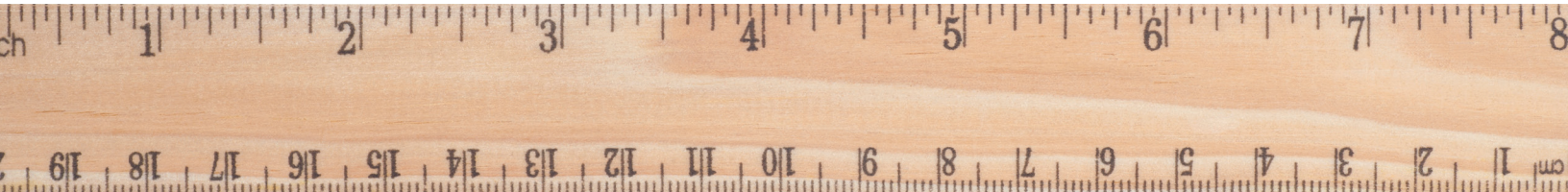


# College- and Career-Ready Standards:

## A Communications Toolkit for Business Leaders

CED
Committee for Economic Development



# College- and Career-Ready (C&CR) Standards
# A Communications Toolkit for Business Leaders

*With any major change in education, there are going to be challenges. Adoption of college- and career-ready standards, which are what the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) represent, is no different. Given how politicized the standards have become, the key to their success is sharing information about what they are and what they will accomplish. This toolkit equips you with easy-to-use, research-based information to lead informed conversations and provide support for their ongoing implementation.*

## Top three C&CR messages for business leaders:

- The United States is falling behind in education (compared to other industrialized countries)—with severe economic repercussions for individuals, businesses, and the nation.
- With the Common Core State Standards, states benefit from a consistent measure of readiness for college or postsecondary workforce training, helping every student (including those who are disadvantaged or who move around frequently) compete for jobs and gain equal opportunity and choice for accessing the middle class.
  - When evaluated by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), in 2012 the United States ranked, among 15-year-olds, 26th for math, 21st for science, and 17th for reading among 34 industrialized nations.[1]
  - By 2020, U.S. companies will need to employ 123 million highly skilled workers. However, only 50 million workers will qualify.[2]
- The standards are already the framework—not curriculum—of choice for voluntary, high-quality educational standards at the state level. While the total number may fluctuate over the next several months, over 40 states have currently adopted and are implementing them. Nearly half have given the standards designation under a unique state name.



# Understanding the Standards

## What the standards are:

**For decades, state-based educational standards in the United States have been evolving, resulting in the Common Core State Standards in 2010.**

- At the time of the CCSS launch, all 50 states had state-based standards.
- Those standards, however, ranged drastically from state to state, with no true bar for quality or measurement.
- As states adopt and implement the Common Core State Standards, American students will be acquiring the same level of knowledge at each grade level.

**With the CCSS, states led the effort to voluntarily implement a single set of clear educational standards.**

- The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers developed the CCSS with the participation of teachers, parents, the Parent Teachers Association, school administrators and education experts, and state leaders from across the country.
- More than 10,000 responses from two public comment periods also guided CCSS development.
- The standards establish what students need to learn and know, not the curricula or lesson plans teachers must use.
- Standards are evidence-based, aligned with expectations for college and career, and benchmarked against other top-performing countries.

**The goal of the CCSS is to prepare all children in the United States for the full range of opportunities to pursue a quality life through college or career training, with less need for remedial schooling.**

- Nearly 60 percent of first-year college students discover that, despite being fully eligible to attend college, they are not ready for postsecondary studies. After enrolling, these students learn that they must take remedial courses in English or mathematics, which do not earn college credits. This gap between college eligibility and college readiness is expensive and alarming.[3]

**State participation is voluntary—and widespread.**

- Each state independently decides to adopt the CCSS.
- No state was asked to lower their expectations for students in adopting the CCSS.
- Today, over 40 states have voluntarily adopted the CCSS.

## How the standards work:

The CCSS framework focuses on English language arts and math—two subjects that provide the foundation for many other content areas, and are most frequently assessed for accountability purposes.

