

American K-12 Education

How is Common Core Faring?

How Did We Get Here?

The United States has consistently underperformed in K-12 education internationally, ranking 13th in reading and 37th in math in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) international rankings in 2018 (Schleicher, 2019). As a result, there have been multiple federal education initiatives focused on improving K-12 education. The most recent rendition, the Common Core Standards, uses nationalized standards to measure student and school success. States must adhere to these standards in order to receive most federal funding grants, such as the Obama era Race to the Top program (Race to the Top, 2010).

A Brief Timeline of American K-12 Education Policy

1983

The Report "A Nation at Risk" is published, highlighting problems within the American educational system (A Nation at Risk, 1983).

- 23 million adult Americans are functionally illiterate
- Achievement scores on test are lower than in 1960

2002

The No Child Left Behind Act was passed in 2002 and attempted to reform the public education system by insisting that students meet state standards in order to receive federal funding such as Title I. Additionally, schools that did not meet state standards and were not deemed as making "adequate yearly progress" were subject to state intervention (No Child Left Behind Act of 2002)

1994

The "Goals 200" Act is passed by Congress and President Clinton. This act establishes multiple educational goals to be reached by the year 2000, including 100% rate for adult literacy and a national 90% high school graduation rate. (The Goals 2000: Educate America Act)

2009

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governor's Association (NGA) develop the Common Core standards (Development Process).

The Problem

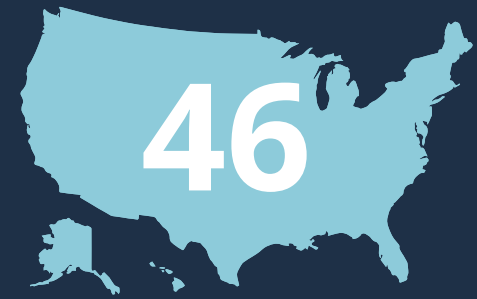
The Common Core Standards were developed over a period of 11 months from conception to finalization in 2009 and 2010.

Adoption of the standards occurred at the state level from 2011-2015. This ambitiously short timeline did not allow for testing and improvements at a smaller scale. As a result of this rushed layout, students and teachers reported feeling overwhelmed and ill-prepared for the new standards (Fusarelli et al., 2015). Another problem with the Common Core Standards is that they were not formulated based on international research as they claim. One of the arguments for federal standards was that all the top performing countries had centralized standards, which is not the case (Porter et al., 2011). Contrary to their stated intention, studies show that the Common Core Standards show little correlation with the the standards of other top performing countries (Porter et al., 2011).

Potential Solutions

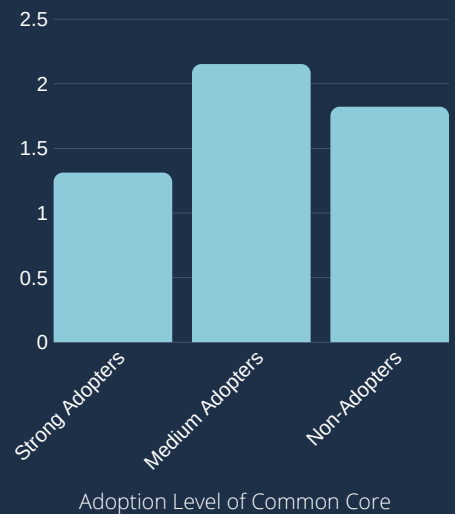
The current Common Core Standards were adopted without a solid research basis and were not tested before being nationally rolled out (Mathis, 2010). Policymakers and K-12 educators should work together to develop new K-12 educational standards. These standards should be tested over a significant period of time that allows policymakers to determine the potential effectiveness of the new standards on a national level. We should further study the international education standards of other high performing countries and use this information in developing US education standards. There is evidence that the standards of other high performing countries differ significantly from the US Common Core standards in their content and emphasis. International standards show a higher emphasis on procedural understanding as opposed to higher cognitive understanding when compared to the US Common Core standards (Porter et al., 2011).

Fast Facts

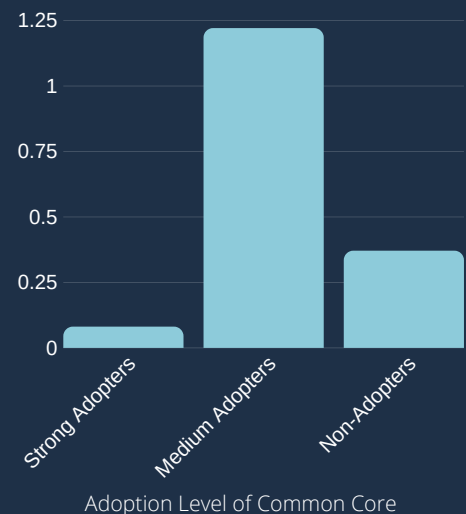


The number of States who have adopted the Common Core standards

Average 4th Grade Reading Score Increase according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress 2009-2015 (Loveless, 2016).



Average 8th Grade Math Score Decrease according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress 2009-2015 (Loveless, 2016).



Works Cited

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