Communicating the Common Core & Assessments

The Importance of Students, Expectations, & Consistency

Nathan James, GMMB
Chris Barron, Ready Washington
Communicating the Common Core & Assessments

• What the research tells us
• Implications for messaging & strategy
• Resources & support: Ready Washington
Rules of the Road

- Words matter
- Understand your audiences
- Audiences are smart
- Perspective is relevant
- Goals in sight
Common Core violates THREE Federal Statutes & the 10th Amendment

Common Core: Every child is unique. Common Core education standards put each child into one mold.

Click Here To Opt Out of Common Core Tests

Stop Common Core

Parents & Teachers against Common Core
Among parents and the public, awareness remains low...

U.S. Public School Parents' Awareness of Common Core

How much, if anything, have you heard about the new national standards for teaching reading, writing, and math in grades K through 12, known as the Common Core State Standards — a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or nothing at all?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public school parents</th>
<th>Parents in states that have implemented Common Core standards^</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A fair amount</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only a little</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All results based on parents of students in public school, grades K-12

^Includes parents in 33 states plus the District of Columbia that implemented Common Core standards in the 2013-2014 school year, or earlier.

April 3-9, 2014

GALLUP
But support grows if people hear a simple description of the standards

“To ensure that all students are prepared for success after graduation, the Common Core Standards establish a set of clear, consistent guidelines for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level across subjects.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support/strongly</th>
<th>32%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support/somewhat</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose/somewhat</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose/strongly</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total support 64%
Total oppose 24%

Achieve, 2014
Teachers are enthusiastic about the Common Core, even as they acknowledge challenges

74% of math, ELA, science and/or social studies teachers in WA are enthusiastic about CCSS implementation

75% of math, ELA, science and/or social studies teachers in WA believe implementing the CCSS will be challenging

Primary Sources, 2013
However, there is growing anxiety among teachers about implementation

- Concern about implementation challenges

- Perception of rushing:
  - Implementation
  - New assessments
Key Findings: Standards

• Awareness of the Common Core is growing.
• Opposition is growing with awareness--opponents can easily foster skepticism.
• Conceptually, voters support common standards and assessments.
• When we explain the Common Core in basic terms, voters support the standards.
• The strongest messages in support of the standards focus on students.
**Key Findings: Assessments**

- The public does NOT favor eliminating testing or allowing parents to opt out their children.
- Some of the negativity toward testing can be overcome if people are confident that the tests can accurately measure student performance.
- The public will not accept MORE tests, but there is some openness to BETTER tests.
- The strongest messages in support of assessments tie them to the value of the standards.
Ok, so now what?
Messaging & Strategy
Strategy

A Good *Offense* is Your Best *Defense*

- Define the message
- Be proactive
- Be consistent
Define the message

Focus on how the Common Core prepares students for success

• **Teachers** strongly support the standards and believe in their potential to improve student success.

• **Results**: In Kentucky, the first state to begin using the Common Core State Standards, high school graduates ready for college and career increased from 38% to 47% in a single year.

• **Equality**: By setting high expectations for all students, the Common Core ensures all students have access to a quality education.

• **Competitive**: The world is a more demanding place than ever before. The Common Core prepares students to compete for jobs in today’s economy.

• **Consistency**: Consistent standards ensure students like those from military families do not fall behind just because they move between districts or states.
Define the message

Emphasize the virtues of the standards when talking about the assessments

• Highlight the benefits of the standards and describe how the assessments help ensure children are on the pathway to success.
• Assessments must deliver timely, actionable data to inform instruction and improve student outcomes.
• Demonstrate that teachers and students are getting the tools and resources they need to meet the promise of the standards.
• Highlight teacher contributions to and support for the assessments.
• Describe field tests as a “practice run” that will help to ensure that the assessments are accurate and fair for all students.
Be Proactive

What Does Common Core Look Like Inside A Classroom?

By REEMA KHRAS

As she wraps up class, fourth-grade teacher Rosalyn Bailey walks by each table, hovers over each child and points at the math assignment.

“What’s two-tenths plus four-tenths?” Bailey asks one of her students, who responds with a wrong answer.