- Advanced literacy skills across content areas is the best available predictor of a student's ability to succeed in introductory college courses.[4]
- The development of strong literacy skills requires explicit instruction and a continuum of support from birth through grade 12.[5]

Each grade from K through 12 has its own set of standards. For example:

- **Kindergarten students are expected to be able to:**

  - *Understand and use "question" words (i.e., who, what, where, when, why, and how) in discussion; and,*
  - *Count objects.*

- **3rd graders are expected to be able to:**

  - *Read closely to find main ideas and supporting details; and,*
  - *Multiply and divide up to 10×10 quickly and accurately, and know the times tables from memory.*

- **8th graders are expected to be able to:**

  - *Analyze where materials on the same topic conflict with matters of fact, interpretation, or point of view; and,*
  - *Work with positive and negative exponents, square root and cube root symbols, and scientific notation.*

- **High school students are expected to be able to:**

  - *Write a literary analysis, report, or summary that develops a central idea, has a coherent focus, and is well supported with relevant examples, facts, and details; and,*
  - *Use mathematics to analyze real-world situations, optimize situations, troubleshoot, and make informed decisions.*

To implement the CCSS, a state must adopt all of its K-12 standards in English language arts and mathematics, and the state can then add up to 15 percent more standards to this core. Alabama, California, Colorado, Kansas, and New York are among the states that chose to develop additional standards.[6]

Change takes time and requires long-term commitment. It is important to provide the appropriate supports to educators and other stakeholders to ensure success for all students.

# Understanding the Standards

## How states measure the CCSS:

- Currently each state has its own end-of-year assessment.
- A common set of assessments, developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), will be ready for the 2014-2015 school year.
- Preliminary testing for these assessments—across four million students thus far—has been successful.[7]
- The median cost for the current English language arts and math assessments used by PARCC is $29.95 per student.[9] For SBAC, costs are $27.30 per student.[10] Because common assessments enable bulk purchasing, states that use them have the potential to save money.

## Comparison of PARCC and SBAC to the Typical Current State Test[8]

| | PARCC or Smarter Balanced | Typical Current State Test |
|---|---|---|
| Rigor | Greater | Variable |
| Alignment/Focus to Standards | Measure CCSS for each grade, not a random sample of a few standards | Variable |
| Time after Tests Taken for Results to be Reported | Within approximately 2-4 weeks of testing | 4-6 months after testing (typically in the early fall of the next school year) |
| Reports to Teachers/Parents | Highly informative, actionable | Seldom provided |
| Appropriate for High-Stakes Decisions for Teachers/Principals | Yes | No |
| Writing Assessment | Every grade, 3-8, and high school | A few grades or not at all |
| Range of Testing | Measure all students' learning - those who struggle to those who excel | Measure knowledge and skills around the proficiency level |
| Design of Assessments | State-led | Private companies |
| Value to Institutions of Higher Education | Provide information about readiness for entry-level, credit-bearing courses | Mixed |

# Speaking to Parents About Higher Education Standards

**Above all, raising educational standards is about improving your child's success after high school, whatever his or her dreams may be.**

**Different from our generations, today's students will work in an increasingly competitive economy requiring a higher-skilled workforce:**

- Today, among jobs requiring postsecondary education, 37% require a bachelor's degree or higher. In 1965, that number was only 11%.[11]
- By 2020, U.S. companies will need to employ 123 million highly-skilled workers. However, only 50 million workers will qualify.[12]



**College or career-training is an investment. It makes sense to ensure that your money is being well-spent on your son or daughter learning new things, not relearning old lessons which should have been covered in his or her K-12 education.**

- It is estimated that, in 2011, states and students spent more than $3 billion on remedial courses.[13]
- More than 50% of students entering two-year colleges and nearly 20% of those entering four-year universities are placed in remedial classes.[14]

**Raising standards will put your child on a trajectory for success by strengthening his or her critical thinking and analytical skills, regardless of your family's socioeconomic levels.**

**The standards do not require states or districts to collect additional data. Furthermore, the federal government is prohibited by law from collecting any personally identifiable data about individual students.**

**Undergoing this type of change in our education system is a complex process and will take time.**

## How parents can support higher education standards:

- Talk to your child on an ongoing basis about his or her education to ensure that progress is being made and possible setbacks are addressed.
- Consider joining your local Parent Teacher Association (PTA). You'll have the opportunity to discuss with parents and school officials the status of your state's standards and how you can help make them a success.

