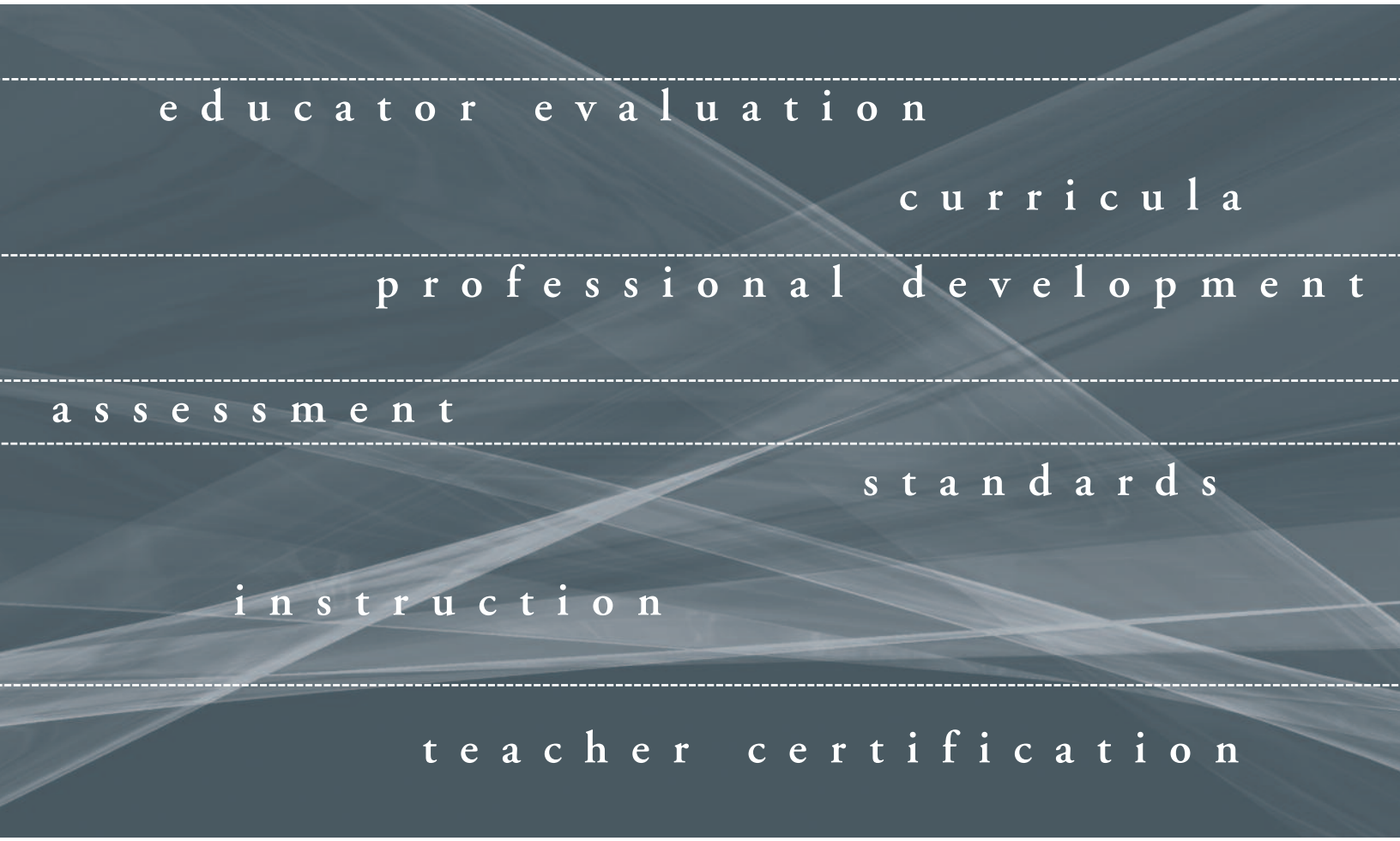
CENTER ON EDUCATION POLICY CEP

Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards

Professional Development for Teachers and Principals



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Based in Washington, D.C., at The George Washington University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development and founded in January 1995 by Jack Jennings, the Center on Education Policy is a national independent advocate for public education and for more effective public schools. The Center works to help Americans better understand the role of public education in a democracy and the need to improve the academic quality of public schools. We do not represent any special interests. Instead, we help citizens make sense of the conflicting opinions and perceptions about public education and create the conditions that will lead to better public schools.

