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Leveraging the Common Core to Support College and Career Readiness in California

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Executive Summary

The early years of the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in California were complicated by the Great Recession as well as by a significant devolution of finance and programmatic control to the local level through the Local Control Funding Formula. The state charted a steady course and took a systematic approach to CCSS implementation, making policy changes in such areas as assessment and accountability to create a framework that supported the standards. Postsecondary systems also made policy shifts to align with the CCSS. This research outlines policymakers' and educators' hopes for how the CCSS can support improvements in students' college and career readiness, and it provides early evidence about both similarities and disconnects between those expectations and implementation activities in high schools and districts.

Policymakers and educators are optimistic about the potential of the CCSS to improve college and career readiness, yet there is initiative fatigue, confusion about how to integrate the many college and career readiness-focused reform efforts underway in California, and a lack of clear guidance about how to implement the CCSS. Interviewed high school educators expressed a desire for more clarity about such issues as: 1) the expectations of the state's postsecondary systems for their various degree and certificate programs, 2) how to connect those expectations to teaching and learning in high schools, and 3) instructional strategies that will support the intent of the CCSS with regard to college and career readiness.

The report outlines key findings regarding state education leaders' expectations compared with educators' experiences with CCSS implementation, summarized in the following table.

State education leaders expect...	Early evidence from the field suggests...
The CCSS will help students develop “critical thinking skills,” such as problem solving, analysis, and synthesis, and other skills that enhance learning.	Teachers are also optimistic about the potential of CCSS to enhance students' critical thinking skills. They raised specific concerns, however, about choosing the best instructional techniques and knowing when they are “doing it right.”
The CCSS will help students prepare for college and career by offering a strong foundation in core subject areas.	In the studied schools, most of the curricular changes that had occurred to date were in mathematics (math). Math teachers were confused about which approach (such as integrated math) will best prepare students for success in college. English teachers reported that they were assisting colleagues in other disciplines with integrating literacy across the curricula. Across the disciplines, teachers questioned if traditional college preparatory courses need to change to align with the CCSS, and they expressed the need for better professional learning opportunities.

State education leaders expect...	Early evidence from the field suggests...
<p>The CCSS will prepare students for college and career by stimulating more integration of CTE and core academics, with educators bringing more applied skills and work-based learning opportunities into core academic classrooms, and more core academic content into CTE classrooms.</p>	<p>This study found philosophical support for the idea, but concern that, absent state or foundation funding for an integrated career pathway program, educators have few supports to make the curricular and pedagogical changes required.</p>
<p>The CCSS and accompanying assessments will bring new focus to the senior year of high school.</p>	<p>Educators believe that a large proportion of seniors will need additional supports and that schools might not have the capacity to meet students' needs during the initial years of the CCSS. In addition, the lack of systematic connections with postsecondary education makes it challenging to create coherently aligned curricular opportunities for large numbers of students.</p>
<p>The CCSS will increase collaboration between K-12 schools and their local postsecondary institutions.</p>	<p>This study found little evidence of new sustained collaborations between schools and colleges resulting from CCSS implementation. There were no clear incentives to collaborate with postsecondary partners and most teachers believed they did not have the capacity to add collaboration with postsecondary to their "to do" list at this stage in the implementation process.</p>
<p>The Smarter Balanced assessments will provide an opportunity for teachers to incorporate the use of different technologies in their classrooms. This includes using formative assessments to gauge student learning; engaging students differently in the learning process; and providing information about student learning to teachers, students, and parents.</p>	<p>Educators seem to be at the early stages of learning how to use applied technologies in the classroom. Teachers at all of the studied schools are learning how to incorporate technology to create opportunities that could not exist without it, as opposed to replacing activities that used to be done with paper and pencil. Across the board, teachers stated that it was too soon to use many of the online options that are a part of Smarter Balanced.</p>



Given those findings, this report offers a series of policy recommendations. The recommendations provided in this report are intended to be a bridge between where the state is today and all of the interconnected activities that will likely be needed to substantially improve students' college and career readiness through the CCSS. The recommendations acknowledge that the state is in a new era of local control and that policymakers are still determining which policy levers are effective and appropriate in that environment.

The recommendations fall into the following categories:

- Clarify and communicate the state's expectations for college and career readiness and how various education initiatives fit together.
- Make strategic investments to support students' transitions from high school to postsecondary and catalyze collaboration across education systems.
- Provide high-level and flexible resources and guidance to support new forms of professional learning.
- Provide additional resources and guidance for districts as they seek to improve the use of educational technologies.

The first five years of CCSS implementation occurred during a challenging fiscal era and a near-simultaneous transition to a radically new way to fund schools. Now is the ideal time for policymakers to reflect on the early successes and challenges of the focus on college and career readiness within the CCSS and set priorities for the next five years.



Introduction

The 2014-15 academic year was an important milestone for California's implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). It was the final year of the state's initial five-year CCSS implementation plan that outlined major state-level activities,¹ the first year that schools administered the CCSS-aligned Smarter Balanced assessments, and the first year in which many schools had fully implemented the CCSS.² This turning point—from implementation planning at the state level to full execution of the CCSS in California classrooms—is an important time for leaders to reflect on the events of the last five years since the CCSS were adopted and chart a course for the next five.

Since 2010, implementation of the CCSS has been a central focus of the California State Board of Education (SBE) and California Department of Education (CDE). As described in more detail below, the state fully committed to the CCSS as its key strategy for improving educational quality. State education leaders made numerous conforming policy changes, overhauled its testing system to align with the CCSS, and made substantial financial investments to equip schools with the technology, professional development, and instructional materials needed for implementation.

An end goal of this full-scale effort to implement the CCSS is to support post-high school success for a larger proportion of students. The CCSS are a grade-by-grade set of learning goals in English Language Arts (ELA) and math. An objective of the standards is to support increased learning in those subject areas while also improving students' critical thinking skills—such as problem solving, analysis, and synthesis—as well as communication, collaboration, and other skills that enhance learning. The CCSS are an intentional departure from the previous standards

that tended to emphasize the breadth of content coverage rather than the depth. The CCSS are also intended to build toward the expectations that students will face in postsecondary education and in the workforce, leading to greater student success beyond high school.

While many policymakers and experts see potential for the CCSS to significantly improve post-high school outcomes over the long term, it is important to understand that the CCSS are a set of learning goals in ELA and math; they do not prescribe curricula or pedagogical approaches. In order for this reform effort to be successful, teachers will need to adopt new instructional strategies. In addition, the CCSS do not include any guidance about the nonacademic components of college and career readiness (such as learning how to apply for college or financial aid), or about whether and how high schools should connect to colleges, universities, and workplaces.

