A Compendium of Research on the Common Core State Standards

Center on Education Policy

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CENTER ON EDUCATION POLICY CEP

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Center on Education Policy

Graduate School of Education and Human Development
The George Washington University

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.

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 May 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. We hope to periodically update this compendium. 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 35 different authors, including reports from CEP. Of the 35 authors contacted to review our summary, 27 responded, for a response rate of 77%. 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.

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Communications and 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)

Communications and 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 and 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 and Public Opinion (also Governance and 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 and 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 and Public Opinion (also Governance and 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.

Communications and Public Opinion

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 and Public Opinion

Phi Delta Kappa International and 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

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

[*] 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.

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, and 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, and 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

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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

[*] 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, and 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, and 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, and 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

Content, Curriculum, and Alignment

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

Content, Curriculum, and Alignment

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, and 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

Content, Curriculum, and Alignment

Gamson, D., Xiaofei, L., & 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 WFT 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

Content, Curriculum, and 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-bcf.usc.edu/~polikoff/textbooks.pdf

Content, Curriculum, and 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

*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, and 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, and 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

Content, Curriculum, and Alignment

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

[*] 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, and 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

[*] 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, and Alignment (also Governance and Leadership)

Wohlstetter, P., Buck, B., Houston, D., and Smith, C. (In press)
Common Core, Uncommon Model: Children First Networks in New York City

Focus

With attention focused on Children First Networks (CFNs), 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; CFN cluster leaders, individual leaders, and coaches for English, math, special education, and English language learners; and principals, school administrative personnel, and teachers. Interviews were coded and 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 policy, 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, 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 number of member schools as challenges.

Where to Obtain This Report

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

* 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.

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.

Governance and Leadership

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 and 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:
  - *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

Governance and 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

Governance and Leadership

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

* 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.

Governance and Leadership (also Communications and 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 and Leadership (also Communications and 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 and 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 and 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).

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

Wohlstetter, P., Buck, B., Houston, D., and Smith, C. (In press)
Common Core, Uncommon Model: Children First Networks in New York City

Focus

With attention focused on Children First Networks (CFNs), 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; CFN cluster leaders, individual leaders, and coaches for English, math, special education, and English language learners; and principals, school administrative personnel, and teachers. Interviews were coded and 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 policy, 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, 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 number of member schools as challenges.

Where to Obtain This Report

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

* 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 (also Governance and 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 and 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 and 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 and 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, and 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

* 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 (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

Implementation (also Governance and 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

Implementation

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 (also Governance and 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

*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

Teacher Preparation

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 and 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 and 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

* 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/WP33ImplementingtheCommonCoreStandardsforMathematicsWhatWeknowaboutTeacherofMathematicsin41S.pdf

Teacher Preparation

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 and Professional Development (also Testing and 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**:
  - *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.
  - *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 the performance tasks, by requiring students to demonstrate what they knew, allowed teachers to award partial credit.
  - *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/

[*] 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 and 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 and 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

* 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.

Testing and 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 and Assessment (also Teaching and 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**:
  - *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.
  - *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 the performance tasks, by requiring students to demonstrate what they knew, allowed teachers to award partial credit.
  - *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/

[*] 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.

Testing and 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

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
Brown Center on Education Policy (2014)	*How Well are American Student Learning? A Progress Report on the Common Core*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment; Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments
Brown Center on Education Policy (2011)	*How Well are American Student 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 and 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 (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 and Professional Development
Center on Education Policy (2013d)	*Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: States Prepare for Common Core Assessments*	Implementation; Testing and Assessment

Authors/organization (year)	Name of study	Section
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
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 and 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 (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
Educational Policy Improvement Center (2011a)	*Lining Up: The Relationship between the Common Core State Standards and Five Sets of Comparison Standards*	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 Readiness*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment

Authors/organization (year)	Name of study	Section
Gamson, D., Xiaofei,L., & 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
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
Michigan State University (2013a)	*Implementing the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics: A Comparison of Current District Content in 41 States*	Governance & Leadership; Implementation
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
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

Authors/organization (year)	Name of study	Section
Phi Delta Kappan International & Gallup. (2013)	*Which Way Do We Go?*	Communications & Public Opinion
Polikoff, M. (2014)	*How Well Aligned Are Textbooks to the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment
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*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment; Comparison of CCSS Content to Wide-Scale Assessments
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
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 Model: Children First Networks in New York City.*	Content, Curriculum, & Alignment; Governance & Leadership

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Center on Education Policy
Graduate School of Education and Human Development
The George Washington University
2140 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 103
Washington, D.C. 20037

Ph: 202-822-8065
Fax: 202-994-8859
E-mail: cep-dc@cep-dc.org
Web: www.cep-dc.org

Center on Education Policy

Graduate School of Education and Human Development
The George Washington University
2140 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Suite 103
Washington, D.C. 20037

Ph: 202-994-9050
Fax: 202 -994-8859
Email: cep-dc@cep-dc.org
www.cep-dc.org

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