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Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards

Professional Development for Teachers and Principals

Timely, ongoing, and effective professional development for teachers and principals will be critical to the successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These voluntary state-developed standards in mathematics and English language arts (ELA) outline the knowledge and skills that students in grades kindergarten through 12 are expected to learn to be prepared for college and careers. As of July 2013, the CCSS have been adopted in math and ELA by 45 states and the District of Columbia and by one additional state in ELA only. If teachers and principals are going to be prepared to help their students master the Common Core and pass the aligned assessments that will be ready in school year 2014-15, they will need professional development on various issues related to the standards.

To date, little is known about important aspects of professional development related to the CCSS, including which entities are responsible for providing it, what kinds of professional development are being offered, how many teachers and principals have received training to date, and what challenges states are confronting as they try to meet this need. To help answer these questions, the Center on Education Policy (CEP) at The George Washington University included several questions specifically related to professional development within a broader survey about CCSS implementation. The survey was administered to state deputy superintendents or their designees from February through May of 2013.

Forty states responded to this survey, including 39 that had adopted the CCSS in both ELA and math and 1 that had adopted the standards in ELA only. Thus, the survey findings represent the views of a majority of the states that had adopted the standards at the time of the survey. The responses of specific states have been kept confidential to encourage frank answers.

This report, the third in a series of CEP reports based on the 2013 survey, describes states' responses to the questions about professional development. The first report in the series focused on states' views of the federal role in supporting CCSS implementation, and the second provided an overview of state implementation efforts. Later reports will take a closer look at CCSS-aligned assessments, special populations, and higher education involvement.

The 2013 survey marks the third time that CEP has surveyed state officials about states' progress in implementing the CCSS. The first such survey was conducted in fall 2010, just months after the standards were released; findings are described in a 2011 CEP report, *States' Progress and Challenges in Implementing Common Core State Standards*. The second survey was administered in fall 2011; findings are discussed in a 2012 report, *Year Two of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: States' Progress and Challenges*.

Key Findings

The survey findings shed light on states' experiences thus far with providing CCSS-related professional development.

- **In more than half of the states surveyed, a majority of K-12 teachers of math and English language arts have participated in at least some CCSS-related professional development, but fewer states report that very large proportions of their educators have been served.** At the time of the survey, 22 states estimated that more than 50% of their math and ELA teachers had received some professional development on the Common Core, but only 10 states said that more than 75% of their teachers had received this type of training. As for principals, 21 states estimated that more than 50% of their principals had participated in CCSS-related professional development, while a smaller group of 11 states noted that more than 75% of this group had been served.

- **States, school districts, and other entities are providing CCSS-related professional development services for teachers and school principals.** All 40 states surveyed are providing some type of professional development on the Common Core to teachers, and 39 states are providing these services to principals. States are delivering these services directly, through state regional agencies, or by training people who in turn will train teachers and principals—and in many states through all three approaches. In a large majority of the states surveyed, school districts are also providing CCSS-related professional development. Other providers of training on the CCSS include higher education institutions and nonprofit and for-profit organizations.

- **States are providing various types of professional development on the Common Core.** Most of the survey states are disseminating CCSS-related professional development materials for training teachers (37 states), carrying out statewide professional development initiatives (36), and encouraging schools and districts to collaborate on CCSS implementation through professional learning communities (33). Several more states plan to provide these services for teachers in school year 2013-14 or later. In addition, 36 survey states are developing and disseminating professional development materials for principals, and 3 more plan to do so in the future.

- **The majority of survey states reported major challenges in providing CCSS-related professional development.** For example, 26 states said it was a major challenge to provide professional development and other supports for teachers in sufficient quantity and quality. Providing all math and ELA teachers in the state with state-sponsored professional development on the Common Core was cited as a major challenge by 24 states. Twenty-two states reported that providing all of their principals with state-sponsored professional development was a major challenge.

What Proportions of Educators Have Participated in CCSS-Related Professional Development?

In more than half of the survey states, a majority of math teachers and English language arts teachers have received at least some professional development on the Common Core, according to estimates from survey respondents. A total of 22 states estimated that more than 50% of their math teachers had participated in this type of professional development at the time of the survey, and an equal number of states said that more than 50% of their ELA teachers had participated. As shown in **table 1**, only one-quarter of the survey states (10 states) estimated that more than 75% of their K-12 math and ELA teachers have participated in at least some CCSS-related professional development. Just a few states said that 25% or less of their teachers have been trained in the Common Core.

Twenty-one states reported that more than 50% of their K-12 principals have participated in CCSS-related professional development, while 11 states said that more than 75% of principals have received this type of training. Only a few states reported that 25% or less of their math teachers (1 state), ELA teachers (2), or principals (4) have

received CCSS-related professional development. Just under one-third of state respondents could not estimate these proportions or did not know at the time of the survey.