California's education leaders created a deliberate and relatively slow phase-in plan for the CCSS. They provided resources, but allowed great flexibility at the local level; created new policies to support the CCSS; suspended the state's accountability system for two years; and did not link teacher evaluations to assessments. In addition, California was in the midst of devolving significant fiscal control and programmatic decision-making to the local level (discussed further below), which may have mitigated concerns about centralized control. With these and other actions, California's leaders hoped to minimize the problems that other states are experiencing during the implementation process, such as parent and teacher protests and large proportions of parents opting their students out of the assessments.³

This Report

This report focuses on understanding the role of college and career readiness in the implementation of the CCSS at the high school level. In the pages that follow, the report describes:

- The policy changes and investments California made over the last five years to support the CCSS;
- California state policymakers' goals and expectations for how the CCSS will strengthen college and career readiness specifically;
- The experiences of educators in four high schools as they implement the CCSS, and how those experiences compare and contrast with policymakers' expectations; and
- Recommendations for policymakers to consider as they face the next five years of CCSS implementation, focused specifically on how the CCSS can best be leveraged to improve college and career readiness.

Throughout those sections, the report discusses how California's education leaders are hoping to use the CCSS to strengthen ties between K-12 and postsecondary education to build a more seamless connection between the systems. Leaders hope that such a connection, combined with new ways of teaching and learning, will help close the achievement, college going, and college completion gaps that exist in California.

The findings in this report are based on research conducted in 2014. In spring 2014, researchers interviewed state-level education policy leaders, postsecondary education leaders, and County Office of Education representatives to learn about their expectations. In fall 2014, researchers conducted interviews with educators and administrators in four high schools located in two districts to learn about their experiences implementing the CCSS. All interviews focused on college and career readiness and high school-to-college transitions. (See sidebar for a brief description of the study and the Appendix for a full description).

Research Overview

This report is based on interviews at the state, county, district, and school site levels—along with extensive document reviews—conducted in 2014. Researchers interviewed 91 individuals for the study:

- Twenty California education policy leaders at the state and system levels (in both K-12 and postsecondary);
- Four education policy leaders from four states involved in the Core to College initiative;⁴
- Seventeen representatives from ten California county offices of education; and
- Fifty teachers, school administrators and district administrators from four California high schools located in two districts.

Interviews focused on CCSS implementation and the following related topics:

- Current college and career readiness initiatives (such as Linked Learning and Career Pathways Trust);
- Professional development;
- Curriculum and instruction;
- Using technologies to measure learning and engage students (including online CCSS-aligned resources for teachers and engaging students through technology);
- Assessment;
- Equity; and
- Collaboration with postsecondary institutions.

For more information, please see the Appendix.

Early on, California's context for implementing the CCSS was complex.

Two critically important contextual factors intersected with California's early efforts to implement the CCSS. First, during the first 3-4 years of implementation, California was still in the midst of the Great Recession. During that time, county offices of education (COEs), districts, and schools laid off personnel, terminated programs and services, and deferred spending on needed resources. The state's economic situation created a very challenging environment for implementing a sweeping reform initiative, and many districts are still digging out from problems incurred during the recession.

Second, amidst the first phase of implementing the CCSS, the state embarked on a major shift in school finance, devolving control from the state

to the county and local levels. In 2013, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) went into effect, giving local education agencies (LEAs) more flexibility to spend their allocations in ways that serve their student populations, with the goal of restoring school funding to 2007-08 levels.⁵ The law also includes a major new accountability requirement, the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), which requires LEAs to plan their use of funding in pursuit of eight state priorities for education, including CCSS implementation.⁶ By including the CCSS as a state priority in the LCAP, state policy leaders sent a strong signal about their expectations that LEAs would fully adopt the standards. CCSS implementation is not otherwise required by state law.

California's eight priorities for public K-12 education⁷

1. *Basic Services*: Includes appropriate teacher assignment, sufficient instructional materials, and facilities in good condition.
2. *Implementation of State Standards*: Implementation of the academic content and performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education (the Common Core and the Next Generation Science Standards).
3. *Parent Involvement*: Engaging parents in decision-making processes and in student programs.
4. *Student Achievement*: Based on multiple indicators, including standardized tests and college and career readiness.
5. *Student Engagement*: Based on multiple indicators, such as attendance, chronic absenteeism, dropout rates (middle and high school), and high school graduation rates.
6. *School Climate*: Based on multiple indicators, such as student suspension and expulsion rates, and local measures assessing safety and school connectedness.
7. *Course Access*: The extent to which pupils have access to, and are enrolled in, a broad course of study that includes core subject areas, including the programs and services developed and provided to economically disadvantaged pupils, English learners, foster youth, and students with exceptional needs.
8. *Other Student Performance*: Student performance as measured by performance in other required areas of study, such as physical education, the arts, the SAT, and the ACT.

As one policy leader from a state agency said, “We’re in just kind of this amazing time where we’re really looking at remodeling the entire educational system.” Another policy leader said, “This is not a sprint—this is a marathon.”

As the state passes the five-year mark with CCSS implementation, state policymakers are still communicating that the implementation of the CCSS, along with the implementation of the LCFF, is very much a work in progress.

California took a patient, systematic approach to implementing the CCSS.

California’s education leaders made a host of changes to establish a framework of support for the CCSS. The state’s approach included the provision of resources and strong local autonomy, a non-punitive accountability framework, and the development of a learning environment across the state (as opposed to a traditional accountability system). In addition, the postsecondary systems came together to signal support for the CCSS.

Suspension of high-stakes, test-based accountability

The state’s approach has included providing educators with time and autonomy to implement the CCSS without high stakes, most notably by not measuring school or student progress based on Smarter Balanced assessment scores until 2016 or later. Assembly Bill 484 (Bonilla, Chapter 489, Statutes of 2013) suspended the state’s old testing system and led to the development of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) system, which includes the Smarter Balanced assessments. The bill also established 2013-14 as a “field test” year for Smarter Balanced assessments, to provide educators with time to implement the CCSS in their classrooms before the scores mattered for accountability purposes. Senate Bill 1458 (Steinberg, Chapter 577, Statutes of 2012) revised the Academic Performance Index (API), a metric for ranking schools based primarily on test score growth. It authorizes the incorporation of more than one measure of student preparedness

“I think that California did it right this year [2014]. We took this time to actually use this year as a field test. We encouraged people to get out there and take the risk.”

– state education policy leader

for college and career (not just a test score) into the API for secondary schools; various measures are being developed and considered at the state level.

While California has thus far avoided major opposition to the Common Core, policymakers and educators are aware that public perception could shift if the majority of students score lower than expected on the Smarter Balanced assessments; if equity concerns about opportunity to learn are not addressed; or if educators, parents, or students grow frustrated with the assessments.⁸ To address some of these potential problems, state education leaders are working to manage expectations about assessment scores.⁹ For instance, a new student score report developed by the state will help explain Smarter Balanced test scores to parents and students in September 2015. The reports will provide, among other information, the student’s 2015 score on the Smarter Balanced ELA and math exams. The reports will caution that the score only measures student performance

in ELA and math, and that the test is just one of many measures of what students know. With regard to college and career readiness, the 11th grade assessment provides information about some facets of academic readiness, but not all, since it focuses only on ELA and math.