# Why America Needs the Common Core State Standards Now

## THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

RIGHT NOW, THE U.S. EDUCATION SYSTEM IS NOT PREPARING ENOUGH STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN COLLEGE AND A CAREER.




**TOO MANY STUDENTS FAIL TO GRADUATE ON TIME.**
On average, more than 1 million students fail to graduate on time each year. [1]

**AMONG THOSE WHO DO GRADUATE, TOO MANY AREN'T PREPARED FOR COLLEGE-LEVEL WORK.**
Half of all undergraduates pay for remedial courses to cover what they should have learned in high school, at a cost of nearly $7 billion annually.[2]

**AND TOO MANY AREN'T PREPARED FOR THE JOBS THAT AWAIT THEM.**
Eighty-eight percent of employers say employees need higher levels of learning and deeper knowledge.[3]

## ENSURING THAT STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE PAYS BIG AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY LEVEL.




The median earnings of a bachelor's-degree recipient during a forty year full-time working life is 65 percent higher than that of a high school graduate.[4]

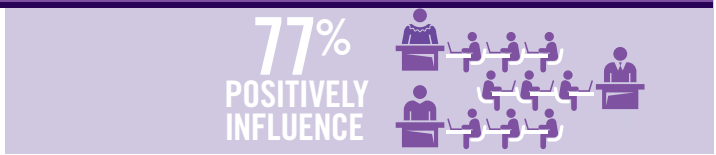



If everyone from the Class of 2012 had graduated from high school, the nation's economy would likely have benefitted from $263 billion in additional income over the course of their lifetimes.[5]

## THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS WILL HELP ENSURE THAT STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL PREPARED FOR BOTH COLLEGE AND A CAREER.




These state-developed standards set consistent guidelines for what students should know at each grade level so they graduate with the knowledge and skills–such as active listening, reading comprehension, critical thinking, and writing–that colleges and employers are looking for.[6]




Nationwide, 77 percent of math and English language arts teachers believe that the Common Core State Standards will positively influence their students' ability to think critically and use reasoning skills.[7]

## LET'S SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY AND SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON CORE

ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENT EDUCATION

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Visit impact.all4ed.org to see the economic impact of increasing the high school graduation rate for the nation, individual states, and more than 200 metro areas.

