“There are a ton of incentives for that. That’s how you get promoted and tenured. Where is the ‘reward’ for working with your colleagues in the ed schools? How often do the universities actually ask the college of education to provide pedagogical support to their colleagues in other departments? That’s part of the issue.”

Progressive institutions, those breaking down silos between departments and demonstrating a collaborative approach to aligning teacher preparation to the new standards, likely result from the university president or provost pushing it, she added.

Silobusters

Two years ago, the National Governors Association (NGA) distributed an issue brief that outlined the critical role played by governors in ensuring teachers and principals support students in meeting the expectations of the Common Core State Standards. The brief focused on policies to build the effectiveness of educators through preparation programs, licensure and certification, evaluations, and professional development, and suggested that governors take a series of actions to support success implementation:

- Communicate a need and a vision for reform and engage parents and leaders from education, the community, business, and philanthropy;
- Improve educator effectiveness;
- Lead transitions in state accountability policies, state assessments and interventions to improve low-performing schools and struggling students; and
- Create a structure to coordinate implementation activities and support its work by adopting the necessary policies and reallocating state resources.

One state that supported the new standards early on—from the governor’s office, to the state board of education, to the legislative assembly, to the state professional educator membership associations—was New Jersey. The Garden State was part of the first major wave of states to adopt the Common Core standards, and the state’s commitment to them is “still solid,” said Marie Adair, executive director of the New Jersey ASCD.

“I think it’s fair to say that everyone saw the promise of the Common Core in New Jersey,” she said. “Our state ranks in the top three in the country—in terms of results. No one wants to lose that. We’ve had a huge investment in education. If [the standards] are deemed good by the NGA and the Council of Chief State School Officers, why would we not do this?”

Forging stronger alignment between K–12 and higher education around the standards is “so important as a topic,” said Adair, “because it’s the future of who the teachers will be in our schools and how the teaching profession will be molded/what it will look like.”

More than a year ago, education leaders across New Jersey’s K–12 and higher education communities, led by the New Jersey chapters of ASCD and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (and with the full support of the state’s educator membership associations), created a series of symposia to provide professional learning (to develop awareness of new requirements for teachers and teacher leaders); explore policy issues that influence teacher education and preparation; and create meaningful dialogue among higher education, K–12 leadership, and professional associations to shape a new vision of teaching and learning for the profession. National experts in teacher preparation spoke at the symposia,