Influx of new dollars

Although the start of CCSS implementation was hampered by a severe budget crisis, once the economy began to recover, state leaders allocated substantial funding—with few strings attached—to help with CCSS implementation. The 2013-14 budget included \$1.25 billion to support teacher learning, establish a technology infrastructure, and purchase materials that best suited their students' needs. State statute required the CDE to collect expenditure information from LEAs by July 2015, with a report due to the California Legislature in January 2016. The 2015-16 California state budget included an increase of \$3.2 billion in one-time funds to reimburse K-12 districts for the costs of state-mandated programs and provide schools with discretionary resources to support critical investments such as CCSS implementation. Recognizing more specific needs related to CCSS implementation, state leaders also allocated one-time block grants of \$490 million for professional development of teachers, and \$40 million to help county superintendents oversee districts' LCAPs.

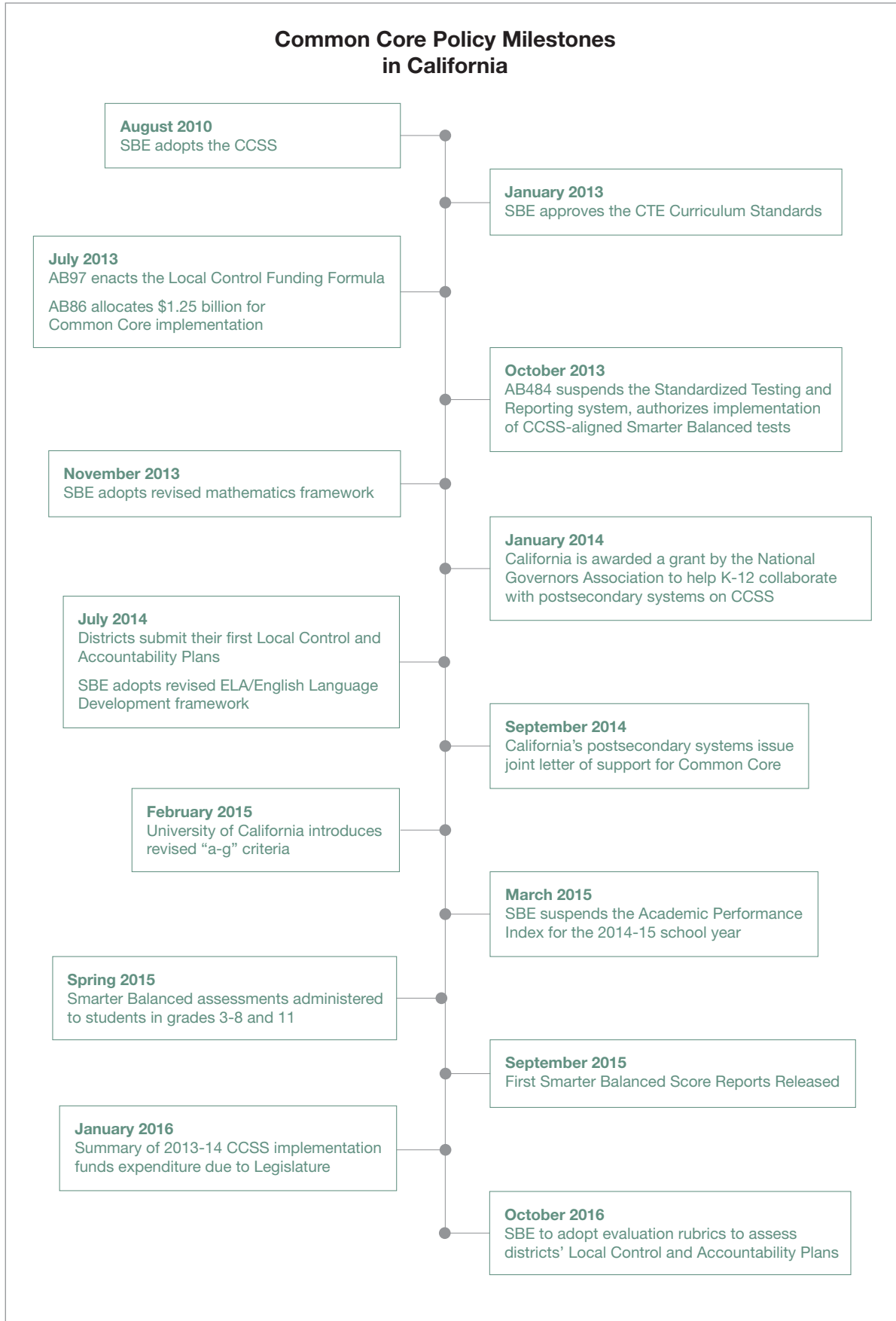
Postsecondary alignment efforts

In 2014, the heads of California's three public postsecondary systems—the University of California (UC), the California State University (CSU), and the California Community Colleges (CCC)—wrote a joint letter, along with the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, in support of the CCSS, stating that the CCSS are aligned with postsecondary expectations in California and that they will be meaningful for improving students' readiness for college.¹⁰

The letter is largely a symbolic gesture of support, but the state's public postsecondary systems also made policy changes to align with the CCSS. For example, the Early Assessment Program (EAP), administered by the CSU, now utilizes Smarter Balanced assessments as a measure of college readiness for the CSU and for the majority of the CCCs.¹¹ The EAP assessment tells high school juniors if they are ready for college-level English and math, and the CSU-developed Expository Reading and Writing course is intended to help 12th graders who are not proficient on the assessment become ready for college-level English courses. Previously optional for students, the EAP assessment will now be part of the standard Smarter Balanced assessment for all 11th graders. Over 100 higher education institutions in the state—all 23 CSU campuses, and 78 of the 113 CCC campuses—agreed to use Smarter Balanced scores for placement into college-level, credit-bearing English and math courses.¹²

In another area of postsecondary reform, the UC revised its "a-g" eligibility requirements to align better with the CCSS.¹³ The a-g requirements are UC-approved high school courses that students must complete in order to be eligible for admission to the UC and CSU. As an official from the UC Office of the President explained, the revisions focused on the "habits of mind, abilities, and skill sets that would result from taking these courses [because the] ideal student learning outcomes of Common Core are the same skills that the UC wants its students to have." The revised criteria also acknowledge the new CCSS-aligned integrated math course as a college preparatory course that will be accepted for admission to the UC.¹⁴ Finally, in a trend that preceded the CCSS, the UC has worked to increase the number of Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that are accepted for a-g.¹⁵

Common Core Policy Milestones in California



Some state goals for the CCSS are already becoming a reality while others are likely a long way off.

The education leaders who participated in this study expressed hope and expectations that the CCSS will spark fundamental shifts in teaching, learning, and connections within and across education systems. In interviews, California policymakers identified several specific ways they expect the CCSS will support improved levels of college and career readiness:

- New approaches to teaching and learning will enhance critical thinking and other skills that improve learning;
- Students will develop a strong foundation in core academic subjects;
- Teachers will better integrate academic content into CTE courses and applied learning into core academic courses;
- The senior year of high school will become more focused on college and career readiness for a larger proportion of students (since a large proportion of students might not be proficient on the 11th grade Smarter Balanced assessment);
- K-12 and postsecondary will collaborate more; and
- Teachers will use new technologies to better engage students in learning.

