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New Standards and Old Divides: Policy Attitudes About College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Students with Disabilities

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Background/Context: *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) requires that all students with disabilities (SWD) receive a free, appropriate public education designed to meet their unique needs to prepare them for post-school education and employment (American Psychological Association, 2018). In the past two decades, momentum has grown for a supplementary idea: that schools be held accountable for SWD achieving grade-level standards. Thus standards-based reform for SWD is often caught between ideals of standardization and principles of differentiation.*

Purpose and Research Questions: *The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which district administrators, principals, general educators, and special educators differ in their policy perceptions of the newest college- and career-readiness standards (CCRS) for SWD versus other learners. Our research questions were: To what extent do teachers of SWD report delivering similar or different instructional content compared to general education teachers? What types of instructional supports do teachers provide, what types of professional development do teachers receive, and how do these differ by teacher type? How do policy perceptions differ between teachers of SWD and general education teachers? How do district administrators, principals, and teachers differ in their policy perceptions of the CCRS as they relate to SWD?*

Research Design: *In three states (Texas, Ohio, and Kentucky), we surveyed a stratified sample of teachers, principals, and district administrators on the implementation of their state's standards and directed them to respond for SWD who participate in the regular accountability system.*

Conclusions/Recommendations: *Results indicate an environment where SWD continue to receive less grade-level content and, in Texas and Ohio, are served by personnel who do not believe that the standards are appropriate. Kentucky demonstrated greater consistencies between general education and SWD instruction and policy environments. Findings raise questions about whether CCRS are being implemented for all students.*

INTRODUCTION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) requires that all students with disabilities (SWD) receive a free, appropriate public education designed to meet their unique needs to prepare them for post-school education and employment (American Psychological Association, 2018). In the past two decades, momentum has grown for a supplementary idea: that schools be held accountable for SWD achieving grade-level standards. In this study, we used a stratified sample of teacher, principal, and district administrator surveys across three states to examine a persistent problem in implementing standards-based reform: ensuring that SWD receive the same quality of instruction as students without disabilities. We asked, in this latest wave of standards-based reform, has instruction improved for SWD, or does it remain substantively different from that of students without disabilities? In this introduction, we first provide background on the history of standards reform for SWD. Then, we contextualize the present survey and its selection of states within the larger parent center.

HISTORY OF STANDARDS-BASED REFORM FOR SWD

In perhaps the first major milestone toward this goal, a 1997 National Research Council published a consensus report, *Educating One and All: Students with Disabilities and Standards-Based Reform*, characterized the then-current policy framework as follows.

> Most standards-based reforms strive to apply the same high standards to all students, including, in many instances, those with disabilities. For many students with disabilities, this represents a striking change. Whereas the framework of standards-based reform stresses accountability for outcomes and applies uniform standards to all students, the legal framework under which students with disabilities have been educated for two decades stresses the individualization of goals and instruction and emphasizes accountability for procedural compliance rather than outcomes. Moreover, many students with disabilities have been routinely excluded from the large-scale assessments that have now become the backbone of accountability in standards-based reforms (pp. 1–2).

Charged "to conduct a comprehensive study of the inclusion of students with disabilities in school reforms assisted under Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Public Law 103-227, sec. 1015)" (p. 2), the Committee concluded that "in many instances the two policy approaches can be reconciled" (p. 2). This paper uses survey analysis to consider whether such a reconciliation has

occurred in the minds of teachers, principals, and administrators.

The Committee's first guiding principle was that all students should have access to challenging standards and that policy makers and educators should be held publicly accountable for every student's performance. Its second guiding principle was that adaptations are required for some students with disabilities. Moreover, the Committee noted that "Efforts to incorporate students with varying disabilities effectively will be hindered over the short term by a shortage of financial and professional resources, an inadequate research base, and conceptual ambiguities in both policy frameworks" (p. 2). The Committee also cautioned that, "even with additional resources, some of the elements needed to integrate all students with disabilities fully into standards-based reform may exceed the limits of current knowledge and technology" (p. 2).

Important policy milestones toward the report's goal of "educating one and all" have been achieved over the past 20 years. In 1997, the reauthorization of IDEA required states to include SWD in high-stakes testing and to include those data in overall estimates of achievement. Yet, federal legislation came without meaningful sanctions for noncompliance until 2001, when the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) banned out-of-grade-level testing, required testing and reporting for at least 95% of SWD, and penalized schools with automatic Annual Yearly Program failure if participation fell below 95%. More recently, the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December 2015 asked states to limit the percentage of SWD who take the alternative assessment to 1%.

Nevertheless, despite increases, the 95% participation rate has not yet been realized, and gaming the system via "the minimum number rule" is of concern. This rule refers to the federal law requiring schools to have the state-determined requisite number of SWD in order to disaggregate data for any subgroup (otherwise, reliability of the achievement estimate and privacy cannot be assured for that subgroup). To avoid disaggregation, some schools de-certify SWD, thus falling below the minimum number. A 2018 study by Wrabel, Saultz, Polikoff, McEachin, and Duque across all states and Washington, D.C. found that this practice continues to persist as states create "super subgroups" of historically underachieving groups.

In its 2016 Survey of States, the National Center on Educational Outcomes (Thurlow, Rogers, & Lazarus, 2017) reported that more states than in 2014 are not counting SWD as assessment participants, suggesting they are still being excluded from accountability systems and perhaps at a growing rate. An increased number of states also reported SWD sitting for state assessments without answering enough items to receive a score, and fewer than half of states (of 38 survey respondents) disaggregated results for SWD to examine trends. Other hurdles to meaningful participation for SWD in standards-based reform include validity questions about some commonly used test accommodations (e.g., adults reading aloud reading comprehension tests), the inconsistency with which schools implement IEP-designated accommodations, and questions about the tenability of requiring SWD (the lowest achieving subgroup) to make more progress than other subgroups in order to reach a common level of proficiency.

ESSA introduced policy changes that are altering the standards-based reform context for SWD. ESSA dictates that IEPs be aligned to state academic content standards at the student's grade level. On the other hand, states now decide what constitutes "significant progress" in closing statewide proficiency rate gaps, even as proficiency rate expectations are now permitted to differ. Because SWD are the lowest-performing subgroup, SWD are likely to have the lowest goals, particularly as the more rigorous tests no longer reflect the lowest common denominator (cf. Mehta, 2013). Moreover, although ESSA maintains the 95% participation rate, states can now decide how to factor this requirement into its system of "meaningful differentiation," and ESSA does not assign weight to the 95% participation rate within the accountability system. This lack of specificity in the law suggests that federal policy changes may not translate to meaningful changes at the school level. It also suggests that states will continue to look for ways to skirt accountability for SWD performance.

So, two decades following the publication of the 1997 National Research Council report, tensions persist between IDEA's individual goals requirement and standard-based reform's one-size-fits-all approach. To further complicate standards-based reform for SWD, over these 20 years, the challenge of state standards has increased substantially. This is reflected in the shift from the NCLB standards of the 2000s to the decade-later Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2019) and to state adaptations to the CCSS, commonly referred to as college- and career-readiness standards (CCRS). CCRS include the current modified standards from states that "repealed" the CCSS as well as the current standards in states that never formally adopted the CCSS. Throughout standards upgrading, a constant is the nature of instructional recommendations for SWD, rooted in inclusion. For example, to provide guidance to schools on the application of rigorous standards to SWD, the CCSS website offers the following advice (http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-to-students-with-disabilities.pdf).

> Promoting a culture of high expectations for all students is a fundamental goal of the Common Core State Standards. In order to participate with success in the general curriculum, students with disabilities, as appropriate, may be provided additional supports and services, such as: Instructional supports for learning—based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning—which foster student engagement by presenting information in multiple ways and allowing for diverse avenues of action and expression; Instructional accommodations (Thompson, Morse, Sharpe, & Hall, 2005)—changes in materials or procedures—which do not change the standards but allow students to learn within the framework of the Common Core; Assistive technology devices and services to ensure access to the general education curriculum and the Common Core State Standards.