Eight states (not shown in the table) reported that more than 75% of their math teachers, ELA teachers, *and* principals have received at least some CCSS-related professional development, according to our analysis of responses across educator categories. Six of these eight states have received federal funds through the Race to the Top program, which encourages states to adopt rigorous standards and pursue other reforms to improve student achievement. The major uses of Race to the Top funds include efforts to recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, which makes this program an extra source of support for standards-related professional development in states with grants.

Table 1. Estimated percentages of teachers and principals receiving professional development in the CCSS

Type of educator	Number of states estimating that the following proportions of educators have participated in at least some CCSS-related professional development:				Cannot estimate at this time/ Don't know
	76% to 100%	75% to 51%	50% to 26%	25% or less	
Math teachers*	10	12	5	1	11
ELA teachers	10	12	5	2	11
Principals	11	10	3	4	12

Table reads: Respondents in 10 states estimated that at the time of the survey, between 76% and 100% of their state's math teachers had participated in at least some professional development related to the Common Core.

*This row totals 39 rather than 40 because one responding state did not adopt the CCSS in mathematics.

These differences in participation rates can be partly explained by the years in which states began to implement or plan to implement a CCSS-aligned curriculum. (Data on state timelines for curricula implementation are discussed in the second report in this series, *Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: An Overview of States' Progress and Challenges.)* In some states that have already started teaching an aligned curriculum, higher proportions of educators have received professional development on the Common Core. For example, two states reported that they began implementing a CCSS-aligned curriculum in school year 2010-11. These same two states also reported that more than 75% of their math and ELA teachers and more than 50% of their principals have received professional development on the Common Core. Similarly, in two of the three states that began implementing a CCSS curriculum in school year 2011-12, more than half of the math teachers, ELA teachers, and principals have participated in CCSS-related professional development. (The third such state could not provide this information at the time of the survey.)

Which Entities Are Providing CCSS-Related Professional Development?

In the states surveyed, a variety of entities are providing CCSS-related professional development services to teachers and principals. These include state education agencies (SEAs), institutions of higher education, school districts, and nonprofit and for-profit organizations.

All 40 survey states are providing CCSS-related professional development services to teachers, whether directly, by training the trainers, or through state regional service agencies. As shown in **table 2**, 28 of these 40 states are using all three approaches, while 8 are using two, and 4 states are using just one approach.

Table 2. State approaches for providing CCSS-related professional development services to teachers

Approach	Number of states
States providing CCSS-related professional development services to teachers either (1) directly, (2) by training the trainers, or (3) through state regional service agencies	40
States using all three approaches	28
States using two of the three approaches	8
States using one approach	4

Table reads: Twenty-eight states are using all of the following approaches to provide CCSS-related professional development to math and ELA teachers: providing services directly, training the trainers, and using state regional service agencies.

School districts are also delivering CCSS-related professional development to teachers in all 40 states surveyed, as indicated in **table 3**. Fewer states reported that for-profit organizations (32), higher education institutions (27), and nonprofit organizations (26) are providing CCSS-related professional development for teachers.

Table 3 also shows the approximate share of professional development services being provided by the various entities mentioned above. Many states reported that the state education agency is providing all or nearly all of the teacher professional development on the CCSS, either directly or by training the trainers or using state regional agencies. Ten states said that school districts are delivering all or nearly all of the CCSS-related professional development, and one state reported that higher education institutions were the primary providers. For each of the entities in the table, a sizable number of survey states noted that the entity is providing "some" professional development, which suggests that a mix of providers is addressing the need for professional development.

Table 3. Providers of CCSS-related professional development for teachers

Entity	Yes	No	Don't know	Approximate share of all CCSS-related professional development in the state provided by entity*		
				Some	All or nearly all	Don't know
SEA directly	37	3	0	27	7	2
SEA through "training the trainers"	33	7	0	17	12	2
State regional service agencies	34	6	0	20	9	1
Institutions of higher education	27	10	3	22	1	3
School districts	40	0	0	24	10	4
Nonprofit organizations	26	11	3	22	0	3
For-profit organizations	32	4	4	26	0	5

Table reads: In 37 of the states surveyed, the state education agency is directly providing professional development to teachers on the Common Core.

*The number of responses in the shaded portion of the table do not equal the number of "yes" responses in each row because some respondents did not specify the share of professional development being provided by a particular entity.