The sections below discuss each of these expectations in greater detail. In addition, they provide preliminary evidence from research in four high schools in two districts about how some of these expectations are already being met, while others are not yet taking hold or are facing challenges in the field.

One over-arching finding from all the interviews was the sense of optimism and excitement that teachers expressed about the CCSS. They consistently mentioned that the new standards are providing them with the opportunity to be professionals—to make determinations about what and how to teach their students—and that the focus on critical thinking, communication, collaboration, analysis, and other skills will help a larger proportion of students succeed after high school. In the studied districts and schools, interviewees voiced almost no criticism of the philosophy behind the CCSS; the main concerns focused around a lack of specific information about what is expected of students in postsecondary, the need for additional guidance about the CCSS, and a desire to learn about how their students fare after graduating from high school. Additionally, teachers expressed an overall sense of being overwhelmed by the major education policy shifts underway in California.

Enhancing critical thinking skills

EXPECTATIONS

Policymakers consistently reported that they expect students' critical thinking skills—such as problem solving, analysis, and synthesis, in addition to other skills that enhance learning, such as communication and collaboration—to improve as a result of implementing the CCSS, and to support college and career readiness. As one legislative staff member said, “[implementation of the CCSS is] a moment in time to highlight the process skills that are related to being successful in college and career.”

EARLY EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

While the interviewed teachers did not use a single, common term for it, each one discussed how the CCSS necessitate the development of students' knowledge and skills that go beyond traditional academic disciplines. They also consistently reported that the previous standards did not signal the importance of those skills.

Teachers provided examples of how the CCSS require them to step back a bit to allow students to grapple with the material. One teacher said, "It's not so much me teaching; it's putting the ideas out there, letting them struggle with it, think about it, write about it." Similarly, teachers said that by allowing students to solve their own problems and draw their own conclusions, they are teaching them to learn. Most teachers said that their role is shifting from lecturing to facilitating. Rather than standing and imparting knowledge to students, teachers discussed how they are helping students lead themselves to understanding. In addition, teachers are emphasizing collaborative work among students, although in interviews they expressed uncertainty about which strategies are most effective. Finally, the CCSS also require students to synthesize and analyze, rather than just memorize. Because of the decrease in multiple-choice assessments, there are more ways that students can demonstrate knowledge. The teachers expressed hope that such demonstrations will lead to increased confidence, which will lead in turn to the development of

"We're in groups again and working together and talking to each other and talking about process in problems. So, the communication is open again, rather than students sitting, listening, and then doing."

– 12th grade math teacher

academic mindsets. Across the board, the interviewed teachers are supportive of the focus on critical thinking skills, but are concerned about choosing the best instructional techniques and knowing when they are "doing it right."

Stronger foundations in core academic areas EXPECTATIONS

Policymakers also think the CCSS will help students prepare for college and career by offering a strong foundation in core subject areas. More specifically, they hope that students will reach higher levels of literacy because reading and writing will be infused across disciplines rather than isolated within English classes. In math, they expect that the Common Core will help build students' understandings in a more coherent manner than the previous standards and that students will be able to apply foundational concepts to analyze and solve complex problems.

EARLY EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

In all four high schools, teachers and administrators reported that most of the curricular changes that had occurred to date were in math. Almost all reported that they were confused, though, about whether integrated math—one of the options for implementing CCSS math curricula—will adequately prepare advanced students for pre-calculus and calculus, and whether college-bound students who do not take the highest levels of math in high school will be ready for college-level math. One of the districts decided not to adopt integrated math courses, but teachers in that district changed the math curriculum by adopting College Preparatory Math because it incorporates some of the important concepts of the CCSS (such as writing and problem-solving) without requiring schools to adopt an integrated course. As one teacher said, "We decided not to do [integrated math] because it's too much of a change for teachers. And also we want...UCs, CSUs, and Community Colleges to get much more on board with this before they start seeing transcripts from us." Teachers in both districts

described a “wait and see” attitude with regard to integrated math, since it was not clear to them that the approach would prepare students well for California’s three different postsecondary systems.

With regard to ELA, the majority of teachers said it has changed the least under the CCSS. English teachers generally believed that they were already using CCSS-aligned instructional strategies to prepare students for college and career. Many of them reported that they are helping their colleagues who do not teach English integrate disciplinary literacy into their curricula. The studied schools are focusing on expository reading and writing slightly more than before the CCSS, and they are prepared to increase ELA supports for seniors, if needed, based on Smarter Balanced assessment scores.

Across the disciplines, teachers of traditional college preparatory courses consistently mentioned that they are uncertain about whether they needed to change their curricula and practices, or whether honors, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and similar courses could remain relatively untouched. As with the focus on critical thinking skills, teachers reported that they appreciate the curricular changes sparked by the CCSS conceptually, but they were also anxious about having enough time to develop their own materials and about how to change curricula and instructional strategies absent specific rubrics and templates. All of the interviewed teachers expressed uncertainty about whether they were implementing the CCSS correctly and, similarly, about whether they were supporting increased levels of college and career readiness for a larger proportion of students.

While teachers had received substantial professional learning opportunities about implementing the CCSS, nearly all said they now need more time to collaborate with their peers. One high school science teacher explained it this way: “I don’t need another lecture on the theory [of Common Core]—I’ve

“I don’t have as much time as I would like to be able to find the right kinds of [resources] and switch everything that I’ve done for the last 13 years and turn it on its head.”

– high school math teacher

had that...I need time to sit down and develop resources with other teachers.” All of the studied schools were struggling to carve out adequate time for these kinds of activities, in part due to contractual limitations on teacher work time.

Better integration of CTE and core academics EXPECTATIONS

Most of the interviewed state education leaders stated that one way the CCSS could prepare students for college and career is by integrating CTE and core academics—bringing more applied skills and work-based learning opportunities into core academic classrooms, and more core academic content into CTE classrooms. CTE offerings had declined in the early 2000s, but infusions of recent state and foundation investments reinvigorated CTE in some districts through programs such as Linked Learning and Career Pathways Trust.

EARLY EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

The majority of educators interviewed stated that they believe that integrating CTE and core academics could be one way to prepare students for college and career. Absent state or foundation funding for an integrated career pathway program, though, they reported that they have few supports to make the curricular and pedagogical changes required, and to align career pathways with postsecondary. Across all the schools, teachers discussed how they lack clear “guideposts”—goals, objectives, and strategies to reach those goals and objectives—with regard to college and career readiness in general, and

integrating CTE and academics specifically. One of the studied districts is engaged in Linked Learning, while the other is not; neither is involved in Career Pathways Trust. At the schools without funded CTE initiatives, interviewed teachers generally did not believe that the integration of CTE and core academics is a priority; most described how students are usually on differentiated CTE or college preparatory tracks. The schools with CTE-focused funding had some core academic courses paired with CTE courses in aligned career pathways. The course pairing allowed for CTE and academic teachers to work together to reinforce key concepts across the courses.