StateFarm™

# Why America Needs the Common Core State Standards Now

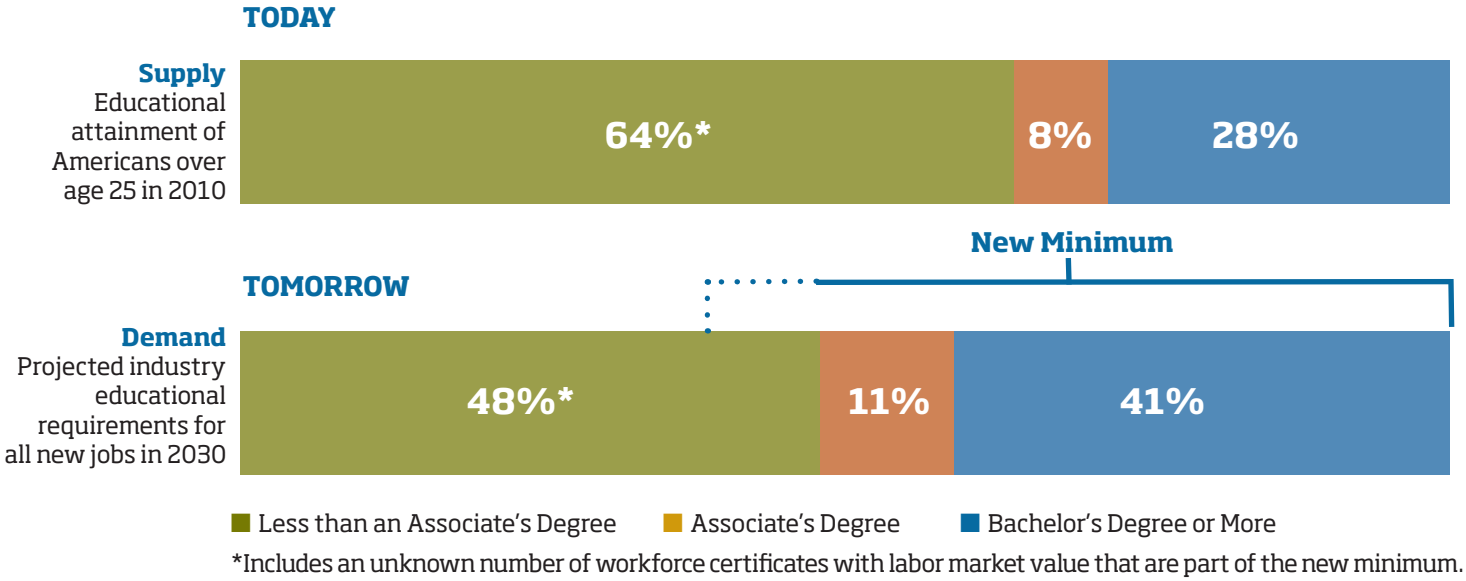
## A substantial "skills mismatch" has emerged between employer needs and employee qualifications, and will get worse.

- Over the past 40 years, the percentage of jobs requiring some kind of postsecondary education has doubled, from 28 percent to 59 percent.[15]
- 70 percent of the jobs now requiring postsecondary education are in occupations that previously required no education beyond high school.[16]
- Among jobs requiring postsecondary education, 37 percent require a bachelor's degree or higher. In 1965, that number was only 11 percent.[17]
- By 2020, U.S. companies will need to employ 123 million highly-skilled workers. However, only 50 million workers will qualify.[19]
- Meanwhile, more than 150 million Americans will be competing for an estimated 44 million low-skill jobs.[20]
- About 40 percent of employers are already dissatisfied with high school graduates' ability to read and understand complicated materials, think analytically, and solve real-world problems.[21]

## The "New Minimum"[18]

### Mismatch in the Nation's Talent Pipeline

### Current educational attainment and projected industry requirements by education level




*Includes an unknown number of workforce certificates with labor market value that are part of the new minimum.

While this is national data, the aggregate data is similar for most every state. States need to look at their own data to ensure their education pipeline meets the specific needs of their economies to know what sectors and jobs are expected to grow and where the gaps will be.