CONTEXT FOR THE PRESENT SURVEY AND ITS SELECTION OF STATES

In this study, we used survey analyses to understand the extent to which teachers of SWD report they are teaching grade-level standards and whether actors throughout all levels of the policy system consider these standards to be appropriate for SWD. The context for this study is an ongoing partnership between the Center on Standards, Alignment, Instruction, and Learning (C-SAIL; c-sail.org) and states that are diverse geographically and in terms of their approach to CCRS. The state partners are committed to participating in the Center's data collection activities and in conversations about what findings mean for policy and practice.

The three participating states include both CCSS and non-CCSS states. Kentucky and Ohio were early adopters of the CCSS. In contrast, Texas did not adopt the CCSS and instead developed state-specific CCRS. Porter, McMaken, Hwang, and Yang (2011) found that Texas's standards were not substantively different from the CCSS in terms of cognitive demand. On the other hand, Carmichael, Martino, Porter-Magee, and Wilson (2010) found Ohio and Kentucky's pre-CCSS standards to have less rigor than Texas's state standards. CCSS adoption brought Ohio and Kentucky closer to Texas in terms of the rigor of their K–12 standards, and the repeal of CCSS in those states was more of a name change (to Ohio Learning Standards and to Kentucky Academic Standards) than a substantive change in content. We do not, therefore, interpret the differences in these states' standards to be particularly meaningful to our research questions, as state standards were more alike than different during the 2016 administration of the parent survey (which posed questions about each state's present standards), and revisions to English language arts (ELA) and math standards have been minor in scope and substance (Desimone et al., 2019).

As for policies specifically pertaining to SWD, according to the most recent data available from the Education Commission of the States (2015), these states fund SWD similarly through a primary funding formula as opposed to categorical or reimbursement funding (Millard & Aragon, 2015). Thus, these three states have predictable funding environments that may contribute to the stability of SWD standards-based policy and services, as districts know how much funding to expect from the state year-to-year. More recent data on state policy developments (Education Commission of the States, 2018) show little change in policies for SWD during the time frame of this study, with the exception of Texas.

We briefly describe here the policy activity directly affecting SWD in Texas, which occurred in the midst of our survey administration. In January 2018, the U.S. Department of Education announced the results of a 15-month investigation, which found Texas to have violated the rights of SWD by setting an artificial cap on the percentage of students who could receive services (2018a). In response to the start of the investigation, Texas repealed the 8.5% district-level cap on identifying SWD in 2017. However, this cap was still in place during our Spring 2016 survey administration. Rather than view these developments as confounding variables in our study, we highlight them as opportunities to observe similarities and differences among SWD and teachers of SWD across states in 2016 just prior to this policy development and amidst similar funding environments.

FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETING RESULTS AND SUMMARY OF PURPOSE

We examined how teachers perceive policies related to these standards using the lens of five policy attributes (Porter, Floden, Freeman, Schmidt, & Schwille, 1988; Porter, 1994): specificity, authority, consistency, power and stability (these attributes are explained in the Methods section). Porter's theoretical framework suggests that these five attributes are related to successful policy implementation. The policy attributes framework has been used for decades in education policy research to analyze both systemic reform efforts (Clune, 1993) and comprehensive school reforms (Berends, Bodilly, & Kirby, 2002; Polikoff, 2012). This survey, administered in Spring 2016, represents a critical snapshot of perceptions immediately following the passage of ESSA.

The purpose of the present set of analyses was to describe these perceptions for SWD. We also compared respondent views about the CCRS policy experience for teachers of SWD against those of general education teachers and explored policy perspective gaps toward standards-based policy as a function of type of personnel and their "distance" from the classroom (i.e., teachers vs. principals vs. district officials). This information is important in assessing the potential effects of standards-based reform on the achievement of SWD: As Gartner and Lipsky documented decades ago (1987) and in the more recent work of Pianta and Walsh (2013), the attitudes of "street-level bureaucrats" as well as general education teachers can determine how legislative initiatives are implemented, which together define the nature of service delivery and instructional practices for SWD.

We also note that the present survey addressed elementary schools as well as high schools, an oft-neglected area for research on SWD, and note that we directed survey respondents to answer questions for their SWD who are deemed appropriate for inclusion in the regular accountability system. (This constitutes the vast majority of SWD but does not include SWD who participate in the alternate assessment.) With the advantages and disadvantages of our study design in mind, our four specific research questions were as follows. (1) To what extent do teachers of SWD report delivering similar or different instructional content compared to general education teachers? (2) What types of instructional supports do teachers provide, what types of professional development do teachers receive, and how do these differ by teacher type? (3) How do policy perceptions differ between teachers of SWD and general education teachers? (4) How do district administrators, principals, and teachers differ in their policy perceptions of the CCRS as they relate to SWD?

Ultimately, the present set of analyses speaks to the degree to which school personnel believe in CCRS for SWD. We presume that beliefs will affect meaningful implementation of those standards for SWD. Study results speaks to whether school personnel have "the potential for becoming a resource and context for development itself" (Pianta & Walsh, 2013, p. 8) in educating SWD or whether these students will experience compromised participation and attention within standards-based instruction.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

In our three partner states, we identified districts using a stratified random sampling technique designed to ensure the sample was representative of districts in each state: 42 Texas districts, 42 Ohio districts, and 89 Kentucky districts (note that results are weighted by state). The survey administration in Kentucky occurred in partnership with Westat which included more districts in the state. In each district, we sampled up to two elementary schools and two high schools, ensuring representative samples of public, private, and charter schools based on state demographics. In each elementary school, we sampled two fifth-grade math teachers, two fourth-grade (ELA) teachers, one teacher of SWD, and one teacher of English learners (ELs). In each high school, we sampled two (ELA) teachers and one teacher in each of the following specialties or topics: SWD, ELs, Algebra I, Algebra II, and geometry. (The present analysis does not include responses pertaining to ELs.) We chose these three math subjects because they are the most common high school math courses and because they enroll students likely to be required to take the state mathematics assessment. We recognize that this design excludes middle schools, but it does allow us to compare and contrast elementary versus secondary policy, where differences should be more pronounced.

In Ohio and Texas, respectively, 155 and 121 eligible districts were contacted. Among the eligible released districts, 49 and 53, respectively, agreed to participate but only 42 completed the survey in each state (conditional response rate: 85.7% and 79.2% in Ohio and Texas, respectively). The Kentucky process was slightly different, with a subset of 89 districts drawn from 125 districts already participating in a state survey administered by American Institutes for Research. Sampled schools in districts who agreed to participate were contacted for the principal survey. Eligible teachers in the sampled schools who agreed to participate were selected. In Ohio, 417 of 654 sampled teachers responded (conditional response rate: 64%); in Texas, 603 of 1,089 (conditional response rate: 55%); in Kentucky, 740 out 1,890 (conditional response rate: 39%). As for principals, 111 principals (or designated staff) of 185 eligible principals responded in Ohio (conditional response rate: 60%), 149 of 211 in Texas (conditional response rate: 71%), and 179 of 354 in Kentucky (51%).

In Ohio and Texas, American Institutes for Research administered the survey. In Kentucky, administration occurred via a partnership with Westat. This partner omitted some questions from Kentucky's teacher and principal surveys, and district administrators did not take the survey. We also attribute lower response rates in Kentucky to these differences in the survey administration; American Institutes for Research expended significant resources in boosting the response rate in Ohio and Texas. Since more districts were surveyed in Kentucky, resources had to be expended over a wider, more rural geographic area through an intermediary, and it was more difficult to find designated SWD teachers in a more sparsely populated state.

We examined patterns of nonresponse in each state for areas of concern and found no significant differences among subject areas of teachers (math, ELA, SWD, and EL) responding to the survey. We do not include EL teachers in this paper as they were not present in many of the small, rural districts in Ohio and Kentucky. To correct for remaining response bias, we used a technique in Stata known as jackknife re-sampling, which systematically leaves out each observation and calculates the averages in order to make the estimates more accurate. We also weighted each response to be representative of the state and report robust standard errors obtained from this procedure.