Regardless of whether the studied schools had dedicated funding for career pathways, educators identified barriers to integrating CTE and core academics. One key barrier is having enough teachers with the necessary credentials to teach the core academic content along with the expertise to teach the subject in the CTE context. This affects, for example, whether a course that teaches math for construction would count toward local and state graduation requirements in math. In addition, while the number of CTE courses that meet the UC's a-g criteria are increasing, interviewed teachers stated that another barrier is receiving approval for CTE courses to qualify for a-g.¹⁶ Another overarching problem is a sense of initiative fatigue; most viewed integrating core academics and CTE as another new reform effort in the midst of implementing both the CCSS and LCFF, which adds another layer of complication. Finally, as with the state leaders, administrators and teachers generally expressed greater clarity about college readiness—given the availability of information about, for example, a-g, AP, and IB—and greater uncertainty about how to prepare students to succeed in different careers.

Better use of the senior year of high school **EXPECTATIONS**

State and system leaders expect that the CCSS and accompanying assessments will bring new

focus to the senior year of high school. Since the Smarter Balanced assessments will provide 11th graders with information about their level of postsecondary readiness in ELA and math, interviewees see the potential for the 12th grade year to become an important window for catch up and preparation for life after high school. Currently, some students do not take rigorous courses during the senior year, leading to “senior slump.” State education leaders are worried, though, about schools’ capacity to shift the focus of the senior year quickly.

In particular, they are concerned about the first few cohorts of 11th graders taking the Smarter Balanced assessments, given those students’ lack of exposure to CCSS-aligned instruction and curricula in elementary and middle school. There was complete consensus that the majority of students will likely be informed that they are not ready for college-level courses in ELA and math. Interviewees voiced additional concern about the extra supports that English learner, low-income, special education, foster, and academically at-risk students will need in 12th grade—many of whom might be ready for some form of postsecondary education, but not for success in all of the state’s postsecondary systems or in all degree or certificate programs.

“The legislature is pretty committed to the Common Core, and there’s an understanding that results may not be pretty for the first few years. But it’s a little hard to anticipate how legislators will react [if many students do not score well], and how the system, teachers, and administrators will react, and what that might give rise to.”

– staff member, California Legislature

The timing of this information will also present logistical problems. Students will receive scores at the end of the summer before their senior year, making it challenging to rearrange schedules in order to take the appropriate coursework.¹⁷

EARLY EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

Interviewed teachers and administrators share policymakers' concerns about the first cohorts of students to receive information about college readiness from the 11th grade assessments. They believe that there is simply not enough time to prepare all current middle and high school students for the new assessments. Students in those grades will not spend much time with CCSS-aligned curricula and instructional strategies prior to facing the 11th grade test. Teachers are worried that the stakes connected to the assessments will soon become high, as will the pressure from parents, the media, and politicians. Educators also thought that the CCSS might exacerbate equity gaps, especially for English learners and low-income students.

They also share concerns that it will be too difficult to find spaces in existing courses, or to offer new courses, once students receive their scores. In addition, the lack of connection with postsecondary institutions around curricula, discussed below, makes it challenging to ensure that 12th grade courses will provide the necessary catch-up and acceleration needed to prepare large percentages of students for college-level coursework.

Increasing collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary

EXPECTATIONS

State and system policy leaders expect that the CCSS will increase collaboration between K-12 schools and their local postsecondary institutions. They stated that coordination between the segments commonly occurs through the EAP program (with, for example, CSU faculty coaching K-12 educators to teach senior transition courses); through K-12 teachers participating in professional development opportunities

offered by postsecondary institutions, such as the UC's Subject Matter Projects; and through efforts to articulate career pathways from K-12 to college through programs such as Linked Learning and Career Pathways Trust. Leaders said they expect that collaboration will continue through those mechanisms, but they also hope that the CCSS will foster even more collaboration between the segments.

EARLY EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

In general, this study found little evidence of new, sustained collaborations between K-12 and postsecondary as a direct result of the CCSS. Schools' implementation of the CCSS was a heavy lift, and very internally focused. There were no clear incentives to collaborate with postsecondary partners and most teachers believed they did not have the capacity to add collaboration with postsecondary to their "to do" list at this stage in the implementation process. Even if they did have the time, teachers were unsure if they were supposed to reach out to postsecondary and, if so, if they had the authority to do so. Several interviewees from the studied county offices of education discussed that they had convened educators from across the systems to talk about specific curricular issues, but, when the research was conducted, those did not appear to be ongoing, sustained, activities. While there were some pre-existing partnerships with local postsecondary institutions, particularly around creating applied curricular pathways and in relation to professional learning through the UC's Subject Matter Projects, the CCSS had not yet sparked new ones in the studied schools.

Beyond the lack of collaborative relationships with postsecondary, interviews with teachers revealed several other concerns about postsecondary expectations. The majority of teachers said that the CCSS made them aware of the importance of helping their students become ready for college and career, but they stated that they do not have enough specific information about that

expectation to feel confident that they are providing students with the right learning opportunities. Teachers also expressed unease about preparing students for a variety of postsecondary options. In general, teachers thought that the curricula and instructional strategies previously used in college preparatory courses (such as honors, AP, and IB) were already aligned with the CCSS; teachers who had never taught college preparatory courses were not sure how to change their curricula and instructional strategies. Many mentioned that they are planning to replicate strategies other teachers used in college preparatory courses.

Finally, the majority of the interviewees were concerned that there is no way for them to know if their efforts to prepare students for college are successful, since they do not receive data from the CCCs, CSUs, or UCs about how well their students do. Many teachers expressed frustration that they are supposed to ensure that greater percentages of students are college and career ready, yet teachers never receive information about how their students fare after high school graduation. The sense of urgency about accessing data to monitor students' progress was compounded by the lack of assessment data for two consecutive years, although most teachers were more interested in formative or interim assessment data than in end-of-the-year assessment data.

Using technologies to measure learning and engage students

EXPECTATIONS

The importance of applied educational technologies was specified when the state made it one of three target areas on which LEAs could spend CCSS implementation funds. Several state leaders and COE administrators said that the Smarter Balanced assessments provide an opportunity for teachers to incorporate the use of different technologies in their classrooms, such as using formative assessments to gauge student learning; engaging students differently in the learning

process; and providing information about student learning to teachers, students, and parents.¹⁸

EARLY EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

Across the board, educators in the studied schools stated that they are in the early stages of learning how to use applied technologies in the classroom. Several counties and districts surveyed teachers and students to better understand their respective needs and capacities, and brought in outside experts to teach students and teachers how to utilize online platforms to, for example, post worksheets, accept assignments from students, and facilitate collaboration among students. Throughout, the focus was on helping teachers understand how to incorporate technology to create opportunities that could not exist without it, as opposed to replacing activities that used to be done with paper and pencil.

