



October 2011

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Strong Support, Low Awareness: Public Perception of the Common Core State Standards

In just a few short years, the education landscape has changed dramatically due to a sweeping set of policy changes and reform initiatives, perhaps none more transformative than the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Since their release in June 2010, 45 states and Washington, D.C. have chosen to adopt these common, K-12 English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics standards to provide all students with the academic foundation they need for success in college, careers and life.

Despite the number of states that have voluntarily adopted the new standards—set to be implemented by 2014-15—the question remains: what does the public think about the Common Core State Standards? Or, perhaps the harder question: will the public support the Common Core as states move forward on their implementation plans, including, for many, the likely adoption of assessments aligned to the Common Core?

Achieve's recently-commissioned national poll of voters and K-12 educators—*Strong Support, Low Awareness: Public Perception of the Common Core State Standards*—sought to answer these questions and found that while both the public and educators strongly support the notion of all states having common standards, there is low awareness, especially among the general voting public, of the Common Core State Standards.

Major findings from the nation-wide survey include:

- Generally, public education is considered to be a very or extremely important issue to voters across the board. However, only about one in ten voters—and educators—believe public education is working pretty well right now.

Have Heard about Common Core State Standards (CCSS)? (Voters)	Voters	Teachers
Nothing	60%	13%
Not Much	21%	17%
Some	13%	22%
A Lot	6%	46%

- The Common Core State Standards are in the early stages of implementation and awareness among the general public is very low; only 19% of voters have seen, read and/or heard anything about the Common Core. Awareness among teachers is significantly higher, likely because of states' and districts targeted outreach and professional development initiatives.
- Among the few voters who are aware of the Common Core State Standards, there is a mixed impression of the CCSS, with essentially the same percentage having a favorable and unfavorable view. Among teachers who are aware of the Common Core, there is generally a more favorable view. When more details on the CCSS are given, support rises significantly.
- There is strong support for common assessments among voters, but also disagreement as to how the results of the assessments should be used. The general public strongly supports using the results for a full range of accountability purposes, while teachers are more skeptical of using test results for such purposes. For example, at least three-quarters of voters said it was acceptable to use test data for holding districts, schools or teachers accountable. Among teachers, a slim majority (51%) believe it is acceptable to use test results to hold districts and school accountable, but only 39% believe this data should be used for teacher accountability.

<p>It is better for all states to have the <u>SAME STANDARDS/TESTS</u> at each grade level in math and English so students across the country have to meet the same expectations.</p> <p>...Or...</p> <p>It is better for all states to have their <u>OWN STANDARDS/TESTS</u> at each grade level in math and English so each state can be sure that the standards/tests reflect their own priorities.</p>	All	Dem	Ind.	Rep
Common Standards	66%	70%	69%	56%
Own Standards	31%	29%	27%	43%
Common Assessments	63%	71%	58%	65%
Own Assessments	33%	27%	39%	30%

Strong Support, Low Awareness: Public Perception of the Common Core State Standards demonstrates how critical it is for state and district leaders and advocates to redouble their communications efforts to increase awareness and understanding of the Common Core State Standards, common assessments and related policies—and prepare the public for what the education landscape will look like over the next few years. For tips, download "[Common Core State Standards Communications & Outreach](#)."

To view the survey results (either in PowerPoint or report form) see, <http://www.achieve.org/publicperceptionccss>.

New from Achieve

PARCC

PARCC has released its first Quarterly Progress Report to provide a snapshot of the progress PARCC is making in the development of the PARCC assessments and immediate next steps in each of the main areas of work, such as assessment design, K-12 engagement, technology, research, and communications and outreach. [More...](#)

PARCC issued a three-part Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) to support the to-be-developed assessment systems' technology needs. This is the first of a number of solicitations PARCC will be issuing in the fall and winter of 2011. [More...](#)

Upcoming Webinar on State Data Systems

The Data Quality Campaign (DQC), of which Achieve is a managing partner, is hosting a webinar on Thursday, November 10 from 3-4 p.m. ET to leverage the progress states have made in developing statewide longitudinal data systems that follow individual students over time. Learn about DQC's new framework that offers four guiding principles for state policymakers as they enhance their collaborative data efforts with their districts to support each other's complementary roles to transform education into a data-driven enterprise. Doug Kosty with the Oregon Department of Education will discuss DQC's framework and its application to state and district data efforts in Oregon. Also, hear about data collaboration from state and district leaders in Colorado. [More...](#)

The Nation's Report Card

Mathematics and reading are the cornerstones of our students' education. They lay the foundation for all school subjects, as well as for lifelong learning. To help share the latest student achievement data for students in mathematics and reading, join the National Assessment Governing Board in the live webinar release of *The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics and Reading 2011, Grades 4 and 8* on Tuesday, Nov. 1 at 11 a.m. ET. Details are at www.nagb.org/reading-math-2011.