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT AND SCALES

We used multi-item composites for each measure to increase reliability and validity (Mayer, 1999), while borrowing items on already validated national surveys where possible. When we needed to create or adapt items, we completed a cycle of development, expert review, cognitive interview, and review (see Desimone & Le Floch, 2004).

We structured items with parallel wording across the district, principal, and teacher surveys. For example, we asked all three respondent groups, "Please indicate your agreement with the following statement about the [State CCRS]." We started with a baseline question to capture general education students with statements such as, "[State CCRS] set appropriate expectations for student learning at each grade level." To contrast general educator responses for students with and without disabilities, a later statement asked, "[State CCRS] set appropriate expectations for students with disabilities . . . ," such that identical wording of items was used to form multi-item composites comparing responses for students with and without disabilities.

For the present analysis, we included items relevant to conclusions about SWD: personnel perceptions of critical policy attributes related to standards implementation; teachers' focus on content emphasized and de-emphasized in the transition from NCLB to CCRS; and instructional supports and classroom features. We expected teachers to be cognizant of the instructional shifts as in every state, as the vast majority of respondents (91% in Texas and Ohio, and 88% in Kentucky) had more than three years of experience, and the mean years of experience for respondents was 12 years of experience (Texas and Kentucky) or 14 years of experience (Ohio). We describe each set of items below.

Standards-Emphasized Instruction

To conceptualize our analysis, we relied on the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC) approach (Porter, 2002; Porter, Polikoff, Zeidner, & Smithson, 2008), measuring alignment by asking teachers to report on the topics and cognitive demands they covered. We then convened trained content experts at American Institutes for Research to map content onto the topics and cognitive demands from each state's standards. These experts used existing content analysis of both CCSS and individual state standards. To measure alignment, we started with content analyses of state standards in our partner states prior to the implementation of No Child Left Behind; we refer to this as the pre-CCRS.

First, trained content-expert raters coded the pre-CCRS as covering topics and cognitive demands; the results were what teachers in these states should have been teaching before the CCRS. Raters (3 or 4 per content area) worked independently and then averaged their results; it was not a consensus approach, and they used a priori codes from the existing SEC content languages. We compared these pre-CCRS results to their content analyses of the current CCRS in each state. We determined the particular content that saw the greatest average proportional increase at each grade level from pre-CCRS to CCRS, and we called this the "emphasized" instructional content. The de-emphasized instructional content was the content that saw the greatest decrease in coverage from pre-CCRS to CCRS. The list of emphasized and de-emphasized content by subject area can be found in the Appendix. This SEC technique has been used and shown to be valid and reliable in multiple studies (Blank, 2004; Clune, 1993; Polikoff, Porter, & Smithson, 2011; Osthoff, 2007; Webb, 2002, 2007). If teachers are teaching to their newest state standards, we would expect them to report teaching significantly more of the emphasized rather than the de-emphasized content.

Policy Attribute Scales

We examined whether general educators and teachers of SWD hold different perceptions on five critical policy attributes for CCRS implementation. According to policy attribute theory (Porter, 1994), these perceptions translate into instructional differences. These policy perceptions represent the context for interpreting the remainder of the survey questions and their implications for SWD.

To measure specificity, we asked teachers their level of agreement with statements related to how detailed guidance was around standards implementation, including whether they were told the order in which to teach certain content and how much time they should spend on each content area. For specificity, Cronbach's α ranged from 0.74 to 0.92, depending on the state. For authority, we asked teachers the extent of their agreement with statements that reflected their buy-in to the standards, such as if they thought the standards made learning relevant, if the standards were appropriate for their students, and if they gave them the flexibility they needed to help students below grade level (α = 0.84–0.89). For consistency, we asked the degree to which teachers believed curricula, assessments, professional development, evaluations, and other policies were aligned (α = 0.87–0.90). For power, we asked teachers about positive and negative repercussions for implementing the standards (α = 0.65–0.66). We attribute this relatively low value to the fact that the power items on the survey asked about both rewards *and* sanctions. During the timeframe of this study, states were noticeably reducing their use of punitive measures (i.e., teacher evaluations tied to high stakes testing, using hard proficiency cut-off scores to evaluate schools) while retaining some rewards (Pak, Edgerton, Desimone, & Song, 2018), which may have weakened the relationships among some items. For stability, we asked them to predict how long the standards and assessments would last in each state (α = 0.77–0.86). The full list of items included in each policy attribute composite measure in the Appendix.

DATA ANALYSIS

We weighted all survey results based on state representation. We used Wald tests after applying survey weights to preserve the benefits of our stratified sampling design; thus we report standard errors instead of standard deviations where applicable. On each scale or item, we conducted these Wald tests of significance among respondent types within each state. We also applied analyses of variance (ANOVAs), with a Tukey post-hoc correction, to examine whether summary results (with weights applied) differed among states.

We used different statistical tests when we had data only on two states (Texas and Ohio). (This occurred due to differences in the Kentucky survey questions.) We applied *t* tests within each state to consider whether district officials' reports on the extent to which ELA and math standards were more appropriate for students without disabilities than for SWD. We looked at the same questions for principals and then for general educators. Finally, we tested whether principals reported a need for more support for SWD than for students without disabilities, while comparing the two states with an additional *t* test.

RESULTS

We hypothesized that we would find several meaningful differences for policy and practice because the background knowledge of and the experiences with special educators about SWD are more extensive than is the case for general educators, which may create varying sets of expectations. This framework would suggest that special educator views are more realistic. Alternatively, it is possible that special educators' distance from the state standards may render their expectations insufficiently ambitious. We identified several significant differences with possible implications for future policy research on SWD.

STANDARDS-EMPHASIZED AND GRADE-LEVEL INSTRUCTION

We hypothesized that teachers of SWD would teach less standards-emphasized content compared to general education teachers in both ELA and math, because SWD may require foundational instruction on below-grade level topics (Powell, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2013). We tested the standards-emphasized and deemphasized content separately to see which types of teachers were making CCRS intended instructional shifts.

To start, we asked general education teachers in each state if the instruction they provide to SWD differs from instruction delivered to other students. With means between 2.01 and 2.26 (1 = very different; 2 = somewhat different; 3 = the same), teachers in each state reported providing somewhat different instruction. As shown in Table 1, there were no significant

differences among states or between subjects (ELA vs. math) within states.

Table 1. How Teachers Describe Their SWD Instruction

How different is the instruction you provide to SWD? (1=very, 2=somewhat, 3=same)									
TX ELA	N	Mean	OH ELA	N	Mean	KY ELA	N	Mean	*F*
	160	2.15 (0.05)		106	2.07 (0.08)		40	2.01 (0.08)	(1.56, 0.17)
TX Math		Mean	OH Math	99	Mean	OH ELA	N	Mean	
	157	2.19 (0.05)			2.26 (0.08)		83	2.23 (0.05)	
When you provide instruction to SWD, what percent of time do you teach to the grade-level standards?									
TX ELA	N	Mean	OH ELA	N	Mean	KY ELA	N	Mean	*F*
	162	64.59% (2.62)		106	73.71% (4.01)		122	65.08 (3.53)	(1.32, 0.25)
TX Math	N	Mean	OH Math	97	Mean	OH ELA	N	Mean	
	154	63.46% (3.84)			71.94% (4.43)		83	67.08 (3.10)	
Approximately what percentage of SWD in your target class will be able to meet the majority of the grade-level standards by the end of the academic year?*									
	N	Mean							
TX SWD	79	39.05% (5.27)							
OH SWD	67	45.24% (4.81)							

**This item was excluded from the Kentucky SWD teacher survey.*
*Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. ** = $p < 0.01$, * = $p < 0.05$ indicate significant Wald test results for SWD compared to both Math and ELA. Standard errors are after weights were applied.*

We then asked general education teachers in Texas and Ohio to report the amount of time they spend teaching grade-level standards to SWD, as opposed to standards at higher or lower grade levels. These questions were not included on the modified Kentucky survey. None of the differences between states or subjects was statistically significant (see Table 1). Notably, teachers in each state reported spending less than 75% of their instructional time teaching grade-level standards to SWD. Also, in Texas and Ohio, we asked SWD teachers to estimate the percentage of their students whom they expected would meet grade-level standards by the end of the academic year. Differences among states were not statistically significant in Table 1, but averages fell below 50% in both states.

