were highly engaged in CCLS activities, three that were moderately engaged, and three with low levels of CCLS engagement (one school withdrew). Data was collected through a school faculty survey that focused on faculty's CCLS knowledge, understanding, and implementation of the standards. The analysis was conducted on individual administrators, coaches, and teachers; grade-level teams for elementary school; and subject-matter teams for middle school. When analyzing teams, researchers focused on the number of advice-seeking connections between team members (density), the number of times teachers on a team sought advice from a team member (frequency), and the impact of the given advice (influence).

Key Findings

- **Knowledge of the CCLS varied by subject and position**. School faculty scored higher on CCLS knowledge tests for English language arts (CCLS-ELA) than on CCLS knowledge tests for math (CCLS-M). Administrators and coaches scored higher than classroom teachers did.

- **Knowledge of the CCLS-ELA was related to seeking resources outside of the school**. This was not true for CCLS-M, however. The people most likely to seek resources outside of the school were administrators and coaches. English teachers in middle schools were also more likely to seek resources outside of the school than the math teachers in those schools.

- **In elementary and middle schools, team knowledge and communication about the CCLS varied**. Researchers also found little connection between team knowledge and team advice seeking. However, there was a connection between seeking knowledge outside of schools and requests for information. Researchers also found that teachers were able to identify and use sources of knowledge within their school.

- **Across the eight schools, 37 out of 456 respondents were more likely than other participants to receive requests for assistance about the CCLS and aligned-assessments**. These people were more likely to have higher knowledge about the CCLS-ELA and the CCLS-M and to seek resources outside the school. Roughly two-thirds of these people were administrators or coaches, and the remaining third were classroom teachers.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.cpre.org/fromtheinsidein

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[*] 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.

Editorial Projects in Education (2013)
Teacher Perspectives on the Common Core

Focus

The purpose of this report was to gain insight into educators' views of the Common Core State Standards and their preparation to implement the standards in their classrooms.

Methods

In October 2012, *Education Week* invited randomly selected registered website users who had previously identified themselves as classroom teachers to participate in a web survey. The study was based on responses from 599 qualified K-12 teachers and instructional specialists in CCSS-adopting states.

Key Findings

- **Large majorities of respondents said they were familiar with the CCSS in math (78%) and English language arts (92%).**

- **Respondents get information on the CCSS from a variety of sources.** Teachers most often learned about the CCSS from school administrators (60%), state department publications (59%), education media (53%), and teachers in their school (53%). They were least likely to learn about the CCSS from education publishing or testing companies (20%) and general news and media sources (17%).

- **The majority of teachers (71%) have received some professional development (PD) related to the CCSS but the amount and quality have varied.** For example, 28% of teachers had more than 5 days of CCSS-related PD while 12% had less than one day. About 66% characterized their PD as high-quality. Most of the professional development was focused on English and literacy (81%), mathematics (57%), and alignment between previous standards and the CCSS (56%), and was delivered in structured or formal settings (81%) or in collaborative planning time (55%).

- **About 74% of respondents said that more planning time would help them feel better prepared to teach the CCSS.** Access to aligned curricular resources and access to aligned assessments were tied for the second most helpful resource (72%). The least helpful resource identified was more information about the changes from previous state standards to the CCSS (33%).

- **About 56% of respondents said their main curricular materials were not aligned to the CCSS.**

- **Few respondents said that they, their school, or their students were very prepared for the CCSS**. Twenty percent of respondents said they were very prepared to teach the CCSS to students as a whole. Nine percent of respondents said their school was very prepared to implement the standards, and 5% said their students were very prepared to master the CCSS.

- **Seventy-six percent said the standards would improve their instruction and classroom practice.**

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.edweek.org/media/epe_survey_teacher_perspctives_common_core_2013.pdf

Teaching & Professional Development (also Teacher Preparation)

Simpson, A. & Linder, S.M. (2014)

An Examination of Mathematics Professional Development Opportunities in Early Childhood Settings

Focus

The purpose of this study was to examine the pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities for teachers of early childhood education (birth to five) in mathematics.