Jack Buckley, commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, will present the data. He will be joined

News Clips

1. **Empowering Through Reforms**

Oklahoma State Superintendent of Public Instruction Janet Barresi writes in an op-ed that education reforms empower educators. "Common Core State Standards, which will be rolled out over the next three school years, will further empower students by giving them a clearly rigorous education that will

by expert panelists including David Driscoll, chairman of the National Assessment Governing Board and former commissioner of education for Massachusetts; Doris Hicks, principal and CEO of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School for Science & Technology and member of the National Assessment Governing Board; and Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction for Nevada Public Schools.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—also known as The Nation's Report Card—includes detailed state-level achievement data for both assessments. To show trends in our students' achievement over time, the assessments report results in mathematics from 1990 and in reading from 1992.

put them on pace with their national peers." [More...](#)

2. **States Rewrite Education Rules**

Some of the states rejected for "Race to the Top" grants are proceeding to revamp their education systems anyway—in some cases more ambitiously than states that won. One year later, officials in several of those states say they're moving forward with plans outlined in their grant applications. [More...](#)

3. **NJ Announces College And Career Readiness Task Force**

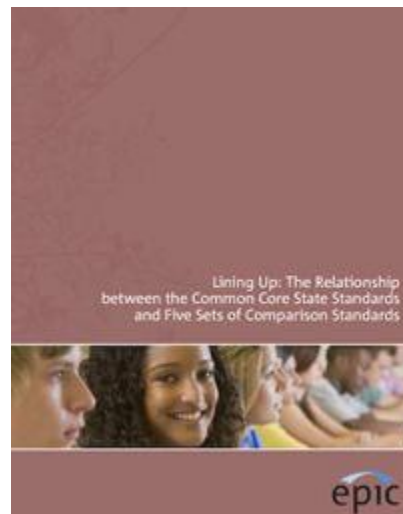
New Jersey's Acting Commissioner Christopher D. Cerf announced that "In order to ensure that we are aligned with our colleagues in higher education, we are bringing together practitioners from both fields to clearly define the knowledge and skills that students need to be ready for college and a career." [More...](#)

New Resources

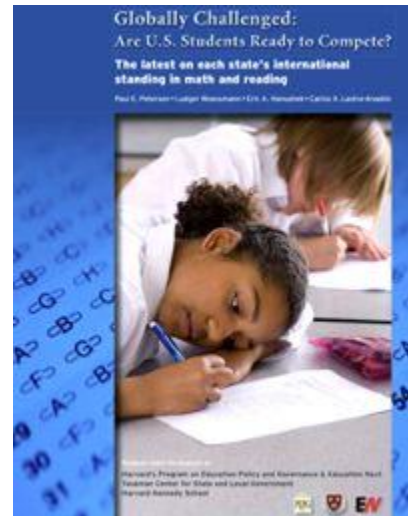
- [*What Gets Measured Gets Done: Adding College-Course Completion to K-12 Accountability Systems*](#), a Jobs for the Future (JFF) policy brief, proposes that including college-course completion as a measure in K-12 accountability frameworks is a robust strategy for driving educational improvement. An increasing number of states are including this predictive indicator of college success in their accounting of high school performance, among other measures of college and career readiness. According to the report, the federal government's recent invitation to states to request waivers from provisions of the No Child Left Behind Law may further provide states with an opportunity to redesign their accountability systems and encourage district and school initiatives to help ensure that high school graduates are prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and careers.



- The Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) studied whether the exit level Common Core State Standards aligned with five sets of comparison standards from California, Massachusetts, and Texas as well as the International Baccalaureate standards and the Knowledge and Skills for University Success standards. The [study](#) that found there was substantial alignment between the Common Core State Standards and the five sets of comparison, yet noted the Common Core State Standards demand a bit more cognitive complexity in some content areas.



- [Globally Challenged: Are U.S. Students Ready to Compete?](#), a Harvard study of student achievement, finds that U.S. students rank 32nd among industrialized nations in proficiency in math and 17th in reading. The 32% of U.S. students who achieved proficiency in math compares to 75% of students in Shanghai, 58% in Korea, and 56% in Finland. Comparing students' math achievement across states, the study finds the highest performing state to be Massachusetts, where 58% achieve proficiency. Minnesota, Vermont, North Dakota, New Jersey, Kansas, South Dakota, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and Montana are among the top ten performing states. The math findings are of particular importance, because many companies are experiencing shortages of technically skilled workers.



- According to [The Hidden Costs of Community Colleges](#), more federal, state, and local taxpayer dollars are being spent on community college dropouts than ever before. The American Institutes for Research (AIR) used 2004-2009 U.S. Department of Education IPEDS data and the Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study to examine the cost of dropout rates for first-time, full-time degree- or certificate-seeking community college students—those students *most likely to remain in school* and complete an associate's degree. After adjusting for students who transfer to four-year colleges, the study found that approximately one-fifth of the full time, degree-seeking students did not return for their second year, costing taxpayers nearly \$1 billion in 2008-09—an increase of 35% from five years ago. The estimated cost of community college attrition for first-time, full-time degree- or certificate-seeking students are presented both nationally



and on a state level; individual estimates for two-year colleges participating in IPEDS are also available at www.collegemeasures.org.

Achieve Job Opportunity

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