# Why America Needs the Common Core State Standards Now

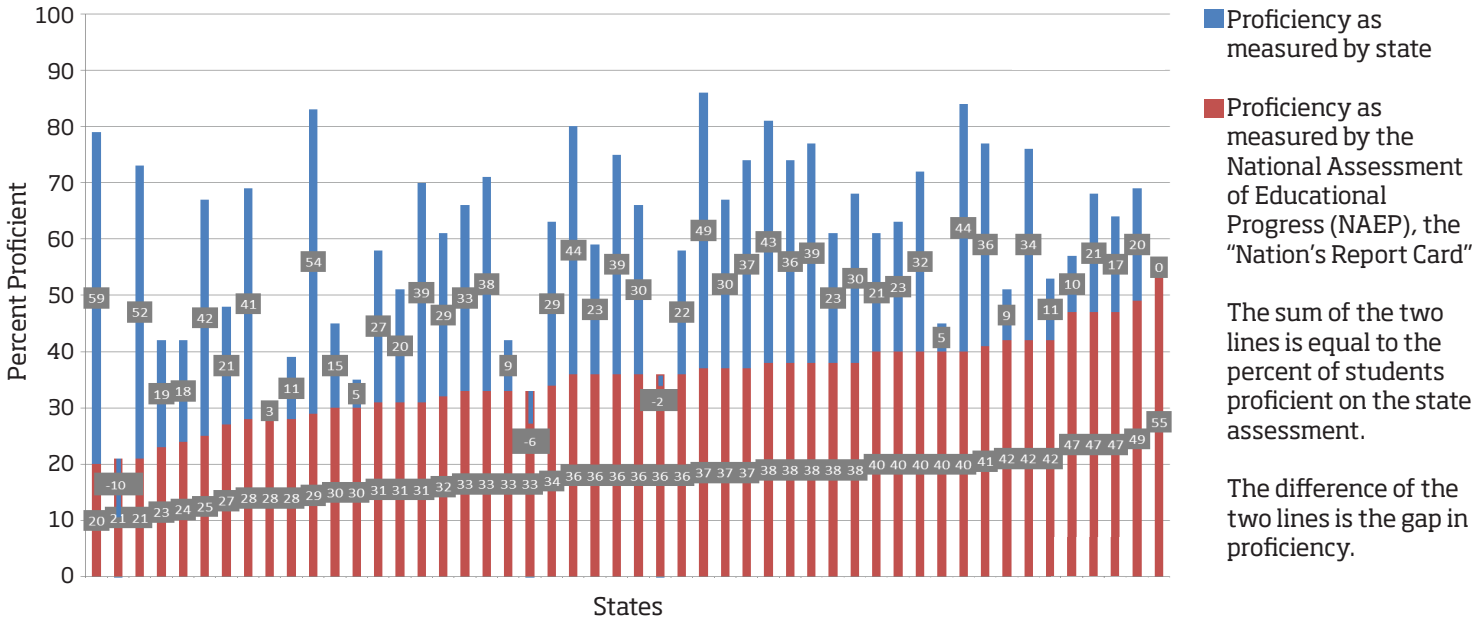
## U.S. students are woefully unprepared for this new reality.

- According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), more than 60 percent of middle and high school students scored below the "proficient level in reading achievement."[22]
- Half of incoming ninth graders in urban, high-poverty schools are already three years or more below grade level.[23]
- Only 25 percent of high school graduates who took the ACT test were ready for college-level work.[25]
- Only 52 percent of high school graduates met the ACT reading readiness benchmark for succeeding in credit-bearing, first-year college courses.[26]

## NAEP vs. State Measured Proficiency Levels[24]

### A Performance & Communication Problem

### 8th Grade Math - 2013 data




- The drop in the reported performance of students will be dramatic.
- This data shows that all states have a performance problem (the red line) AND states may have a communication problem. This is because the percent of students proficient based on the higher standards (NAEP) will drop from 75% to 34%.

# Why America Needs the Common Core State Standards Now

## The United States lags behind many developed nations in educational and workforce competitiveness.

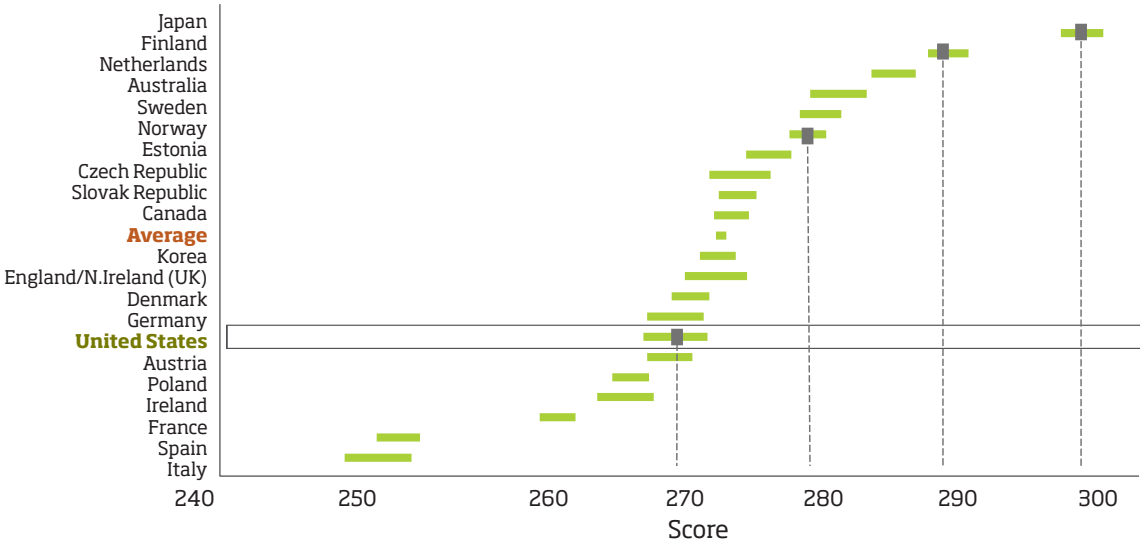
- When evaluated by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), in 2012 the United States ranked, among 15-year-olds, 26th for math, 21st for science, and 17th for reading among 34 industrialized nations.[27]
- According to a 2012-2013 World Economic Forum global competitiveness report, the United States ranked 47th out of 144 countries for the quality of math and science education.[28]
- The average industrialized nation has increased the percentage of its college-educated population by 65 percent, while the United States has only increased its college-educated population by three percent.[29]
- Most business leaders (54 percent) believe the U.S. higher education system currently lags behind both developed and emerging countries in preparing students for the workforce, and virtually all (96 percent) steadfastly believe that innovation is crucial to remain globally competitive.[30]