We next asked general education and SWD teachers to report on the specific content they taught. The survey questions did not indicate which items were emphasized or deemphasized in the standards. Responses were scaled as 1 = no coverage, 2 = minor coverage, 3 = moderate coverage, and 4 = major coverage, and responses for the items within each category (emphasized vs. deemphasized) were averaged.

In Table 2, we show results for emphasized content by subject area and by elementary versus secondary level rather than pooling (due to different patterns for elementary vs. secondary). Texas elementary and secondary ELA teachers and secondary math teachers reported teaching significantly more standards-emphasized content than did special education teachers, ES = 0.29 (0.90 *SD*) for elementary ELA, 0.40 (0.90 *SD*) for secondary ELA, and 0.40 (0.88 *SD*) for secondary math) Significant differences also occurred in Ohio for math and ELA, but only at the elementary level, ES = 0.37 for ELA (0.93 *SD*), 0.87 (1.13 *SD*) for math. In contrast, Kentucky special educators reported teaching the same level of content as general educators; there were no significant differences. Thus, the overall results demonstrate two states where SWD in 2 (Ohio) or 3 (Texas) out of 4 possible grades and subjects receive less standards-emphasized instruction. In contrast, in Kentucky, instruction was essentially the same for SWD compared to general education students.

Table 2. Standards-Emphasized (E) and Standards De-Emphasized (D) Content by State and Teacher Type

Texas Teachers	ELA			Math			SWD		
	N	Mean	SE	N	Mean	SE	N	Mean	SE
ELA Elem E	116	3.39	(0.05)				24	3.09*	(0.08)
ELA Elem D	116	3.68	(0.03)				24	3.48	(0.10)
ELA High E	92	3.59	(0.06)				16	3.19*	(0.17)
ELA High D	92	3.30	(0.06)				16	2.83*	(0.17)
Math Elem E				138	3.41	(0.05)	26	3.06	(0.21)
Math Elem D				137	2.95	(0.03)	26	2.79	(0.11)
Math High E				52	3.35	(0.08)	8	2.95*	(0.25)
Math High D				52	3.35	(0.11)	8	2.59*	(0.19)

Ohio Teachers	ELA			Math			SWD		
	N	Mean	SE	N	Mean	SE	N	Mean	SE
ELA Elem E	62	3.41	(0.08)				19	3.04*	(0.11)
ELA Elem D	62	3.70	(0.05)				19	3.55	(0.10)
ELA High E	94	3.43	(0.05)				20	3.34	(0.11)
ELA High D	94	3.08	(0.05)				20	3.03	(0.11)
Math Elem E				69	3.37	(0.11)	10	2.50*	(0.39)
Math Elem D				69	2.57	(0.04)	10	2.08*	(0.32)
Math High E				68	3.12	(0.06)	19	2.84	(0.15)
Math High D				68	3.15	(0.09)	19	2.73	(0.20)
Kentucky Teachers	ELA			Math			SWD		
	N	Mean	SE	N	Mean	SE	N	Mean	SE
ELA Elem E	92	3.39	(0.05)				11	3.04	(0.15)
ELA Elem D	92	3.49	(0.04)				11	3.60	(0.09)
ELA High E	102	3.20	(0.05)				11	3.20	(0.14)
ELA High D	102	3.20	(0.04)				11	3.25	(0.15)
Math Elem E				31	3.40	(0.09)	26	3.19	(0.13)
Math Elem D				31	2.68	(0.09)	26	2.79	(0.13)
Math High E				105	3.07	(0.05)	32	3.05	(0.11)
Math High D				104	3.27	(0.05)	32	3.07	(0.12)

*** = p < 0.01, * = p < 0.05 indicate significant Wald test results for SWD compared to both Math and ELA. Standard errors are after weights were applied. All significant SWD results were significantly lower.*

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS

What resources might explain these instructional differences? We asked teachers to identify which of seven types of instructional supports they provide (see Table 3 for the list of supports). We selected these supports using the literature on Universal Design for Learning and best practices for SWD (Fuchs et al., 2015; Burns, 2003; Thompson, Morse, Sharpe, & Hall, 2005). We hypothesized that special educators offer more supports to SWD than do general educators, given special educators' higher level of training in and understanding about SWD. We examined these differences using ANOVA, with Wald tests to examine whether ELA and math teachers had significantly different challenges than SWD teachers in implementing CCRS. The numbers in Table 3 indicate how many of the seven supports listed on the survey are provided to SWD. With responses averaging between 2.67 and 3.36 supports, no state provided a majority of supports to SWD. There were no significant differences between ELA and SWD teachers in any of the states. In contrast, there were significance differences between math and SWD teachers in each state. In Texas, math educators offered significantly *fewer* supports to SWD (ES = -0.55 or -0.97 *SD*), whereas Kentucky math educators offered significantly *more* (ES = 0.56 or 1.90 *SD*).

Table 3. Instructional Supports for SWD by Teacher Type

Question: Thinking about your target class, when you provide instruction to SWD, how often do you do each of the following? (1 = never, 2 = occasionally, 3 = often, 4 = always)

ELA	Math
a. Ensure adequate background knowledge on text before having students with disabilities work on those passages.	a. Teach the same content using simpler numbers.
b. Pre-teach key vocabulary & concepts needed to comprehend the text.	b. Teach the foundational-level skills that students with disabilities have not yet mastered; then have students with disabilities apply newly learned skills in the context of the grade-level content standards.
c. Highlight main ideas to help students with disabilities generate inferences related to the text.	c. Model explanations and have the students with disabilities practice those explanations to communicate (verbally and in writing) about mathematics.
d. Provide opportunities for repeated reading.	d. Simplify text that contextualizes mathematics problems.
e. Provide explicit instruction about text structure.	e. Read to the student text that contextualizes mathematics problems.
f. Provide graphic models/organizers for students with disabilities to fill in 'gaps' in text.	f. Explicitly connect hands-on materials to pictorial representations and to symbolic representations of problems.
g. Structure peer-mediated activities in which higher-performing readers support word recognition among lower-performing readers.	g. When multiple strategies or algorithms apply, focus primarily on the one that's easiest for the students with disabilities to use.

Total Instructional Supports Offered as Reported by ELA and Math Teachers to SWD in Texas, Ohio and Kentucky

ELA	TX Gen Ed N	Mean	TX SWD N	Mean	*t* (p)
	162	3.34 (0.05)	40	3.36 (0.07)	0.19 (0.85)
	OH Gen Ed N	Mean	OH SWD N		
	106	3.18 (0.06)	39	3.18 (0.09)	0.00 (1.0)
	KY Gen Ed N	Mean	KY SWD N		
	22	3.23 (0.09)	122	3.08 (0.05)	1.21 (0.23)
	Cross-State *F* (6, 486) (3.36, 0.01**)				
Math	TX Gen Ed N	Mean	TX SWD N	Mean	*t* (p)
	160	2.88 (0.07)	42	3.43 (0.11)	3.72 (0.00)**
	OH Gen Ed N	Mean	OH SWD N		
	99	2.81 (0.05)	29	2.99 (0.18)	1.35 (0.18)
	KY Gen Ed N	Mean	KY SWD N		
	74	3.23 (0.04)	91	2.67 (0.05)	8.46 (0.00)**
	Cross-State *F* (6, 489) (10.96, 0.00**)				

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PREPAREDNESS

We used ANOVA to assess whether different types of teachers received different amounts of professional development and whether that professional development was helpful. We expected special educators to receive more professional development on strategies for helping SWD reach the standards than their general education counterparts. To test this, we asked teachers to report whether they were offered professional development focused on each of the following topics: the content of the standards, instructional shifts associated with the standards, test preparation strategies for the standards, and instructional strategies for teaching the standards to SWD. Teachers responded “yes” or “no.” There were a few significant differences among teacher groups, as shown in Table 4. In every state, the most common professional development offered (among the choices provided) was on the content of the standards.

