

TO: The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
FROM: Hart Research Associates and the Winston Group
DATE: March 10, 2014
RE: Survey of Teachers' Attitudes about the Common Core State Standards

Between February 28 and March 4, 2014, Hart Research Associates and the Winston Group surveyed a representative cross section of 1,015 public school teachers in the states that are implementing the Common Core State Standards. Respondents were interviewed by telephone at their homes. The margin of error associated with a randomly selected sample of this size is ± 3.1 percentage points.

Summary of the Key Findings:

Large majorities of teachers express approval of their state's adoption of the Common Core State Standards and of their school district's implementation of these standards. However, teachers give their districts relatively low grades on several specific aspects of how the standards are being implemented, including: (1) giving teachers the tools and resources they need to prepare to teach the new standards in their classrooms; (2) giving schools enough time to implement the standards; (3) communicating with parents about how the standards are changing and what will be expected of students; and (4) giving teachers an opportunity to provide their input on the implementation of the standards, including the selection of curriculum. Teachers assess more positively the degree to which districts are providing professional development and training related to the new standards. Two in three teachers say it is too soon to tell whether the Common Core State Standards are living up to the goals set for them.

Discussion of the Key Findings:

Across the 45 Common Core Standards states, 62% of teachers approve of their state's adoption of the standards, including 19% who strongly approve and 42% who somewhat approve. One-third of teachers express disapproval, including 13% who strongly disapprove and 20% who somewhat disapprove. Approval is highest among elementary teachers, teachers in urban districts, teachers in schools with high proportions of students on free or reduced lunch, and younger teachers. Approval is lower among high school teachers, though a majority of them still express approval.

Two-thirds of teachers express approval of the way their districts are implementing the Common Core State Standards; 20% strongly approve and 46% somewhat approve. Again, younger teachers are more likely to express approval, but on this measure teachers in urban districts are somewhat less likely than others to voice approval for their district's implements (though 60% do so).

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While a near majority (49%) of teachers say their opinion of the Common Core State Standards has not changed as a result of what they have heard, read, or seen over the past year, 32% say they have become less favorable to the standards and 18% say have become more favorable to them. Teachers who are less favorable to the standards most frequently volunteer that the standards set expectations unrealistically high and are too test driven. Teachers who are more favorable to the standards most frequently mention their own positive experiences with the standards and the quality of the training in which they have participated.

Teachers were asked to rate the implementation of the Common Core Standards in their district on seven specific criteria. On only one of these criteria, communicating with teachers about how the standards are changing, do a clear majority give their district positive grades of “excellent” or “good.” On four other aspects, 58% or more of teachers give their districts lower grades of “just fair” or “poor.” Teachers give their district the lowest grades for giving teachers an opportunity to provide their input on the implementation of the standards, including the selection of curriculum. These results are summarized in the following table.

How Respondents’ Districts Are Implementing CCSS

	<u>Excellent</u> %	<u>Good</u> %	<u>Just Fair</u> %	<u>Poor</u> %	<u>Not Sure</u> %
Communicating with teachers about how the standards are changing and what will be expected of them	15	39	28	15	3
Providing teachers with professional development and training related to the new standards	16	33	31	18	2
Putting the necessary time, energy, and emphasis on implementing the standards to ensure a smooth transition	13	32	31	22	2
Giving teachers the tools and resources they need to prepare to teach the new standards in their classrooms	11	28	31	27	3
Giving schools enough time to implement the standards	8	30	30	28	4
Communicating with parents about how standards are changing and what will be expected of students	8	27	32	26	7
Giving teachers an opportunity to provide their input on the implementation of the standards, including the selection of curriculum	8	26	28	32	6

Given that states and districts are still in an early state of implementing the new Common Core Standards, it is not surprising that teachers are withholding judgment about whether the standards are living up to the goals that were set for them when they were first adopted. Among all teachers in the 45 states, fully 68% say it is too soon to say whether the standards are living up to the goals that were established for them. Just 6% have a definitive view that the standards are living up to the stated goals, while 23% say they are not living up to the goals.