## This situation is costing young adults, businesses, and our nation billions of dollars.

- It is estimated that, in 2011, states and students spent more than $3 billion on remedial courses.[32]
- Private industry spends an estimated $3.1 billion annually to bolster the literacy skills of entry-level workers.[33]
- In 2010, the median income for young adults with a bachelor's degree was $45,000 a year. The median was $29,900 a year for those with a high school diploma or its equivalent.[34]

## Skill Levels of Adults[31]

### Literacy




**Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Programme for International Association of Adult Competencies**

**Results for adults between 16 and 65**

US is 7th from the bottom.

7 points is equivalent to about one year of additional schooling.

**Norway =** roughly 1 year better
**Finland =** roughly 3 years better
**Japan =** roughly 4 years better

# Concerns About the Common Core State Standards

### The federal government is leading the CCSS initiative.

False.

The standards are a state-led initiative by governors and education leaders with a large amount of input from teachers, parents, school administrators, and other community stakeholders. No federal official was on the work teams and feedback groups that developed the standards, while teachers from across the nation did serve on the development, feedback and validation committees.

### With the CCSS, every school will have to adopt the same curriculum.

False.

The Common Core State Standards define what students need to know; they do not define what teachers should teach or how students should learn. The standards explicitly preserve local control over curriculum choice. These decisions are left to each state and school. Teachers, principals, superintendents and school boards will continue to make important decisions about curriculum, including texts, and how their schools are operated.

### Adoption of the CCSS will reduce the amount of classic literature, poetry, and drama that students will read.

False.

In the CCSS, it is explicitly stated that students should continue to read literature, including foundational American literature; however, it does not dictate the books educators should teach or the curricula they should follow.

### To adopt the CCSS, states will need to lower their standards.

False.

Quite the opposite—not one of the over 40 states that has adopted the CCSS reported having to lower its standards.

### Teachers do not support the CCSS.

False.

American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten supports the standards, with the caveat that teachers need time to learn and properly implement the work.

National Education Association President Dennis Van Roekel also supports the standards, with the caveat that teachers provide additional input relating to testing and the standards' content.

### No state/public input in development or in adoption.

False.

Standards were written and reviewed by educators from every state involved in the development. All states received at least four, full drafts of the proposed standards throughout the process, with smaller reviews and feedback periods throughout the process. In addition, there were two public review and comment periods. Nearly 10,000 comments were received to help shape the final draft. Of those 10,000, 20 percent came from parents.

### The tests cost too much.

False.

Two-thirds of the states in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and half in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) will save money transitioning to new assessments.[35] Most state assessments do not incorporate the cost of offering a writing assessment, so even greater savings are available. Roughly a half of one percent of the average expenditure per student will be spent on the new high-quality, high-value assessments.[36]

### There is still uncertainty as to exactly how the PARCC/SBAC assessments will be administered in each state.

PARCC and SBAC are supporting states that are conducting technology readiness audits in districts and schools. PARCC's initial technology review of its member states showed that a vast majority of districts and schools are able to successfully implement the assessments with their existing technology.[37]

### The standards require new data collection and sharing of data.

False.