Methods

This study utilized a multi-phased mixed methods model, conducting surveys and interviews with both providers and recipients of professional development for early childhood mathematics education. The sample of providers included 815 participants and 320 of them completed surveys (a 39% response rate) and researchers conducted 20 follow-up interviews. The sample of recipients included 1,127 survey-responding participants (no response rate provided) and researchers conducted 27 follow-up interviews. To measure alignment to the Common Core State Standards in mathematics, the researchers collected program descriptions, course descriptions and syllabi, and programs of study from 17 two-year and 27 four-year institutions providing degrees in early childhood education for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Key Findings

This study 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.

- **Half of the providers interviewed mentioned the CCSS-M as a focus of their professional development.** Of these, only two worked with pre-service educators in a college or university. The majority of these worked with school districts and in-service teachers.

- **Most institutions in the study did not have pre-service courses aligned with the CCSS-M.** Only 3 two-year and 11 four-year institutions had course content that was aligned with the CCSS-M.

Where to Obtain This Report
Simpson, A. & Linder, S. (2014). An examination of mathematics professional development opportunities in early childhood settings. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *42* (5), pp. 335-342.

Testing & Assessment

ACT (2010)
A First Look at the Common Core and College and Career Readiness

Focus

The purpose of this study was to provide the best estimate of student performance on assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards, using current ACT metrics of college and career readiness.

Methodology

Using the ACT research-based College Readiness Benchmarks, researchers estimated students' college and career readiness for each of the clusters from the CCSS. The data was gathered in the spring of 2010 from 256,765 students in 11th grade and reported as a whole and by race/ethnicity.

Key Findings

Overall, roughly 33% of students are prepared for college and/or careers. Furthermore, when the data is reported by race/ethnicity, White students scored higher in every measured category than did African-American or Latino students. Other key findings in literacy and mathematics are reported below.

Literacy

- **Too few students understand complex texts**. Only 31% of the sampled students performed at a college- or career-ready level when reading complex texts.

- **Curriculum and instruction needs to increase emphasis on key aspects of language acquisition**. Specifically, the authors recommend more focus on language variety, skillful use of language, and the ability to acquire and use rich vocabulary.

- **Content-specific reading skills need to be strengthened**. Students struggled the most with reading science content, but students also need to improve their reading, writing, and communication skills in other disciplines.

Mathematics

- **More emphasis needs to be placed on the foundations of mathematics in curriculum and instruction**. Only 34% of sampled students performed at a college- and career-ready level when working with tasks involving number and quantity.

- **Better intervention programs are needed for students who struggle with mathematical concepts in the earliest grades**.

- **Students need to have a better understanding of mathematical processes and practices to be successful in college and/or careers**.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.act.org/commoncore/pdf/FirstLook.pdf

Testing & Assessment (also Teaching & Professional Development)

Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning at WestEd (2013)
Preparing for the Common Core: Using Performance Assessment Tasks for Professional Development

Focus

This study monitored implementation of a professional development pilot program designed to prepare teachers for the Common Core State Standards by having them develop performance assessment tasks to measure students' mastery of the math and English language arts (ELA) concepts in the CCSS. The pilot was implemented in member districts of the California Office to Reform Education (CORE).[*] The professional development activities studied were conducted during three days in June 2012, and the teacher-designed performance assessment tasks were implemented in classrooms in school year 2012-13.

Methodology

Using a protocol, researchers interviewed educators in three CORE districts about their experiences piloting the assessment tasks. Interviewees included 62 teachers, 15 school administrators including principals and instructional coaches, and 3 district administrators.