Table 4. Professional Development Content by State and Teacher Type

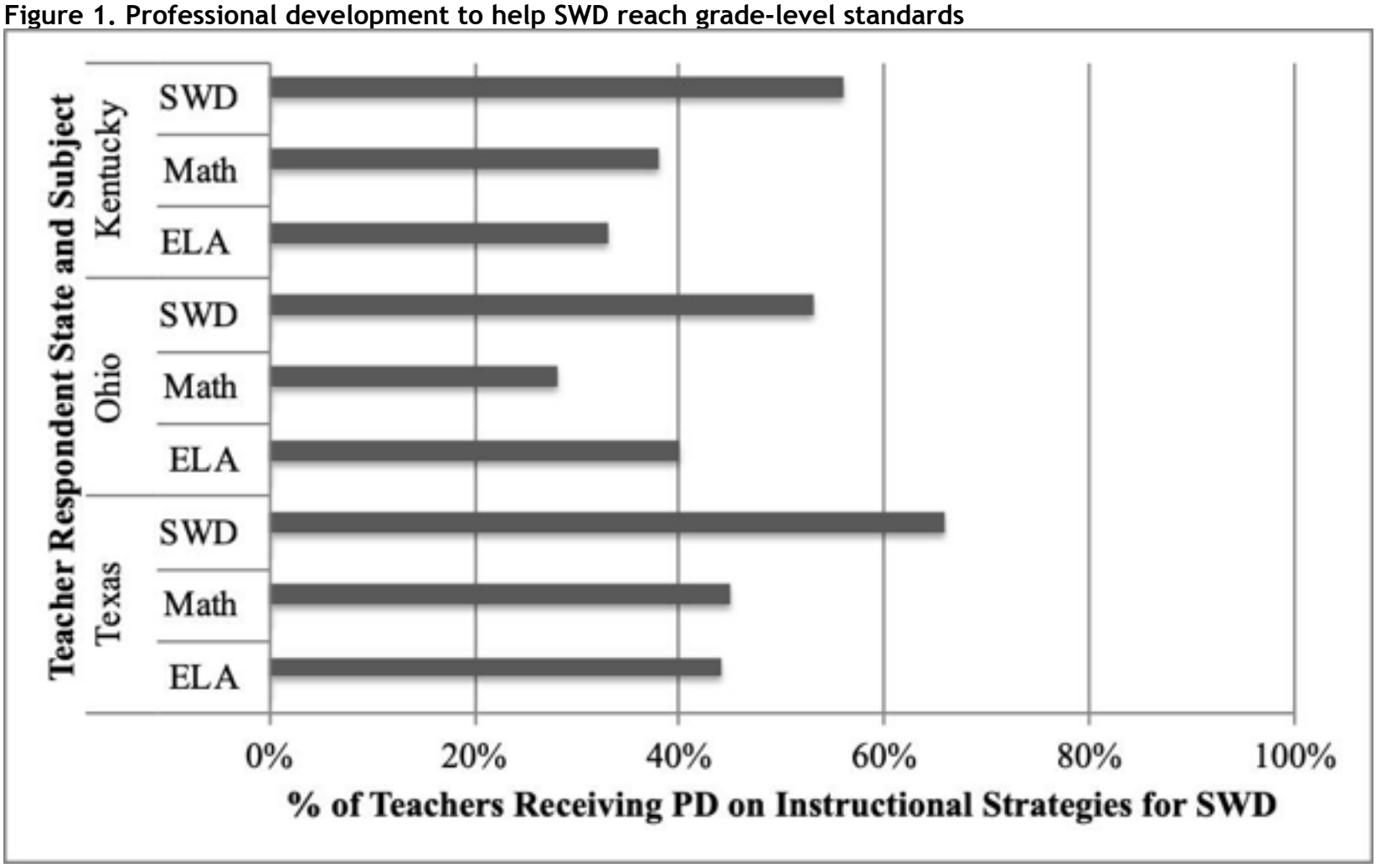
Standard Content	TX	N	Mean	OH	N	Mean	KY	N	Mean
	ELA	202	0.77 (0.04)	ELA	152	0.69 (0.07)	ELA	166	0.62 (0.05)
	Math	241	0.85 (0.04)	Math	160	0.59 (0.04)	Math	130	0.55 (0.04)
	SWD	75	0.81 (0.05)	SWD	60	0.58 (0.10)	SWD	81	0.67 (0.05)
F (9, 1258)	4.74 (0.00)** Post hoc results: TX ELA v. KY Math*, TX Math v. OH Math**, TX Math v. KY ELA**, TX Math v. KY Math**								
Instruction Shifts	TX	N	Mean	OH	N	Mean	KY		Mean
	ELA	201	0.59 (0.05)	ELA	149	0.67 (0.06)	ELA	166	0.34 (0.04)
	Math	245	0.73 (0.05)	Math	161	0.47 (0.04)	Math	130	0.37 (0.04)
	SWD	76	0.47 (0.08)	SWD	60	0.46 (0.09)	SWD	90	0.41 (0.05)
F (9, 1269)	8.46 (0.00)** Post hoc results: TX ELA v. KY ELA**, TX ELA v. KY Math*, TX Math v. TX SWD**, TX Math v. OH Math**, TX Math v. KY ELA**, TX Math v. KY Math**, TX Math v. KY SWD**, OH ELA v. KY ELA**, OH ELA v. KY Math**, OH ELA v. KY SWD.*								
Test prep strategies	TX	N	Mean	OH	N	Mean	KY		Mean
	ELA	202	0.68 (0.07)	ELA	149	0.47 (0.05)	ELA	166	0.40 (0.03)
	Math	242	0.53 (0.04)	Math	161	0.44 (0.05)	Math	129	0.38 (0.05)
	SWD	75	0.50 (0.08)	SWD	60	0.47 (0.08)	SWD	91	0.50 (0.06)
	3.01 (0.00)** Post hoc results: TX ELA v. OH Math*, TX ELA v. KY ELA**, TX ELA v. KY Math**								
	TX	N	Mean	OH	N	Mean	KY	N	Mean
	ELA	202	0.44 (0.08)	ELA	152	0.40 (0.06)	ELA	167	0.33 (0.04)

	Math	244	0.45 (0.04)	Math	160	0.28 (0.04)	Math	130	0.38 (0.05)
	SWD	76	0.66 (0.10)	SWD	60	0.53 (0.08)	SWD	91	0.56 (0.05)
F (9, 1266)	2.86 (0.00)** Post hoc results: TX SWD v. OH Math**, TX SWD v. KY ELA.**								
Instruction strategies for SWD									
F (9, 1273)									

**p<0.05, **p<0.01, 0=no, 1=yes*

In Texas, the difference between SWD and general education teachers receiving PD on helping SWD reach grade-level standards was not significant, though 20% more of SWD teachers did receive this PD. Discouragingly, as shown in Figure 1, less than one third (28%) of Ohio math teachers reported receiving PD on instructional strategies to aid SWD in reaching the standards; this was a statistically significant difference from special educators (ES = 25% or -0.63 *SD*). In contrast, differences between Ohio ELA teachers (40%) and teachers of SWD (53%) were not significant. In Kentucky, only 33% of ELA teachers received professional development on instructional strategies for SWD, with a similar figure among math teachers (38%). The pattern was consistent across Kentucky teacher types. These differences were statistically significantly different from teachers of SWD, 56%; ES = 23% (0.60 *SD*) for ELA, 18% (0.45 *SD*) for math.

Figure 1. Professional development to help SWD reach grade-level standards



In no state did a majority of general education math or ELA teachers report receiving PD on how to help SWD achieve standards. This finding represents an area of concern, as it seems unlikely special educators will be able to help SWD reach grade-level standards if general educators are not also prepared to support SWD participating in the general education program. Table 5 suggests that all teachers feel moderately prepared to teach SWD, with only Ohio math teachers falling below the 3.0 (moderately prepared) threshold. General educators seem to be somewhat confident in their abilities despite not receiving SWD-targeted PD. This confidence may be misplaced considering our instructional findings in Texas and Ohio.

