



Communications Research and Guidance on the Common Core State Standards

Jacque Lawing Ebert
Partner, GMMB



Overarching Opinion Research

- Education is “a value, not just another issue.”
- Building Awareness and Support is critical
- Research Informs



Common Core Connects the Dots

- A vision vs. disconnected reform
- What makes a student college- and career-ready?

Key Research Findings: 2009

- **Public had a mixed view of existing state standards:**
 - 46% were very or fairly satisfied
 - 52% less satisfied
 - 56% felt standards were too low
 - 39% said they were about right or too high
- **Felt that all states should have the same standards**
 - Public: 73%
 - Teachers 66%

From Theory into Practice

- **Key Message:** “The Common Core State Standards are the product of a voluntary, collective effort by states. This state-led initiative to establish consistent and clear education standards for English-language arts and mathematics was informed by the best state standards; the experience of teachers, content experts, states and leading thinkers; and feedback from the general public.”

From Theory into Practice

- **Key Message:** “The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are designed to provide consistent learning goals for all students, regardless of where they live, and allow parents and teachers to more effectively help all students achieve those goals.”

From Theory into Practice

- **Key Message:** “Many young people who graduate and pass all the required tests – even in high-performing states – still require remediation in their postsecondary work. The Common Core State Standards are anchored by requirements for college and career success, providing a more accurate description of academic readiness.”

Awareness about the Common Core State Standards

- **39% of the public** is aware of the Common Core State Standards
- **90% of teachers** are aware of the Common Core State Standards



Support for the Common Core State Standards

- Of the public that is aware of the CCSS, **59% are supportive** but with some reservations
- **77% of teachers view the CCSS favorably**
- **Funding and student support** remain key concerns
 - 30% of the public fear the CCSS “will cost money but won’t make a real difference in graduation rates of the quality of education.”

Next Phase: Educators Working on Implementation

- Today, messages need to **focus on the work underway in states to implement the standards** and what successful implementation looks like:
 - Training teachers to teach to the new standards
 - Aligning curriculum, assessments and instructional materials

Communications Guidance

- **Frame your state's standards work** to reinforce how “today's economy demands all students be prepared for success in college and career”
- **Don't oversell** consistent standards as a panacea for improving education
- **It's about the students!** Connect the work to the goal of raising student achievement

Communications Guidance

- **Getting everyone on the same page:** Stress that the Common Core State Standards set **clear, shared expectations for students, parents, and teachers**
- **State-Driven Process:** Remind your audiences of the process you state went through in deciding to adopt the Common Core State Standards
- **Local Flexibility:** Underline the idea that **the Common Core State Standards do *not* mandate a single curriculum**

Communications Guidance

- **Own and promote the work** your state is doing to implement your new standards
- **Demonstrate commitment** to providing schools and educators with the **resources and support** they will need to implement the standards successfully, particularly in helping struggling students
- **Amplify voices of support** – teachers, administrators business community

Why This Matters

- While support for the CCSS remains high, **criticism and concerns persist**
- **Building and communicating a positive narrative** provides teachers with the political and public support they need to acquire the materials, resources, and support for successful implementation
- **Do Weigh In!**