On the other side of the room, nine-year-old Ken is one of the few students who have a better grasp of the material.

Credit: Reema Khras

Great Falls
@greatfallshub

Smarter Balanced test available to community today - Great Falls Tribune ift.tt/1pj6aH4 #GreatFalls
# Be consistent

| 12 Ways to Describe the Common Core State Standards and Assessments |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| • Academic **check-up** | • **More information** for teachers and parents |
| • **Tool** to help students improve | • **Consistent** standard to compare between states |
| • Opportunity to **raise expectations** | • Training for the **real world** |
| • **Clear** guideline for students | • Chance for **all students** to succeed |
| • **Proven** approach to increase learning | • Method to develop **problem solving and critical thinking** |
| • Preparation to **compete** in college and career | • **Timely** metric to provide an early warning signal |
Resources
**Resources:**  http://www.k12.wa.us/Corestandards/

**Common Core** is a real-world approach to learning and teaching. Developed by education experts from 45 states, these K-12 learning standards go deeper into key concepts in math and English language arts. The standards require a practical, real-life application of knowledge that prepares Washington students for success in college, work and life.

**Common Core provides:**

- Consistent learning expectations for all students.
- Clear standards that focus on understanding over memorization.
- Emphasis on the critical topics students need to succeed after high school.
- Faster testing results with a better, more focused online assessment system.

**Three-Minute Video Explaining the Common Core State Standards**

**Council of the Great City Schools**

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Learn more about the Common Core Standards

- Math
- English Language Arts

**What’s New**

- [Implementing the Common Core in Washington](http://www.k12.wa.us/Corestandards/default.aspx) (PDF)
- [Washington CCSS Professional Learning Materials](http://www.k12.wa.us/Corestandards/default.aspx)
Resources: Smarter Balanced

Parents & Students
The Smarter Balanced Assessment System will give parents and students more accurate and actionable information about what students are learning. Because these assessments are computer adaptive, they will also provide better information about the needs and successes of individual students.

These next-generation assessments are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts/literacy and mathematics for grades 3-8 and 11. That means students in all states will be taught to the same high standards.

Smarter Balanced and Parents: Preparing Students for Success after High School
In schools across the country, teachers are helping students meet the challenge of the Common Core State Standards—consistent guidelines for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level so they can graduate high school prepared for college and the workplace. These new academic benchmarks challenge students to develop a deeper understanding of subject matter, learn how to think critically, and apply what they are learning to the real world.
Resources: Smarter Balanced
http://sbac.portal.airast.org/field-test/resources/#toolkit

• Guidance/description on how to assemble positive stories that can be used to communicate about the Field Test
• Suggested communications timeline
• Field Test overview web page and factsheet
• Rob call script
• Template press release
• Template op-ed
• Talking points
• Ready-to-use PowerPoint presentation Template newsletter/blog
• FAQs
Ready Washington

Common Core Communications Leadership Summit
April 21, 2014

www.ReadyWA.org
Real Learning for Real Life

Campaign timeline

Nov. 2012: Received grant from College Spark WA to partner with OSPI on public awareness campaign
Jan. 2013: Began efforts to build Ready WA coalition, including communications work team
June 2013: Initial launch of Website & resources
Sept. 2013: Official launch, including National Teacher of the Year Jeff Charbonneau
Ready Washington is a coalition of state and local education agencies, associations and advocacy organizations that support college- and career-ready learning standards.

The coalition believes all students should be better prepared for college, work and life to build the skills to compete for the quality jobs that our state has to offer.
Two objectives

1) To build public awareness, understanding and support for Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balanced assessments.

2) To help schools/educators communicate about Common Core and assessments
www.ReadyWA.org
Facebook & Twitter

www.facebook.com/ReadyWA
www.twitter.com/ReadyWA
www.YouTube.com
Teacher Voices

WASHINGTON TEACHER VOICES

No more valuable voice exists in education than that of the teacher. Teachers are the most trusted voices by parents, the public and opinion leaders when it comes what’s happening in the classroom -- and what’s working and what’s not.