All teachers in both districts said that they are being encouraged to incorporate different technologies into the classroom and are receiving related training. They mentioned incorporating the use of laptops and tablets in classrooms to give students access to a variety of multimedia resources (rather than just textbooks), creating “paperless” classrooms with students accessing syllabi and completing and submitting assignments online, and implementing a “flipped classroom” by having students review multimedia sources of content at home and come prepared to discuss concepts in class. Teachers mentioned efforts to extend classroom discussion through online chat boards where students can continue their discourse from class, ask questions, and collaborate. This research was conducted too early in the implementation process to determine whether the CCSS-aligned formative assessments in the Smarter Balanced Digital Library were helpful for teachers.

While most of the teachers believed that they were learning how to use technologies at an appropriate pace, they also noted several significant concerns, including a scarcity of equipment in their schools



that makes it difficult to access technology as often as they would like. For example, many teachers noted that it is difficult to access technology, given limited laptop carts at their schools. Educators also mentioned that while students are adept at using social media, their ability to use Microsoft Word and other programs in the service of learning is limited. As one principal explained, “I think that there’s an assumption that because they’re youthful, students have this technology skillset. Some of our students don’t even know how to type.” Teachers were especially concerned about this issue for low-income students who do not have access to devices and connectivity outside of school. Across all the schools, teachers said that low-income students are often behind with typing skills and general computer literacy, which makes it difficult for teachers to incorporate technologies and different forms of media into instruction. The studied schools are keeping computer labs open after school to provide access for students who do not have access to computers at home. Teachers also mentioned that they are afraid that technology might add an extra layer of complexity for many English learners.

“We assume that kids have all of this technology know-how, but really what they know is kind of limited and it’s really not applicable to significant or deep research.”

– COE administrator

State Policy Recommendations

How the state can leverage the CCSS to strengthen college and career readiness.

Policymakers and educators are optimistic about the potential of the CCSS to improve college and career readiness, yet, at the local level, there is confusion about how to integrate different initiatives, and a desire for more clarity about such issues as postsecondary expectations and promising instructional strategies. Now is the ideal time for policymakers to reflect on the early successes and challenges of CCSS implementation and set priorities for the future.

A challenge for state policymakers will be to determine how to best support schools and districts in ways that align with the state's relatively recent goal of maximizing local flexibility and decision-making. Preliminary research about educators' views of the LCFF indicates that local leaders appreciate the greater flexibility;¹⁹ this study reinforces that, but also suggests that both teachers and administrators want to have an articulated vision and certain targeted supports and guidance from the state.²⁰ It might be challenging for the state's policymakers to find mechanisms to provide useful guidance while avoiding mandates or undermining the structure of LCFF. There should, however, be approaches that strike a balance, such as flexible guidance that provides a menu of options or efforts to share exemplars of best practices.

In general, these recommendations are limited to topics that still appear relevant for state action—even in the new local control environment—because they address equity concerns or because they are too challenging or unwieldy for districts to tackle individually. Some of the recommended actions may fall in the domain of existing state entities such as the SBE or CDE. Others might be appropriate for the newly formed California Collaborative for Educational

Excellence.²¹ It will be several years before the field achieves greater collective clarity about how best to navigate decentralization and the need for ongoing supports, but educators expressed a sense of urgency for state education leaders to find ways to meet the needs stated below.

Clarify and communicate the state's expectations for college and career readiness and how various education initiatives fit together.

There is tension between the high-level, aspirational goals of the CCSS and the need for educators to have specific, actionable information with which to support student learning. Educators and administrators were supportive of the CCSS' focus on college and career readiness, but overwhelmed about how to knit together various efforts—including the CCSS, a-g, LCFF, Career Pathways Trust, and now the CTE Incentive Grant—into a coherent local plan. They have a sense that these initiatives can be aligned and mutually reinforcing, but many do not yet have a clear vision of what that would look like or how to achieve it. The difficulty of preparing students for “college and career” is further compounded by the lack of clear expectations for the wide range of postsecondary degree, certificate, and training programs available in California. Interviewed educators want more transparency about postsecondary academic expectations, and ways for teachers to help students meet them. Some appropriate roles for the state could include:

- *Clarify what graduating seniors need to know in order to be prepared for a variety of education options after high school.* The state should consider emphasizing both academic readiness through the CCSS and nonacademic readiness, such as knowledge about paying for college, organizational skills,

and an understanding of postsecondary options, to name a few.²² It will be critical for California's postsecondary segments to be fully involved and invested in these messages about readiness so that students receive clear and consistent signals from all directions.

- *Provide a clearer vision for career readiness, specifically.* The educators interviewed for this study were seeking additional guidance about career readiness: What is the definition of career readiness? Does it mean different things for different students? They expressed a need for clear answers about how to help students prepare for various academic disciplines and applied fields, certificate and degree programs, and postsecondary institutions within California. This appears to be an area in which state- and system-level entities are better positioned than individual LEAs.
- *Clarify how existing state- and system-level college and career readiness initiatives connect with the CCSS and with each other.* This includes the Career Pathways Trust, the Linked Learning pilot, the CTE Model Curriculum Standards, the CTE Incentive Grant, Career Partnership Academies, Regional Occupational Centers and Programs, and a-g, to name a few. Ultimately, this may prove to be an impossible task and require policymakers to make substantive program and policy changes to bring about greater coherence. In the short term, districts need maps, guides, or other communications tools to help them understand the connections across various initiatives and to explain them to different audiences, including school board members, teachers, and parents. Additionally, the state could develop resources for communicating with students about regional pathways and all of their options after high school. Such tools could be adaptable templates that can be refined to reflect local plans and programs.

Make strategic investments to support students' transition from high school to postsecondary and catalyze collaboration across education systems.

Policymakers expressed hope that the CCSS would help forge stronger connections between high schools and postsecondary institutions, but this research found few new sustained cross-sector connections as a result of the new standards. This is not surprising, given schools' intense inward focus as they implemented the CCSS and new requirements of LCFF. As California moves into the next phase of CCSS implementation, the state should incentivize the development of stronger relationships across K-12 and postsecondary institutions, using the CCSS as a foundation for clarifying and aligning expectations. While much is unknown about the kinds of state-level supports that will be needed to support the development of effective regional partnerships, there are some initial steps the state could take. Some appropriate roles for the state could include:²³

- *Articulate the state's expectation for how K-12, postsecondary, business, and other community entities should be working together to support college and career readiness.* This would not be a prescription for a "right" way to do it, but rather a statement about the importance of cross-system collaboration, with examples of goals, strategies, and structures that appear to be effective. The state could articulate this message informally, through a communications campaign initiated by the SBE, superintendent of public instruction, or governor, or a more formal mechanism, such as embedding the expectation into the new accountability system (such as in the LCAP template) or making a change to the education code. Ideally, the state would also use this statement of expectations to guide its own future policies and investments.