Key Findings

- **Performance assessments tasks supported teachers' understandings of the CCSS by**:
  o *Helping teachers understand the CCSS' expectations for students*. Participating teachers said the CCSS in ELA placed more emphasis on writing, speaking, and listening skills did than the previous California ELA standards. Math teachers said that the assessment tasks required a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts than did the previous standards.
  o *Helping teachers realize the gaps and alignment between the CCSS and students' knowledge*. Participating educators said that many students were not currently performing at a level necessary to succeed on the CCSS assessment tasks and were unprepared for the academic rigor of the CCSS, and that some students who were successful with previous assessment tasks struggled with the CCSS assessment tasks. They also said that students' knowledge and skills aligned with some of the CCSS expectations, and that performance tasks, by requiring students to demonstrate what they knew, allowed teachers to award partial credit.
  o *Helping teachers understand the changes needed in their instructional practice to meet the demands of the CCSS*. Study participants noted that the tasks with which students struggled the most were not a focus of their current instruction. Teachers also reported that it would take a lot of work to make a successful transition to the CCSS from their previous standards.

- **Teachers and principals said they need support from their districts with implementing the CCSS.** Their needs included clear communication about the district's vision for the CCSS, professional development that shows CCSS-aligned instruction in action, and time for common planning.

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.wested.org/resources/preparing-for-the-common-core-using-performance-assessments-tasks-for-professional-development/

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[*] At the time of the study, CORE consisted of eight school districts: Clovis, Fresno, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Sanger. Since then, Garden Grove and Santa Ana Unified have joined.

Teaching & Assessment (also Implementation)

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
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Center on Education Policy
The George Washington University

Testing & Assessment (also Implementation)

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

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (2014)
PARCC Field Test: Lessons Learned

Focus

The purpose of this study was to report the successes and challenges of the first field test of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment.

Methods

States that participated in the field test conducted formal surveys of test administrators, test coordinators, and students. Feedback on the field tests was also collected through observation of the field test in 40 schools, e-mails from field test participants, and through social media.

Key Findings

- **Test items:**
  - Test makers and reviewers approved approximately 89% of the mathematics items and 78% of the English language arts text sets for future assessment use.

- **Student experience:**
  - The majority of students completed the field test on time—this was true of students who took the computer-based test and of students who took the paper-based test.
  - Most students reported they understood the test directions.
  - More than 60% of students reported that the math test was harder than their school work—roughly double the percentage reporting that the ELA test was harder than school work.
  - In both subjects, students said they had been exposed to the most of the subject's content during the school year.
  - Most students who took the computer-based assessment reported that the tools (highlighter, symbols, calculator, and passage navigation) were easy to use.

- **Other categories:**
  - *Technology preparedness:* The majority of test administrators and coordinators used the technology preparedness tools and activities, including an infrastructure trial (69%), data from the Technology Readiness Tool (62%), and proctor caching (60%).
  - *Training materials:* On average, 59% of test administrators and coordinators reported that online training modules were useful in preparing and administering the test.
  - *Manuals:* Some respondents said that the manuals were user friendly (42%), clear and concise (42%), relevant and useful (50%), and sufficiently comprehensive (46%).
  - *Administration procedures:* Similar proportions of participants reported that the access portal was easy to use (45%), the student registration process and test setup process were straightforward and easy to complete (37% and 39%), and the computer-based delivery system worked well during the test (28%).
  - *Customer support:* Test coordinators reported that service requests were answered promptly three-quarters of the time, questions were answered within one communication 65% of the time, and their questions were answered accurately 51% of the time.

Where to Obtain This Report
http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/field-test-lessons-learned-final.pdf

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortia (2014)
Smarter Balanced "Tests of the Test" Successful: Field Test Provides Clear Path Forward

Focus

This study describes the successes and challenges of the first field test of the Smarter Balanced tests.

Methods

Researchers compiled results from a series of state-created and -administered surveys by 13 of the 22 states that are members of Smarter Balanced. Overall, 19,600 students who took the field test and 4,964 adults who were involved in test administration provided feedback on the state-administered surveys. A reviewer used the surveys to generate major themes and findings from across the 13 states.

Key Findings

- **Technology:**
  - Of the seven states that included technology questions in their survey, 70% or more said that the field test went as well as or better than expected.
  - Some schools still run Windows XP systems, which no longer receive Microsoft support. Three of the 13 states had more than 1 out of every 5 devices used for testing running XP.
  - More than 80% of problems requiring help desk contact arose before student testing began.
  - Several problems were reported with the test delivery system and help desk; the most common were loss of Wi-Fi connection, computers/servers freezing, and difficulty logging in.
  - Of the five states that asked about the testing interface, 67% of students responded that the interface was easy or very easy to use.