No data requirements are tied to the CCSS. The federal government is prohibited in four different statutes from collecting personally identifiable information. States maintain data governance and privacy standards, and both testing consortium (Smarter Balanced and PARCC) reaffirmed privacy policies.

### States' current standards are sufficient for today's students.

False.

In most states, on average about one-third of all students must repeat high school course content in remedial courses, a proposition that costs students, families and taxpayers more than $3 billion annually on postsecondary coursework that doesn't even count toward a degree.[38] Moreover, 34 percent of employers deem the preparation of newly hired employees with only a high school diploma as "deficient," (and only 16 percent find their preparation "excellent").[39]

## Awareness Is Needed

In an April 2014 Gallup poll, 37 percent of public school parents had not heard of the CCSS or did not know enough to have an opinion of the standards. Only 35 percent had a positive impression of the framework and 28 percent had a negative impression.[40]

Yet a November 2013 survey conducted by Public Opinion Strategies and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research on behalf of Achieve yielded the following:[41]

- A majority of voters (54 percent) believed students are graduating public high school unprepared;
- A majority of voters (66 percent) believed academic requirements for students in public schools should be raised; and,
- A majority of voters (67 percent) supported states in having the same standards in math and English rather than their own standards.

Upon hearing a brief description, a solid majority (69 percent) of voters supported implementation of the CCSS.

Moreover, a majority of voters (76 percent) agreed that if test scores drop as the new CCSS assessments are implemented, it is only to be expected as students and teachers adjust.

As a result:

- CCSS will raise the quality and rigor of educational standards;
- More students will see their performance scores drop in the short term; and,
- Elected officials need business leaders to share their perspective and stand with them to support state and local implementation.

## Join the Conversation

People are talking about the CCSS on social media—and here's how you can follow the conversation and address the misconceptions.

When sharing information on Twitter, best practices suggest using a hashtag, as well as keeping Twitter posts to less than 100 characters if possible (140 characters is the maximum).

Try starting out with tweets like these:

- In @Gallup poll,37% of public school parents unaware of #CommonCore or don't know enough to have opinion. Share facts:corestandards.org
- Did you know? Today 37% of jobs require a BA or above. Why America needs #CommonCore

To follow the conversation and find information to share, search for:

- Twitter handles that frequently post about the CCSS, such as @GallupEducation and @GatesEd
- Hashtagged topics such as #CommonCore, #CCSS, #CCR and #edchat

You can share this information with your Facebook contacts as well. Text-heavy posts with photos tend to be shared more frequently, as well as infographics.