Table 5. Preparedness to Teach Low-Achieving and SWD by State and Teacher Type

	TX N	Mean	OH N	Mean	KY N	Mean	*F (2, ~587)*
ELA Low	216	3.56 (0.07)	159	3.43 (0.09)	214	3.45 (0.06)	0.98 (0.38)
ELA SWD	216	3.34 (0.11)	160	3.17 (0.09)	211	3.32 (0.06)	0.95 (0.39)

Math Low	248	3.48 (0.07)	168	3.19* (0.11)	170	3.42 (0.07)	3.66* (0.03)
Math SWD	253	3.26 (0.09)	169	2.88* (0.14)	167	3.26 (0.07)	4.22* (0.02)

**p < 0.05, **p < 0.01. 1 = I do not feel prepared 2= I feel slightly prepared 3 = I feel moderately prepared 4 = I feel well prepared.*

TEACHER POLICY ATTRIBUTES

Seeing these discrepancies in instruction, supports, and preparedness, we turn to the policies that influence those conditions. We first wanted to know whether general educators and SWD teachers differed on how specific, consistent, authoritative, powerful, and stable their policy environments are. We hypothesized that SWD teachers' policy environments views are lower on authority because such a pattern was evident during prior periods of reform (e.g., Dorn, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1996).

Table 6 shows means, *SE*s, and Wald test results on the five policy attributes by respondent type (here, teachers of SWD vs. general education ELA teachers vs. general education math teachers) and by state. There were no significance differences between SWD and ELA teachers in terms of consistency. Across Ohio and Kentucky, SWD teachers perceived significantly more consistency in their policies than did math general educators. Effect size (ES) was 0.26 (0.45 *SD*) for Ohio and 0.21 (0.57 *SD*) for Kentucky. Considering the Likert scale ranges from 1–4, a 0.25 unstandardized effect size is meaningful, as it can shift an average response from fully aligned to somewhat aligned. This finding may speak to the major shifts demanded by CCR math standards as compared to ELA (Achieve, 2013).

Table 6. Teachers' Policy Perceptions by State and Teacher Types

Texas	ELA			Math			SWD		
	N	Mean	SE	N	Mean	SE	n	Mean	SE
Specificity	207	3.16	(0.12)	250	3.24	(0.09)	78	2.87	(0.13)
Consistency	202	2.85	(0.09)	243	2.81	(0.04)	71	2.80	(0.07)
Authority	207	2.70	(0.09)	248	2.52	(0.05)	79	2.29	(0.12)
Power	207	2.73	(0.10)	250	2.65	(0.09)	79	2.61	(0.07)
Stability	203	2.43	(0.13)	249	2.61	(0.07)	78	2.45	(0.20)
Ohio	ELA			Math			SWD		
	N	Mean	SE	N	Mean	SE	n	Mean	SE
Specificity	157	2.38	(0.21)	166	2.4	(0.14)	67	2.35	(0.14)
Consistency	146	2.80	(0.05)	158	2.57	(0.07)	59	2.83	(0.10)
Authority	157	2.43	(0.08)	163	2.24	(0.06)	66	2.10	(0.10)
Power	157	2.50	(0.08)	166	2.44	(0.07)	67	2.57	(0.10)
Stability	153	2.44	(0.08)	166	2.47	(0.12)	64	2.39	(0.13)
Kentucky	ELA			Math			SWD		
	N	Mean	SE	N	Mean	SE	n	Mean	SE
Specificity	185	2.65	(0.04)	150	2.70	(0.08)	95	2.95	(0.09)
Consistency	167	2.92	(0.04)	129	2.81	(0.05)	91	3.02	(0.05)
Authority	185	2.90	(0.04)	147	2.63	(0.04)	92	2.74	(0.05)
Power	180	2.52	(0.04)	148	2.49	(0.05)	95	2.69	(0.07)
Stability	169	2.33	(0.09)	133	2.15	(0.07)	93	2.29	(0.12)

Wald Significance Test Results among Teacher Types

Texas	ELA v. Math	ELA v. SWD	Math v. SWD
Specificity	0.37	3.28	6.96*
Consistency	0.15	0.21	0.01
Authority	3.82	9.95**	2.56
Power	0.68	1.15	0.29
Stability	1.15	0.01	0.54
Ohio	ELA v. Math	ELA v. SWD	Math v. SWD
Specificity	0.02	0.02	0.07
Consistency	5.00*	0.08	5.01*
Authority	4.80*	4.46*	0.27
Power	0.84	0.35	1.91
Stability	0.12	0.02	0.20
Kentucky	ELA v. Math	ELA v. SWD	Math v. SWD
Specificity	0.35	8.39**	4.42*

Consistency	3.14	2.30	8.27**
Authority	22.62**	6.24*	2.81
Power	0.33	3.86	5.45*
Stability	2.2	0.09	0.98

** = *p <0.01, * = p < 0.05. Standard errors are after weights were applied.*

Of greater interest, however, was the pattern of results for Kentucky, which differed from the other two states on three of the five policy attributes. First, Kentucky teachers of SWD reported significantly more authority, ES = 0.16 (0.23 *SD*), whereas Texas and Ohio reported lower authority than their ELA teacher counterparts, ESs = -0.41 (-0.49 *SD*) and -0.29 (-0.51 *SD*), respectively. There were no significant differences between SWD and math teachers on authority in any state.) Second, Kentucky teachers of SWD reported significantly higher specificity than did general educators in both subject areas, ES = 0.35 (0.58 *SD*) for ELA and 0.40 (0.38 *SD*) for math; in contrast, Texas teachers of SWD reported significantly less specificity compared to math teachers (ES = -0.37, or -0.40 *SD*). Third, Kentucky SWD teachers perceived significantly more power compared to math teachers (ES = 0.20, or 0.44 *SD*), hinting at stronger rewards and sanctions, though the ES in this instance was smaller. Thus, our hypothesis held true in Texas and Ohio—teachers of SWD reported less authoritative policy environments—but not in Kentucky.

DISTRICT PERSONNEL AND PRINCIPAL VIEWS ON STUDENTS WITH VERSUS WITHOUT DISABILITIES

With these differences between educators in mind, we turn our attention to district officials and principals. Based on Gartner and Lipsky (1987) and more recent work by Pianta and Walsh (2013), we anticipated decreasing views of appropriateness and authority as the surveys moved closer to the classroom door. What we found is consistent with reports of skepticism about the standards context for SWD already described in this results section.

Across states (see Figures 2 and 3), principals expressed ambivalence about the appropriateness of the ELA and math standards for SWD (mean scores ~2.5, where 1 = disagree strongly; 2 = disagree somewhat; 3 = somewhat agree; 4 = strongly agree). In line with our hypothesis, however, Texas districts officials' attitudes were significantly more supportive than those of principals in both subjects, ES = 0.80 (0.46 *SD*) in ELA, 0.98 (0.54 *SD*) in math. In Ohio, there were significant differences between districts and principals in math (ES = 0.83 or 1.16 *SD*), but not for the appropriateness of the ELA standards.

As for teachers, they first responded whether they viewed the standards as setting appropriate expectations generally and by subject; then whether they believed the standards set appropriate expectations for SWD. All comparisons between teachers were significant. In line with our expectations, there were significant differences between groups (see Table 7 and Figures 2 and 3). Texas and Ohio general educators viewed math and ELA standards as significantly more appropriate for students *without* disabilities than for SWD. ESs were large, ranging from 0.84 (2.00 *SD*) for the Texas ELA standards to 1.03 (1.39 *SD*) for the Ohio math standards. Moreover, for both subjects, Ohio teachers reported that the standards were significantly less appropriate for SWD than principals and district officials. This was also the case in Texas but for math only. ESs comparing teachers to principals ranged from for Texas ELA 0.27 (0.23 *SD*) to 1.52 (1.88 *SD*) for Ohio math.