Similar to the findings about teacher professional development, 39 of the 40 survey states report that they are providing CCSS-related professional development for K-12 principals. (The one remaining state reported that CCSS-related services for principals were just getting underway.) As **table 4** indicates, 14 of these 39 states are providing state-sponsored principal professional development through all three approaches: delivering services directly, training the trainers, and using regional service agencies. Eighteen states are using two of these approaches, and seven are using just one approach.

Table 4. State approaches for providing CCSS-related professional development services to principals

Approach	Number of states
States providing CCSS-related professional development services to principals either (1) directly, (2) by training the trainers, or (3) through state regional service agencies	39
States using all three approaches	14
States using two of the three approaches	18
States using one approach	7

Table reads: Fourteen states are using all of the following approaches to provide CCSS-related professional development to principals: providing services directly, training the trainers, and using state regional service agencies.

In 34 states, school districts are also providing professional development in the Common Core to principals, as shown in **table 5**. Fewer states reported that principals are being served by for-profit organizations (24 states), nonprofit organizations (22), and higher education institutions (16).

Table 5 shows the approximate share of principal professional development being provided by these different entities. Relatively few states reported that a single type of entity is providing all or nearly all CCSS-related professional development to principals; where this is the case, the state or school districts are delivering the bulk of the services.

Table 5. Providers of CCSS-related professional development for principals

Entity	Yes	No	Don't know	Approximate share of all CCSS-related professional development in the state provided by entity*		
				Some	All or nearly all	Don't know
SEA directly	35	4	0	27	5	1
SEA through "training the trainers"	26	13	0	15	7	1
State regional service agencies	24	10	5	16	5	0
Institutions of higher education	16	13	10	13	0	2
School districts	34	1	4	20	8	2
Nonprofit organizations	22	9	8	19	0	1
For-profit organizations	24	5	10	18	0	4

Table reads: In 35 of the states surveyed, the state education agency is directly providing professional development to principals on the Common Core.

*The number of responses in the shaded portion of the table do not equal the number of "yes" responses in each row because some respondents did not specify the share of professional development being provided by a particular entity.

What Kinds of CCSS-Related Professional Development Services Are Being Offered?

Most of the survey states have begun to provide various kinds of professional development services to teachers and principals. As shown in **table 6**, these services include disseminating CCSS-related professional development materials and guides for school districts to help teachers master the CCSS (37 states); carrying out statewide initiatives for CCSS-related teacher professional development (36); and encouraging schools and districts to use professional learning communities to foster collaboration on CCSS implementation (33). A few additional states plan to implement these services in 2013-14 or later. Further, 36 survey states have developed and disseminated materials and guides that school districts can use to provide professional development for principals, and 3 more states plan to carry out this activity in the future.

Table 6. State-level professional development activities related to the CCSS for teachers and principals

CCSS-related activity	Implemented in 2012-13 or earlier	Will implement in 2013-14 or later
Develop and disseminate professional development materials and guides for school districts to help teachers master the CCSS and use them to guide instruction	37	2
Carry out statewide professional development initiatives to help teachers master the CCSS and use them to guide instruction	36	2
Develop and disseminate materials and guides for school districts to use in providing professional development to help principals serve as instructional leaders on CCSS implementation	36	3
Encourage schools and districts to use professional learning communities as a way to foster collaboration on CCSS implementation	33	1

Table reads: In school year 2012-13 or earlier, 37 states developed and disseminated professional development materials and guides for school districts to help teachers master the CCSS and use them to guide instruction, while 2 states plan to do so in 2013-14 or later.

Note: Not shown in the table are the numbers of states that gave the following responses: the activity is not a focus of the SEA's CCSS efforts, the activity is not within the SEA's authority, or don't know. The complete tally of responses is available in the second report in this series, *Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: An Overview of States' Progress and Challenges.*

What Challenges Do States Face in Providing CCSS-Related Professional Development?

Providing professional development on the Common Core to teachers and principals has proved to be challenging in many survey states. As shown in **table 7**, 37 states considered it a major challenge (26 states) or minor challenge (11) to provide professional development and other supports in sufficient quantity and quality to ensure that teachers are able to implement CCSS instructional activities. Thirty-one states indicated it was a major (24 states) or minor (7) challenge to provide all of their math and ELA teachers with state-sponsored professional development on the Common Core. Similar numbers of states reported major (22 states) or minor (11) challenges in providing all of their principals with state-sponsored professional development services on the CCSS.