The Ready Washington coalition, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Washington Education Association worked together to assemble a group of Washington teachers to serve as leading voices as our state implements college- and career-ready learning standards and assessments. We hope this area will not only encourage other educators to lend their voices to this issue, but also to educate the public and spark good conversation and debate.

Jeff Charbonneau: The 2013 National Teacher of the Year, has been a key voice in supporting higher learning standards. Learn more about the science teacher from Zillah, Wash., and watch him speak about his experiences in raising expectations for his students. VISIT JEFF’S PAGE

Teacher Voices Blog: We’re starting with a group of nine dedicated educators from around Washington state (see photo on the right) who will regularly post about their experiences in the classroom. But, we’re looking for more educators to weigh in -- the more, the better. Contact us if you’re an educator who’d you like to participate. VISIT THE BLOG
Teacher Voices

• Important for educators (teachers/principals) to use their voice as advocates
• Talk about what’s happening in their classroom; that’s interesting to people
• We want to build the teacher voices network to encourage educators to ‘own’ education issues
• If interested in participating, email chris@partnership4learning.org
Real Learning for Real Life

Five Make-or-Break Moments
Make-or-Break Moments

What’s a make-or-break moment?
A key time period, date or event to increase communications efforts or initiatives.

Last year, a team from state education agencies, the state teachers association and education advocacy organizations met to develop Washington’s make-or-break moments.
Make-or-Break Moments

• **Spring 2014** during and post Smarter Balanced field testing
• **Fall 2014** when the new school year begins
• **Early 2015** before testing begins/state legislative session starts
• **Spring 2015** when testing is happening/ending
• **Summer 2015** when testing scores are returned
Make-or-Break Moment No. 1

Spring 2014, during and post field testing
• 200,000 students throughout the state are taking the Smarter Balanced field test.
• The field test is a test of the test; no individual student scores will be reported.
• Parents, especially in those testing districts, will become more aware of Common Core and the new assessments.
• Ready WA has developed FAQs & working with districts to communicate during and after the field tests.
Make-or-Break Moment No. 2

Fall 2014 when the new school year begins

• First school year with new Smarter Balanced assessment system.
• Internal communication critical for staff.
• Parents/public will be more aware of Common Core; focus will be on tests.
• Take advantage of back-to-school meetings, board meetings and conferences.
• Work with local PTA; use teacher voices.
• Develop and begin ‘earned media’ efforts
Make-or-Break Moment No. 3

Early 2015 before testing begins/state Legislature

• Key time for communication. Before testing and not much communication “noise” with election and holidays over.
• Proactive messaging needed to combat possible ‘opt-out’ movement.
• Ready WA will hit radio and Web advertising big during this time. Cheaper ad rates. Target key areas determined by polling.
• Ground game critical during this period with PTA and community presentations.
Make-or-Break Moment No. 4

Spring 2015 when testing is happening/ending

• Earned media plan fully underway with editorial boards, op-eds and stories to explain new assessments. (What’s your plan?)

• Ground game critical during this period with PTA and community presentations.
Make-or-Break Moment No. 5

Summer 2015 when testing scores are returned

• First test scores will be returned. Need to emphasize these are first-time results and we are measuring what matters.

• Parents will be concerned about test scores.

• Ready WA will hit radio and Web advertising big during this time.

• Ground game and earned media during this period is critical.
Real Learning for Real Life

Next Steps for Campaign
Next Steps

• Statewide poll of 900 voters/parents
• Plan for paid and earned media campaign based on statewide poll results
• Begin ‘ground game’ planning with state PTA
• Update messaging and develop new materials
• Continue focus groups, particularly those in communities of color
• Build Teacher Voices Network
What Are You Doing?

For today’s team time and lunch discussions:

1) What are your communications strategies (internal & external) for Common Core & Smarter Balanced?

2) What are your make-or-break moments?

3) Who are your key audiences and what are your top high-level messages for each one?
Questions?

You’ve heard from us; let us hear from you.

And be sure to follow Ready WA on Facebook and Twitter and visit www.ReadyWA.org for resources and information.
Discussion