Table 7. Appropriateness of the Standards for SWD as Reported by All Personnel

District Officials

How appropriate are the ELA standards for SWD?			for general education students?		Gen Ed v. SWD
State	N	Mean	N	Mean	*t* (p)
Texas	42	3.26 (0.50)	42	3.33 (0.26)	1.13 (0.26)
Ohio	42	2.47 (0.13)	42	2.99 (0.15)	2.62 (0.01)*
How appropriate are the math standards for SWD?			for general education students?		Gen Ed v. SWD
State	N	Mean	N	Mean	*t* (p)
Texas	42	3.35 (0.53)	42	3.09 (0.35)	0.41 (0.68)
Ohio	42	2.21 (0.18)	42	2.73 (0.15)	2.22 (0.03)*

Principals

How appropriate are the ELA standards for SWD?			for general education students?		Gen Ed v. SWD	Districts v. Principals
State	N	Mean	N	Mean	*t* (p)	*t* (p)
Texas	155	2.46 (0.10)	155	3.38 (0.06)	13.03 (0.00)**	2.48 (0.01)*
Ohio	109	2.53 (0.10)	109	3.20 (0.06)	8.73 (0.00)**	0.28 (0.78)
How appropriate are the math standards for SWD?					Gen Ed. v.	Districts v. Principals

					SWD	
State	N	Mean	N	Mean	*t* (p)	*t* (p)
Texas	152	2.37 (0.10)	152	2.87 (0.10)	7.32 (0.00)**	2.93 (0.00)**
Ohio	108	3.04 (0.08)	108	2.40 (0.12)	6.82 (0.00)**	4.87 (0.00)**

Teachers How appropriate are the standards for SWD?			for general education students?	Gen Ed. v. SWD
	N	Mean	Mean	*F (p)*
Texas ELA	205	2.19 (0.15)	3.03 (0.07)	(51.82, 0.00)**
Ohio ELA	155	1.90 (0.14)	2.82 (0.08)	(67.30, 0.00)**
Texas Math	214	1.84 (0.09)	2.73 (0.08)	(79.57, 0.00)**
Ohio Math	160	1.52 (0.11)	2.55 (0.08)	(119.26, 0.00)**

** = *p <0.01, * = p < 0.05. Standard errors in parenthesis are after weights were applied*.

Figure 2. Appropriateness of ELA standards for SWD across states and respondent types

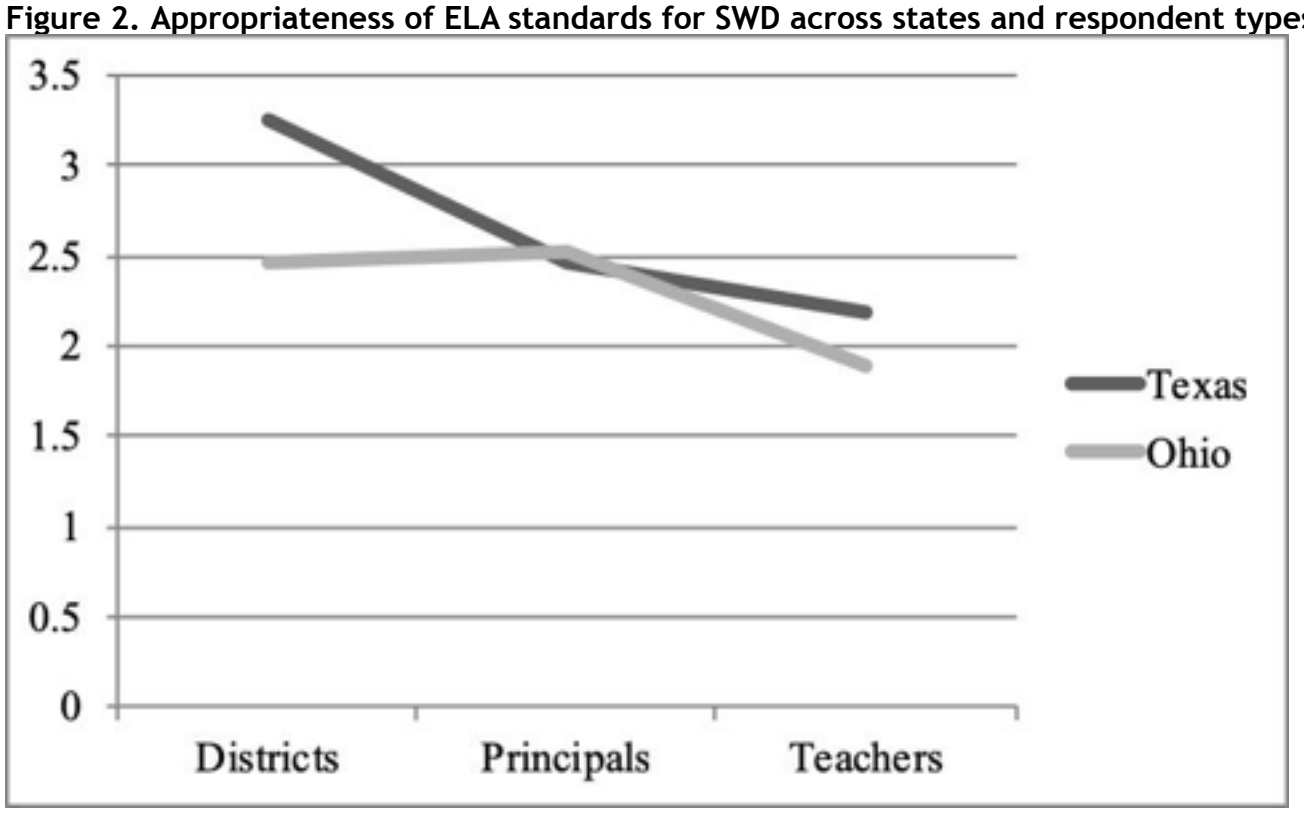
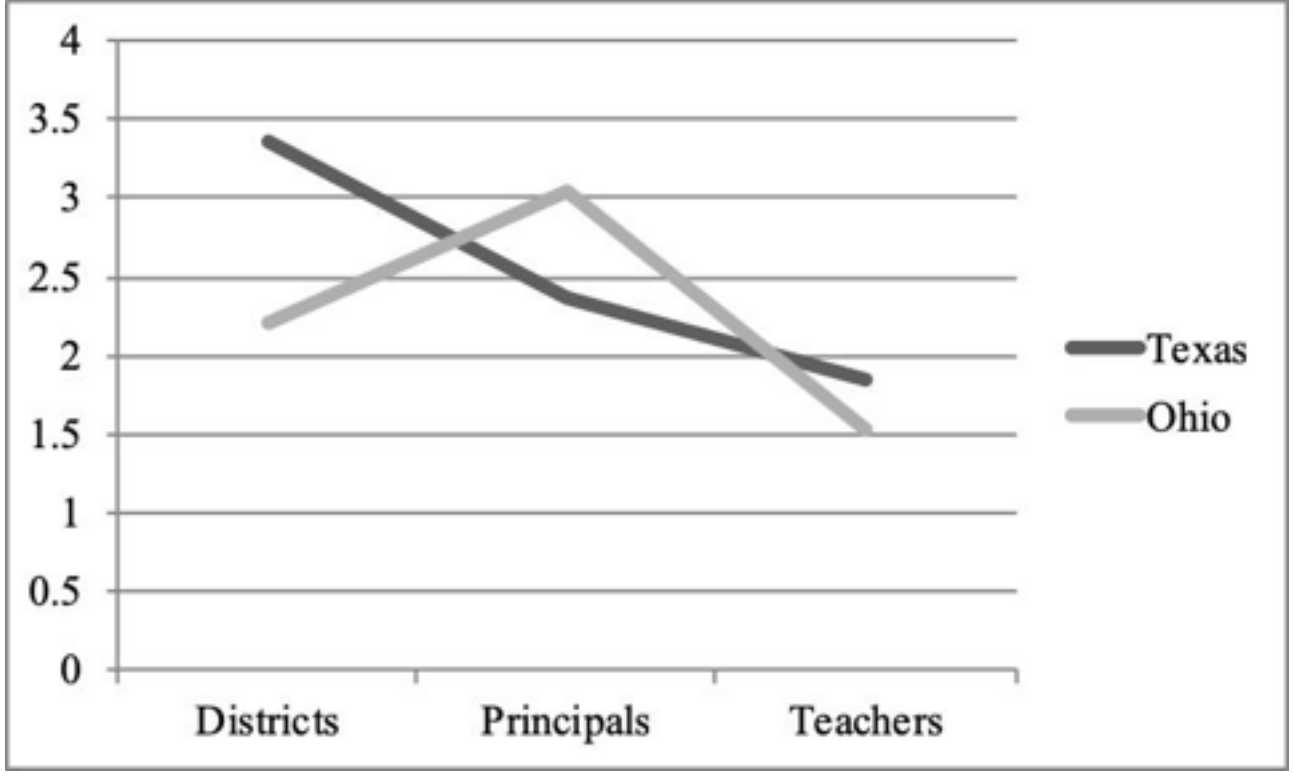