- **Readiness of test administrators and proctors:**
  - Seventy percent of test administrators and coordinators surveyed across five states responded that the test administrator training materials were helpful or very helpful.
  - In-person training sessions for district leads were given the highest satisfaction rating.
  - Many test administrators may not have been aware that students could take breaks during test administration.

- **Function of new item types:**
  - The youngest students reported they had the easiest time using new item features that include highlighting text, dragging and dropping text, or manipulating points on a graph.
  - Seventy-four percent of administrators said that whole-class warm-up activities or extended reading from a proctor where helpful to students—about half of the student respondents said those activities were helpful.

- **Assessment rigor and alignment to classroom instruction**
  - In general, students in the higher grades found the exams to be more difficult than did students in the lower grades.
  - Fewer students in high grades (1 out of 3) reported that the assessment was somewhat well or very well aligned to instruction than did students in lower grades (9 out of 10).

Where to Obtain This Report

http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/SmarterBalanced_FieldTest_Report.pdf

Center on Education Policy
The George Washington University

Appendix: List of Studies by Author

Authors/organization (year)	Name of study	Section
Achieve (2014)	*Voter Perceptions: Common Core State Standards & Tests*	Communications & Public Opinion
Achieve (2013)	*Closing the Expectations Gap*	Governance & Leadership
Achieve (2012)	*Growing Awareness, Growing Support: Teacher and Voter Understanding of the Common Core State Standards & Assessments*	Communications & Public Opinion
Achieve (2011)	*Strong Support, Low Awareness: Public Perception of the Common Core State Standards*	Communications & Public Opinion
ACT (2010)	*A First Look at the Common Core and College and Career Readiness*	Testing & Assessment
American Association of School Administrators (2014)	*Common Core and Other State Standards: Superintendents Feel Optimism, Concern and Lack of Support*	Governance & Leadership; Implementation
Brown Center on Education Policy (2014)	*How Well are American Students Learning? A Progress Report on the Common Core*	Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments; Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
Brown Center on Education Policy (2011)	*How Well are American Students Learning? NAEP and the Common Core State Standards*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning at WestEd (2013)	*Preparing for the Common Core: Using Performance Assessment Tasks in Professional Development*	Teaching & Professional Development; Testing & Assessment
Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning at WestEd (2012)	*CenterView: Willing but Not Yet Ready: A Glimpse of California Teachers' Preparedness for the Common Core State Standards*	Teacher Preparation
Center on Education Policy (2014a)	*Common Core State Standards in 2014: Districts' Perceptions, Progress, and Challenges*	Implementation
Center on Education Policy (2014b)	*Common Core State Standards in 2014: Curriculum and Professional Development at the District Level*	Implementation; Teaching & Professional Development
Center on Education Policy (2014c)	*Common Core State Standards in 2014: District Implementation of Consortia-Developed Assessments*	Implementation; Testing & Assessment

Authors/organization (year)	Name of study	Section
Center on Education Policy (2013a)	*Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: State Education Agencies' Views on the Federal Role*	Governance & Leadership; Implementation
Center on Education Policy (2013b)	*Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: An Overview of States' Progress and Challenges*	Implementation
Center on Education Policy (2013c)	*Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: Professional Development for Teachers and Principals*	Implementation; Teaching & Professional Development
Center on Education Policy (2013d)	*Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: States Prepare for Common Core Assessments*	Implementation; Testing & Assessment
Center on Education Policy (2013e)	*Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: State Education Agencies' Views on Postsecondary Involvement*	Governance &Leadership; Implementation; Teacher Preparation
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*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment; Implementation
Center on Education Policy (2012)	*Year Two of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: States' Progress and Challenges*	Implementation
Center on Education Policy (2011a)	*States' Progress and Challenges in Implementing Common Core State Standards*	Implementation
Center on Education Policy (2011b)	*Common Core State Standards: Progress and Challenges in School Districts' Implementation*	Implementation
Center on Education Policy (2010)	*CEP Survey Questions on the Common Core State Standards*	Implementation