Social studies and science teachers will also be affected by the CCSS because the English language arts standards call on students to be able to read, understand, and analyze nonfiction passages in history and social studies, as well scientific and technical text. Twenty-nine states considered it a major (21 states) or minor (8) challenge to provide all social studies and science teachers with CCSS-related professional development.

Very few states described any of the CCSS-related professional development services in table 7 as "not a challenge."

Table 7. Challenges of providing CCSS-related professional development

Potential challenge	Major challenge	Minor challenge	Not a challenge	Not an SEA activity	Not within SEA's authority	Too soon to tell	Don't know
Providing professional development and other support in sufficient quantity and quality to ensure that teachers are able to implement CCSS instructional activities	26	11	1	0	1	1	0
Providing all math and ELA teachers with state-sponsored professional development services on the CCSS	24	7	3	2	3	0	0
Providing all principals with state-sponsored professional development services on the CCSS	22	11	3	1	3	0	0
Providing all social studies and science teachers with professional development services on the CCSS	21	8	1	3	3	3	1

Table reads: Twenty-six survey respondents reported that it is a major challenge to provide professional development and other support in sufficient quantity and quality to ensure that teachers are able to implement CCSS instructional activities; 11 states considered this a minor challenge.

Some of these challenges may stem from difficulties in finding the necessary funding to provide CCSS-related professional development. Our *Overview* report, the second in this series, includes data on the status of state funding for K-12 education and for SEA operations. Three of the states with decreased or stagnant funding over the past year reported that they have scaled back or eliminated professional development activities as a result, and two of these states have reduced or eliminated activities to help new teachers master the CCSS.

For many states, the challenges associated with providing CCSS-related professional development could stem in part from insufficient SEA capacity to provide these services. As discussed in the *Overview* report, most states (24) indicated that they had adequate SEA staff expertise to provide professional development, and 11 states said they had adequate SEA staffing levels. But only seven states reported that they have all three aspects of SEA capacity—adequate staff experience, adequate staffing levels, and adequate resources—to provide these services.

Conclusion

As discussed in the first report in this series, *Year 3 of Implementing the Common Core State Standards: State Education Agencies' Views on the Federal Role*, nearly all of the survey states agree or strongly agree that implementing the Common Core in math and ELA will require fundamental changes in instruction. Moreover, the implementation clock is ticking. If changes in instruction are to occur on schedule and if students are to be well prepared to master the standards, then teachers and principals must receive effective professional development to aid them through this transition.

Findings from this survey suggest that although most states are well underway with their plans to provide CCSS-related professional development, several challenges must be addressed. One of the most urgent challenges is to not

only provide an adequate amount of CCSS-related professional development, but also ensure these services are of high quality.

These challenges will likely become even more pressing as more states begin implementing their CCSS-aligned curricula and as students begin taking the common assessments aligned to these standards in 2014-15. Many more teachers and principals will need professional development on the Common Core. In at least six states that have adopted the CCSS, less than half of their math and ELA teachers have received some sort of CCSS-related professional development. This number could likely be higher because 11 states did not have this information at the time of our survey.

Further research in this area could help states by identifying the kinds of professional development that states and practitioners consider most valuable and determining which entities are providing these services. States and school districts may find online professional development resources to be the most cost-effective. Some states may find it useful to work collaboratively with other SEAs on professional development services or to take advantage of programs that other states have created. Supporters of the Common Core outside of state government—such as nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, the business sector, and philanthropic organizations—could help states identify and disseminate effective models and strategies for professional development.

Appendix: Study Methods

The preliminary instrument for CEP's state Common Core State Standards survey was developed after considering information from prior CEP surveys and studies as well as other reports and media coverage about the CCSS. The CEP survey team also sought advice on the preliminary survey from staff at the Alliance for Excellent Education, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Council of Chief State School Officers, National Center for Learning Disabilities, and the National Governors Association. In January 2013, the survey questions and response items underwent further review and systematic pretesting. The survey team obtained feedback from state-level officials in three states about the questions and response items. The survey was revised based on their input. In February 2013, CEP staff mailed a letter to the state chiefs/commissioners of education containing information about the CEP CCSS survey.

The CEP survey was administered electronically in February through May of 2013 to deputy state superintendents of education or their designees in the 46 states (plus D.C.) that had adopted the CCSS in English language arts and/or mathematics at that time. Forty of these states completed the survey for a response rate of 85%. The survey responses were imported to an Excel file and the data were cleaned and checked for duplicate entries or missing response times. Additional follow-up via e-mail and telephone was necessary for some survey submissions. Most of the items in the survey were closed questions, and response item frequencies were totaled and percentages calculated using the formula functions in Excel.

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