- *Explore solutions to get district leaders and educators access to the data they need, and invest in a system that meets those needs.* Interviewed educators want to understand their students' outcomes in postsecondary and improve their course offerings and student supports accordingly. Currently, there is no way for most educators to know how their students fare after high school. A cross-system longitudinal data system could resolve this problem.
- *Invest in substantially more seats for certain 12th grade courses.* The state should support courses that are specifically designed to help 12th graders catch up on skills they need to be college-ready by the time they graduate. The state could consider funding these seats through postsecondary institutions—both to avoid complicating the LCFF and to enhance regional connections between K-12 and higher education entities.
- *Incentivize K-12 and postsecondary faculty to work together to co-develop, co-deliver, and co-validate new curricular opportunities.* This could include jointly developed capstone and dual enrollment classes, senior projects, college readiness seminars, college visits, internships, and other experiences designed to prepare students to transition successfully into postsecondary education and careers.²⁴ The state could work to eliminate policy barriers (such as incompatible funding mechanisms) that sometimes impede these kinds of collaborations.
- *Engage the public higher education systems as partners to reach out to 11th graders (and earlier grades) to inform them of their options.* This could perhaps expand upon the materials provided through the EAP.²⁵ The state could invest funding specifically for this purpose.
- *Develop forums for regional/local leaders to communicate about cross-system issues.* This could include conversations about the kinds of infrastructure and support local and regional entities need from the state to support effective cross-sector collaborations.

“We don’t have enough partnerships and we don’t have enough incentives for partnerships.”

– state education leader

- *Provide funding for county superintendents to convene K-12 and postsecondary faculty and administrators.* Convenings could focus on issues such as the CCSS and postsecondary college-level course-taking expectations (and nonacademic postsecondary expectations) and strengthening relationships across systems.

Provide high-level and flexible resources and guidance to support new forms of professional learning.

This research found early indications that teachers have received significant professional learning opportunities about the CCSS, but have ongoing needs to help them effectively prepare students for postsecondary options and careers. Many teachers identified specific needs—such as help supporting English learners with the CCSS—and virtually all mentioned the need for more time to collaborate with peers to develop CCSS-aligned lessons and materials. The state should provide additional support and resources to help districts make informed choices. Some appropriate roles for the state could include:

- *Provide districts with information or technical assistance about how to assess their teachers’ specific professional development needs.* This could include tools such as surveys or classroom observation rubrics. The state could also provide information to districts about how to locate effective professional development providers and how to develop contractual agreements to ensure that the district’s identified needs are met.



- *Sponsor research on professional learning opportunities in the state.* There is a clear need to understand the kinds of professional development and support that teachers are currently receiving, areas of unmet need, barriers to effective professional development, and creative local approaches to overcoming barriers. It is particularly important to understand this issue with regard to equitable distribution of professional learning opportunities across schools that serve low-income students and English learners.
- *Leverage the educational resources of the state's public universities.* The state could incentivize K-12 districts to use their locally controlled funds to purchase professional development services and technical assistance from CSU and UC schools of education. The state could also provide funds directly to universities to kick-start or enhance such services. This could also help K-12 and postsecondary develop and strengthen relationships across systems. Postsecondary institutions could play an important role by valuing faculty participation in such endeavors, such as including these activities in tenure and promotion determinations.

Provide additional resources and guidance for districts as they seek to improve the use of educational technologies.

The state provided funding for technology enhancements in schools, but many teachers in the studied schools report that they do not have consistent access to equipment. Many struggle with integrating technology into their lessons when their students do not have devices and Internet connections at home. Thus, local leaders appear to need more guidance about how to assess and meet technology needs (including professional development around technology use). To help with this, the state could:

- *Provide a set of central resources aimed at helping districts spend their technology money wisely.* These could include surveys or other needs assessment tools; vetting and reviews of technology tools, curricula, or providers;

and literature about promising practices for using technology in the classroom—especially for struggling students, English learners, and students who cannot connect at home.

- *Identify schools with promising practices and disseminate information about what they are doing.* This could include providing contextual information about the schools and the students they serve (since models utilized in one context will often not work well in another context).
- *Consider providing competitive seed money for projects that use technology to address equity gaps.* To spur greater creativity and connectedness across sectors, consider opening up such competitions to partnerships across the education systems.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges described in this report, this time of transition also offers great opportunity. The patient, low stakes approach to implementing the CCSS created goodwill with the educators interviewed. While educators and local leaders may not yet have all the supports and skills they need to utilize the flexibility provided by the state, there is potential for the state to respond directly to the needs of students, teachers, and parents by providing greater support and helping localities develop greater capacity. Finally, the CCSS could potentially provide a foundation or framework to bring coherence to the existing broad array of initiatives aimed at improving college and career readiness. To date, these initiatives have been layered one on top of the other, with little integration or alignment across them. Since the state has committed so fully to the CCSS—in terms of time, emphasis, and funding—the standards can serve as a point of orientation for seemingly disparate efforts. With a continued thoughtful approach, California education leaders can work to realize the full potential of the CCSS to improve college and career readiness for all students in California.

Appendix

Description of research study

With regard to the CCSS and college and career readiness, this study involved a nested approach whereby the research team 1) mapped state-level expectations and available supports for CCSS implementation; 2) examined county-level expectations and implementation activities; and 3) conducted field research in four high schools located in two districts. The study focused on the following key areas of interest:

- Current college and career readiness initiatives (such as Linked Learning, Career Pathways Trust, and use of the state's Career and Technical Education standards);
- Professional development;
- Curriculum and instruction;
- Applied technologies;
- Assessment;
- Equity; and
- Collaboration with postsecondary.

In spring 2014, the research team conducted interviews in person and by phone with 20 key education policy leaders at the state and system (K-12 and postsecondary) levels in California. Researchers also interviewed one education policy leader per state in four states participating in the national "Core to College" grant, to learn about their strategies for Common Core implementation and K-12 and postsecondary collaboration.²⁶ The team then interviewed 17 representatives from 10 COEs, based on recommendations from the state-level interviewees regarding a sample that could provide variation in perspectives and implementation processes.

The state- and county-level interviews informed the development of questions asked in interviews of 50

teachers and administrators in fall 2014. The team selected two counties and one district per county for this field research, and included four high schools (two per district). Districts and high schools were selected based on an understanding that they were actively engaged in implementing the CCSS, and that they were working collaboratively across the COE, district office, and school site levels. The intention was to find districts that would likely have useful information to share about practices they believe might be promising. District and school names are kept anonymous to allow interviewees to speak candidly.