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College Board (2011)	*Common Core State Standards Alignment: Advanced Placement*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
Consortium for Policy Research in Education (2014)	*From the Inside In: An Examination of Common Core Knowledge and Communication in Schools*	Teacher Preparation; Teaching & Professional Development
Consortium for Policy Research in Education (2013a)	*The Lived Experience of Standards Implementation in New York City Schools, 2011*	Implementation
Consortium for Policy Research in Education (2013b)	*Slowing Entropy: Instructional Policy Design in New York City, 2011-12*	Governance & Leadership
Council of the Great City Schools (2014)	*Implementing the Common Core State Standards: Year Two Progress Report from the Great City Schools*	Implementation
Council of the Great City Schools (2012)	*Implementing the Common Core State Standards in Urban Public Schools - 2012*	Implementation
Dingman, S., Teuscher, D., Newton, J., Kasmer, L. (2013)	*Common Mathematics Standards in the United States*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
Editorial Projects in Education (2013)	*Teacher Perspectives on the Common Core*	Teaching & Professional Development
Education First & Editorial Projects in Education (2013)	*Moving Forward: A National Perspective on States' Progress in Common Core State Standards Implementation Planning*	Implementation
Education First & Editorial Projects in Education (2012)	*Preparing for Change: A National Perspective on Common Core State Standards Implementation Planning*	Implementation
Education Week Research Center (2014)	*From Adoption to Practice: Teacher Perspectives on the Common Core*	Implementation
Educational Policy Improvement Center (2011a)	*Lining Up: The Relationship between the Common Core State Standards and Five Sets of Comparison Standards*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2014)	*Student and Teacher Perspectives on a Close Reading Protocol*	Implementation
Gallup (2014)	This is a synthesis of a series of five publications—see summary for a list of titles	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

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Gallup & Education Week (2014)	*Understanding Perspectives on American Public Education: Results of a Gallup-Education Week Survey of K-12 School District Superintendents – Survey 2*	Communications & Public Opinion
Gallup & Education Week (2013)	*Gallup-Education Week Superintendent Panel – Inaugural Survey Findings*	Governance & Leadership
Gamson, D., Lu. X., & Eckert S. (2013)	*Challenging the Research Base of the Common Core State Standards: A Historical Reanalysis of Text Complexity*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
Graybeal, C. (2013)	*Learning to Look for the Standards for Mathematical Practice*	Teacher Preparation
Henderson, M. & Peterson, P. (2014)	*The 2013 Education Next Survey*	Communications & Public Opinion
Henderson, M., Peterson, P., & West, M. (2015)	*No Common Opinion of the Common Core*	Communications & Public Opinion
Kendall, J., Ryan, S., Alpert, A., Richardson, A., & Schwols, A. (2012)	*State Adoption of the Common Core State Standards: The 15 Percent Rule*	Governance & Leadership
Kornhaber, M., Griffith, K., & Tyler, A. (2014)	*It's Not Education by Zip Code Anymore – but What is It? Conceptions of Equity under the Common Core*	Communications & Public Opinion; Governance & Leadership
McDonnell, L. & Weatherford, S. (2013a)	*Organized Interests and the Common Core*	Communications & Public Opinion
McDonnell, L. & Weatherford, S. (2013b)	*Evidence Use and the Common Core State Standards Movement: From Problem Definition to Policy Adoption*	Communications & Public Opinion Governance & Leadership
McLaughlin, M., Glaab, L., & Carrasco, I. (2014)	*Implementing the common Core State Standards in California: A Report from the Field*	Governance & Leadership; Implementation
Michigan State University (2013a)	*Implementing the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics: A Comparison of Current District Content in 41 States*	Governance & Leadership; Implementation