# Resources to Share

- Achieve
  Business center for a college- and career-ready America: http://www.businessandeducation.org
- Achieve
  Multiple toolkits on the Common Core State Standards: http://www.futurereadyproject.org/future-ready-tools
- Alliance for Excellent Education & State Farm
  An infographic showing the economic case for the Common Core State Standards: http://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Common_Core_Infographic_Print1.pdf
- American Federation of Teachers
  Debunking myths of the Common Core State Standards: http://www.aft.org/issues/standards/nationalstandards/debunkingmyths.cfm
- American Institutes for Research
  An overview of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Costs (SBAC): http://www.quickanded.com/2013/08/perspective-on-smarter-balanced-assessment-costs.html
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
  Common Core State Standards assessment consortia: http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/images/publications/journals/pp_v17n01_infographic.jpg
- Business Coalition for Student Achievement
  A communications toolkit about improving education policy for U.S. competitiveness: http://www.biz4achievement.org/files/Upgrade_%20America_Communications_Toolkit_2013.pdf
- Business Roundtable
  Solutions to ensure the Common Core State Standards are successfully implemented: http://www.businessroundtable.org/sites/default/files/BRT%20Ed%20Priority%20Common%20Core%20Oct28.pdf
- Center for American Progress
  An infographic illustrating higher education attainment and investments in education among select nations: http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2012/08/21/29942/infographic-the-competition-that-really-matters/
- Center for American Progress
  Fact sheets detailing how and why the Common Core State Standards will benefit numerous states that have implemented them: http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/news/2013/12/04/80426/a-guide-to-the-common-core-state-standards/
- Center on Education Policy
  A compendium of research on the Common Core State Standards: http://www.cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=438
- Collaborative for Student Success
  A set of resources on the Common Core State Standards, including material for parents and policymakers: http://www.forstudentsuccess.org/resources/
- Collaborative for Student Success
  A video of Republican Governors making the case for the Common Core State Standards: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdL9BrZMw-0
- Committee for Economic Development
  Presentation in April 2014 by Richard Laine of the National Governors Association to the Committee for Economic Development on the Common Core State Standards: http://www.ced.org/pdf/Common_Core_State_Standards_Presentation_-_CED_Education_Committee_slides_-_Richard_Laine.pdf
- Common Core State Standards Initiative
  A bipartisan mix of organizations representing parents, teachers, business leaders, and other key voices who have strongly supported the Common Core State Standards through respective statements: http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/statements-of-support/
- Common Core State Standards Initiative
  A list of quotes from individual supporters of the Common Core State Standards: http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Quotes-from-Supporters.pdf
- Common Core State Standards Initiative
  A map detailing the process each state and territory followed to adopt their new standards: http://www.corestandards.org/standards-in-your-state/
- Common Core State Standards Initiative
  How the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts differ from previous standards: http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-english-language-arts/
- Common Core State Standards Initiative
  How the Common Core State Standards in mathematics differ from previous standards: http://www.corestandards.org/other-resources/key-shifts-in-mathematics/
- Common Core State Standards Initiative
  Myths vs. facts about the Common Core State Standards: http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/myths-vs-facts/
- Council of the Great City Schools
  A video (also in Spanish) about how the Common Core State Standards prepare students to be college- and career-ready: http://www.commoncoreworks.org/domain/157
- Data Quality Campaign
  A compilation of resources and tools for effectively communicating education data: http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/why-education-data/communicating-data
- Data Quality Campaign
  Advocacy points about data's role in supporting the Common Core State Standards: http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/Cheat%20Sheet%20CCR.pdf
- Data Quality Campaign
  An infographic showing why students do better when teachers are empowered with data: http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/files/Data-Rich%20Year%20Infographic.pdf
- Education Commission of the States
  Report: The Progress of Education Reform: Who Pays the Tab for K-12 Education?: http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/07/91/10791.pdf
- GE Foundation
  Report: How Business Can Support Core Standards—and Help Rebuild Education: http://static.foundation.gecitizenship.com.s3.amazonaws.com/foundation/files/2013/01/FINAL-GE-Foundation-Business-and-Education-Summit-White-Paper.pdf
- Higher State Standards Partnership
  Numerous resources on the Common Core State Standards, including myths vs. facts, and links to other organizations that support the standards: http://www.thecommoncore.com/
- National Council of La Raza
  An advocacy toolkit on the Common Core State Standards, including resources for building coalitions: http://www.nclr.org/images/uploads/pages/CCSS_Toolkit.pdf
- National Education Association
  A Common Core State Standards toolkit: http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/Common-Core-State-Standards-Toolkit.pdf
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices
  Information on the Common Core State Standards, including links to trends in implementation:http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-divisions/page-edu-division/col2-content/list---edu-right/content-reference-1@/common-core-state-standards.html
- National PTA
  An overview for parents on what students will learn at each grade under the Common Core State Standards: http://www.pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2910
- National PTA and Hunt Institute
  A video series on the Common Core State Standards: http://www.pta.org/advocacy/content.cfm?ItemNumber=4158
- Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)
  An overview of savings projected for PARCC tests: http://www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/CostFAQs07-22-2013.pdf
- Student Achievement Partners
  A list of business leaders supporting the Common Core State Standards: http://www.achievethecore.org/common-core-intro-for-parents#letter
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation
  Numerous resources on the Common Core State Standards, including opinion editorials, videos, and a map of the education landscape in each state: http://www.businessforcore.org/

# Endnotes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