Figure 3. Appropriateness of math standards for SWD across states and respondent types



CONSIDERATIONS IN INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

As with all survey data and nonexperimental studies, there are important caveats to interpreting these results. This study does not use causal inference methods, so the relations we document are predictive or correlational, not causal. Also, teaching quality can differ dramatically from observation versus self-report (Cohen, 1990), although behaviorally-based behaviors do correlate highly with observational data (Mayer, 1999). To reduce response bias at least in part, we did not signify which content items were aligned with the standards.

Some might also point to the time frame of the survey administration as a major consideration, as it occurred prior to the appointment of Secretary Betsy DeVos, who recently declared that "Common Core is *dead*" (emphasis in the original, U.S. Department of Education, 2018b). We note, however, that backlash to CCSS reached its peak prior to the 2016 election according to national polling (Henderson, West, Peterson, & Barrows, 2017) and studies of social media intensity (Supovitz, 2017). Though state-led repeals of CCSS and testing opt-out movements garnered extensive media coverage, it is also likely that the policy environment for SWD at the classroom-level has remained roughly the same; after all, it takes years for policy shifts to affect instruction (Spillane, 2009). Changing instruction has been the holy grail of standards-based reform for decades and remains elusive, though a related study using this same survey data found authority to be predictive of standards-emphasized instruction in ELA across all three states (Edgerton & Desimone, 2018).

DISCUSSION

These findings paint a picture of two states, Texas and Ohio, where SWD receive less grade-level instruction, fewer instructional supports, and encounter teachers who believe that the standards are less appropriate for SWD. Kentucky bucks this trend, suggesting there may be policy differences in that state worth further exploration. Specifically, Kentucky had adopted a "novice reduction" policy that did not focus on proficiency cut-offs and so-called "bubble" students just below the cut-off. Instead, Kentucky incentivized districts to focus on students in the lowest category of achievement ("novice"), including those students with the most severe disabilities. Improving educational results for SWD was a heavy focus of Kentucky's NCLB waiver, which was still in effect during the time of the survey administration (Kentucky Department of Education, 2015). Kentucky also piloted a Co-Teaching for Gap Closure initiative in 2016.

Texas, meanwhile, was contending with a legal battle related to its 8.5% cap and in the midst of policy upheaval for a failure to provide services to which SWD were entitled. As for Ohio, its contemporaneous NCLB waiver lacked the specificity and focus of Kentucky's, though this issue has since been rectified under the state's approved ESSA plan (Ohio Department of Education, 2019). This study, however, cannot substantiate any direct links between macro state policy and SWD instruction. It does, however, suggest that these policies are worth further research to determine relationships to the level and content of instruction for SWD.

In Texas, teachers of SWD reported addressing less standards-emphasized content than did elementary and secondary ELA teachers and secondary math teachers. The same difference occurred in Ohio at the elementary level. The ESs for some of these differences were large—above or near a full standard deviation at the elementary level in both Texas and Ohio. When viewed positively, this discrepancy may reflect special educators' differential attention to the foundational skills necessary for SWD to gain access to CCR standards. Yet, if SWD are to achieve challenging standards, they also require the instructional expertise of special educators to explicitly connect that foundational content to the complex topics and cognitive demands inherent in the standards. And certainly, SWD are still held to account for learning grade-level standards on standardized assessments.

At the same time, when asked to identify how many instructional supports they relied on (of seven choices we offered) to address the needs of SWD, general education math teachers in Texas and Ohio offered fewer supports than did special educators. Moreover, Texas and Ohio general educators reported spending less than 75% of their instructional time teaching grade-level standards to SWD. Although this percentage is similar to general educator responses for students *without* disabilities, we might assume that SWD require more time to achieve ELA and math standards than other learners in these classrooms. This similarity between general educators and teachers of SWD raises another important question: Are the CCRS meaningfully influencing classroom instruction for teachers broadly speaking? It is possible that teachers are continuing to resist changing their existing instructional practices in accordance with prior periods of standards-based reform (Cohen & Mehta, 2017; Spillane, 2009; Weick, 1974).

Because 62% of SWD receive at least 80% of their instruction in general education classrooms (McLeskey & Waldron, 2011), these findings raise serious concerns about the extent of PD general educators receive specifically addressing the needs of SWD. In terms of general educator reports about their level of preparation, most respondents across the three states indicated a moderate level of preparedness for teaching the CCR standards to SWD. Yet, one would hope that all teachers feel well-prepared, not merely moderately prepared. Texas and Ohio general educators in both content areas viewed CCR standards as inappropriate for SWD. Corroborating this view, teachers of SWD estimated that only 50% of SWD would meet grade-level standards by the end of the academic year.

While expressing ambivalence, principals were more supportive than teachers on the appropriateness of CCR standards for SWD (significantly so in Ohio but not in Texas). Moving farther away from the classroom, district officials' perceptions in Texas were more supportive than those of principals (ES = 0.80 in ELA; 0.98 in math). Even so, Ohio district officials and principals responded similarly for ELA but less supportively than principals for math. Differences in views about the appropriateness of CCR standards for SWD for principals versus district officials raise important questions, albeit with inconsistencies. Findings are nevertheless clear that classroom teachers, who have better knowledge of the academic challenges and opportunities for SWD than do principals or district officials, hold doubts about the appropriateness of the CCRS for SWD. Most alarmingly, special educators estimate a failure rate for half of the population.

Our Texas and Ohio surveys indicate that district officials believe CCRS are appropriate for SWD, and they believe they are already providing specific resources to teachers. This raises further questions about whether additional professional development and classroom-level support for SWD success are forthcoming. Given reports of teacher skepticism about the standards context for SWD already discussed here, decreasing views of appropriateness and authority as the surveys moved closer to the classroom door echo the Gartner and Lipsky (1987) report that persist in more recent studies (e.g., Pianta & Walsh, 2013). The tension between differentiation and standardization persists, seemingly unabated, though perhaps Kentucky holds some clues about how to bridge these divides.

We note that because this analysis is descriptive in nature, it cannot determine the effectiveness of statewide policy efforts. It instead describes policy environments following the passage of ESSA. It is also notable that while Texas and Ohio SWD teachers' responses were significantly lower on some of the five policy attributes, Kentucky SWD teachers were higher than their general education counterparts. This analysis indicates that more qualitative and causal work should be done in Kentucky to see if broader lessons can be learned there, which may apply nationally. It also generates a testable hypothesis for future study: whether specific, targeted state initiatives for certain populations can boost teacher policy environments, authority around the standards, and grade-level instruction.

Aside from the positive light shed on Kentucky's policy environment, this study raises serious questions about the degree to which school personnel believe in CCRS for SWD and are meaningfully implementing them. In the two states with better response rates, there are clear differences in instructional content and expectations for SWD. This paper challenges the notion that standards-for-all is an accepted norm in the post-CCSS era. It also challenges the field to provide guidance to states, districts, and schools about how to successfully marry the two policy frameworks that guide special education practice.

Acknowledgements

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