At the two district offices, researchers interviewed 14 administrators. At each of the four high schools, project staff interviewed the principal, a counselor, the lead educator in charge of implementing the CCSS, and three teachers each in 11th and 12th grades teaching English, math, and science. An administrator at each school was responsible for selecting interviewees. In total, the team interviewed 36 school site educators. For the project as a whole, researchers interviewed 91 individuals. All of the interviews were transcribed and the transcriptions analyzed by theme, looking at both issues of interest (see bulleted list above) and at new themes that surfaced from the transcripts. The district- and school-level research is a snapshot of a small set of teachers and school, district, and COE administrators at one moment in time: fall 2014. Because this work is carefully bounded within grades 9-12, its findings and recommendations do not necessarily apply to grades K-8. Also, please note that the school-level fieldwork was exploratory in nature and therefore the findings should not be generalized to all schools. It is beyond the scope of this research to evaluate the CCSS or the implementation processes.

**Characteristics of Studied Districts and Schools Compared to All California High Schools
2013-14**

Characteristic	Average for California High Schools	Districts ¹		Schools ¹			
		A	B	1	2	3	4
Total Enrollment	1,310 ²	N/A	N/A	Above average	Above average	Average	Average
Non-White students ³	71%	Far below average	Average	Below Average	Far below average	Average	Above Average
Students in Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program ⁴	59%	Far below average	Far below average	Below Average	Below average	Far below average	Far below average
Students Classified as English learners ⁵	15%	Below average	Average	Below average	Below average	Below average	Average
Graduation Rate ⁶	80%	Above average	Above average	Above average	Above average	Above average	Above average
School region description	N/A	N/A	N/A	Suburban, large territory	City, mid-size territory	City, large territory	Suburban, mid-size territory

- 1 Average = Difference of less than five percentage points from the state average; on enrollment, difference of less than 500 students. Above/Below average = Approximate difference of five or more percentage points from the average; on enrollment, difference of 500 or more students. Far above/below average = Approximate difference of 30 or more percentage points from the average.
- 2 Average enrollment for traditional California high schools. Source: CDE Ed-Data enrollment count in “high schools” (<http://www.ed-data.org/state/CA>), divided by number of traditional, active high schools as listed in Public Schools Database (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/si/ds/pubschls.asp>).
- 3 Percentage of students classified as any race/ethnicity other than “White” in all California high schools (including traditional, alternative, continuation and charter schools). State Average Source: CDE 2013 Growth API Data File, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/apidatafiles.asp>. School/District Data Source: CDE Ed-Data.
- 4 Percentage of students whose low household income qualified them for free or reduced price meals, CDE 2013 Growth API Data File and CDE Ed-Data.
- 5 Percentage of students who were classified as English learners, CDE 2013 Growth API Data File and CDE Ed-Data.
- 6 Students in a four-year cohort who graduated in four years or less with either a traditional high school diploma, an adult education high school diploma, or who have passed the California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE); CDE Ed-Data for 2012-13 (data for 2013-14 not yet available).



Notes

- 1 Common Core State Standards System Implementation Plan for California, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/>.
- 2 Common Core State Standards Implementation Survey: Statewide Summary of Results, <http://ccsesa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CCSS-Survey-Results.pdf>.
- 3 See, for example: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/28/opinion/sunday/rage-against-the-common-core.html?_r=0.
- 4 See <http://rockpa.org/page.aspx?pid=580> for more information.
- 5 See: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcfoverview.asp>.
- 6 See approved Local Control Accountability Plan template <http://lcf.wested.org/ca-state-board-of-education-approves-lcff-regulations-and-lcap-template/>.
- 7 CDE. (7 August 2013). Local Control Funding Formula Legislation. See <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/le/yr13ltr0807.asp>. County Offices of Education have two additional priorities in addition to the eight above: Expelled pupils (Priority 9): coordination of instruction of expelled pupils pursuant to Education Code section 48926; Foster youth (Priority 10): coordination of services, including working with the county child welfare agency to share information, responding to the needs of the juvenile court system, and ensuring transfer of health and education records.
- 8 Leff, Lisa. (22 June 2015). "California Tempers Backlash While Embracing the Common Core." Associated Press. See http://www.publicopiniononline.com/nation-world/ci_28360307/california-eludes-backlash-while-embracing-common-core.
- 9 Sacramento Bee Editorial. (17 January 2015). "The Real Test of Common Core is About to Begin." Retrieved from <http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/editorials/article7134272.html>.
- 10 Letter of support for the CCSS from postsecondary system leaders can be accessed here <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/nr/yr14sberel04att.asp>.
- 11 See <https://www.calstate.edu/eap/>.
- 12 See <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/news/close-200-colleges-universities-use-smarter-balanced-scores-part-placement/>.
- 13 The "a-g" eligibility criteria inform prospective students about which courses they need to take to be eligible for admission to the UC and CSU systems. Courses from California high schools and online schools used to satisfy the "a-g" subject requirements must be approved by UC and appear on the system's "a-g" course list. These courses are to be academically challenging, involving substantial reading, writing, problems and laboratory work (as appropriate), and show serious attention to analytical thinking, factual content and developing students' oral and listening skills. See <http://www.ucop.edu/agguide/a-g-requirements/>.
- 14 See BOARS statement at <http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/committees/boars/BOARSonCCSSMathCourseDevelopment.pdf>.
- 15 Source: <http://ucop.edu/agguide/career-technical-education/course-criteria/index.html>.
- 16 See: <http://ucop.edu/agguide/career-technical-education/course-criteria/index.html>.
- 17 In 2015, the California Department of Education intends to release the scores in September, but plans call for an August release in future years.
- 18 From: <http://www.ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Kirst-on-Accountability-ASCD.pdf>.
- 19 See <http://www.stuartfoundation.org/docs/reports/toward-a-grand-vision--early-implementation-of-ca%27s-lcff.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.
- 20 See report from California Collaborative on District Reform, http://cacollaborative.org/sites/default/files/CCDR_Meeting_28_Summary_FINAL.pdf?utm_source=Fermin%27s+daily+email%2C+Aug.+3&utm_campaign=Daily_4-24-15&utm_medium=email.
- 21 See: <http://ccee-ca.org/>.
- 22 See, for example: <http://edimagine.com/four-keys/>.
- 23 Some of the recommendations in this section draw from this research and from previous research conducted by EdInsights that culminated in *Organizing for Success* (http://www.csus.edu/edinsights/PDFs/R_OrganizingForSuccess_0315.pdf) and a companion policy brief (http://www.csus.edu/edinsights/PDFs/B_Regional_Partnerships.pdf). Others draw from a forthcoming brief by Joel Vargas and Andrea Venezia, entitled, *Co-Design, Co-Delivery, and Co-Validation (CO-Cubed): How Can High Schools and Colleges Share Students in Grades 12-13 and Raise Postsecondary Readiness Rates?*, working title.

- 24 See, for example, the Educational Policy Improvement Center's South Carolina Course Alignment Project. Information available at <http://www.epiconline.org/projects/south-carolina-course-alignment-project/>
- 25 See <https://www.calstate.edu/eap/>.
- 26 Core to College is a multi-state grant initiative designed to promote strong collaboration between higher education and the K-12 sectors in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and aligned assessments. There are 10 grantee states: Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee and Washington. See <http://rockpa.org/page.aspx?pid=580> for more information.





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