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Michigan State University (2013b)	*Implementing the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics: What We Know about Teachers of Mathematics in 41 States*	Teacher Preparation
Michigan State University (2013c)	*Implementing the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics: What Parents Know and Support*	Communication & Public Opinion
Nagle, C., & Moore-Russo, D. (2014)	*Slope Across the Curriculum: Principles and Standards for School Mathematics and Common Core State Standards*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
National Center for Education Statistics (2013a)	*The National Assessment of Educational Progress and the Common Core State Standards: A Study of the Alignment Between the NAEP Mathematics Framework and the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics*	Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments
National Center for Education Statistics (2013b)	*The National Assessment of Educational Progress and the Common Core State Standards: A Study of NAEP Reading and Writing Frameworks and Assessments in Relation to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts*	Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments
Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (2014)	*PARCC Field Test: Lessons Learned*	Testing & Assessment
Phi Delta Kappa International & Gallup (2014)	*The 46th Annual PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools*	Communications & Public Opinion
Phi Delta Kappa International & Gallup (2013)	*Which Way Do We Go?*	Communications & Public Opinion
Pioneer Institute (2012)	*National Cost of Aligning States and localities to the Common Core Standards*	Cost Analysis
Polikoff, M. (2014)	*How Well Aligned Are Textbooks to the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

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Porter, A., McMaken, J., Hwang, J., & Yang, R. (2011)	*Common Core Standards: The New U.S. Intended Curriculum*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
Public Policy Institute of California (2014)	*California's Transition to the Common Core State Standards: The State's Role in Local Capacity Building*	Implementation
Regional Education Laboratory Southeast (2012)	*Plans to Adopt and Implement Common Core State Standards in the Southeast Region States*	Implementation
Schmidt, W. & Houang, R. (2012)	*Curricular Coherence and the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics*	Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments; Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2014)	*Primary Sources: Update: Teachers' Views on Common Core State Standards*	Implementation
Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2013)	*Primary Sources: America's Teachers on Teaching in an Era of Change*	Implementation
Scholastic and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2012)	*Primary Sources: 2012 America's Teachers on the Teaching Profession*	Implementation
Simpson, A. & Linder, S.M. (2014)	*An Examination of Mathematics Professional Development Opportunities in Early Childhood Settings*	Teacher Preparation; Teaching & Professional Development
Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (2014)	*Smarter Balanced "Tests of the Test" Successful: Field Test Provides Clear Path Forward*	Testing & Assessment
Southern Regional Education Board (2014)	*State Implementation of Common Core State Standards: Summary Report*	Governance & Leadership; Implementation
Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2014)	*Common Core in the Districts: An Early Look at Early Implementers*	Implementation
Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2013)	*Common Core in the Schools: A First Look at Reading Assignments*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2012a)	*Future shock: Early Common Core Implementation Lessons from Ohio*	Teacher Preparation
Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2012b)	*Putting a Price Tag on the Common Core: How Much Will Smart Implementation Cost?*	Cost Analysis
Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2010)	*The State of State Standards— and the Common Core—in 2010*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

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University of Connecticut (2014)	*UConn Poll: Americans Who Know about Common Core Are Likely to be Skeptical of It*	Communications & Public Opinion
Watt, M. (2011)	*The Common Core State Standards Initiative: An Overview*	Governance & Leadership
WestEd (2013)	*Implementing the Common Core State Standards: Articulating Course Sequences across K-12 and Higher Education Systems*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
Williamson, G., Fitzgerald, J., & Stenner, J. (2013)	*The Common Core State Standards' Quantitative Text Complexity Trajectory: Figuring Out How Much Complexity Is Enough*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
Wohlstetter, P., Buck, B., Houston, D., & Smith, C. (In Press)	*Common Core, Uncommon Theory of Action: CEOs in New York City*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment; Governance & Leadership
Wohlstetter, P., Houston, D., & Buck. B. (2014)	*Networks in New York City: Implementing the Common Core*	Governance & Leadership
Wolf, M.K., Wang, Y., Huang, B.H., and Blood, I.(2014)	*Investigating the Language Demands in The Common Core State Standards for English Language Learners: A Comparison Study of Standards*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

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