Common Core and Other State Standards:
Superintendents Feel Optimism, Concern and Lack of Support

LESLIE A. FINNAN

DANIEL A. DOMENECH, AASA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I.   Introduction

For months, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have been debated throughout the media, legislatures, education organizations, and households across the country. Education groups have released statements both in favor[1] of the standards and opposed.[2] As these arguments are being tossed around, 44 states and D.C. are implementing CCSS and other states are implementing new college and career ready state standards outside of the CCSS. AASA supports high standards for all students, be they through the CCSS or other state-specific standards, but believes that schools and districts should be given the time necessary to fully implement the standards before judging their success, and assessments should be used in the manner for which they were designed and evaluated before any high-stakes outcomes are attached to their results.

Put another way, AASA proposes a purposeful approach of "slow down to get it right," to ensure that schools and teachers have the resources they need to successfully implement the standards and aligned assessments in a way that bolsters student learning. This includes time and support for teachers to meaningfully adopt the standards into their teaching with curriculum and instructional materials aligned to the standards. It also requires a deliberate effort to ensure that the related assessments are used for the purposes for which they were designed. While we will likely eventually reach a time where a single test can accurately assess both student learning and teacher effectiveness, we are not there yet. The CCSS-aligned tests were designed to assess student achievement, and any effort to rush implementation of them that includes using the test data to inform teacher evaluation is ill-conceived. Frustration over an arbitrary deadline to implement tests in a manner for which they were not intended threatens the good that stands to be gained from successful implementation of the CCSS and related assessments.

> "Don't fly the ship while you are building it. Students shouldn't be stressed about testing on something they have never been taught. Teachers shouldn't be evaluated on the success of students on the tests when they have not been teaching the breadth of the CCSS." –
> *Superintendent in Connecticut*

Whatever happens in the news and the political debate, districts are already hard at work implementing these new standards and their related assessments. In order to see how the implementation of the new standards is faring, AASA conducted a survey of superintendents and administrators throughout the country in April, 2014. With 525 responses representing 48 states, the survey provides a glimpse into the planning and implementation of the new standards and assessments as well as the support superintendents are receiving from the state and community.

Overall, most superintendents have already begun to implement the new standards, which they see as much more rigorous than previous standards. The new standards will increase students' critical thinking skills and ensure that they are more prepared for college and the modern workforce than previous standards did. School and district staff are viewed as prepared and engaged in implementation of the new standards. Several separate surveys show that teachers, overall, are very supportive of the new standards. In a recent *School Administrator* article, Susan Bunting, superintendent of the Indian River school district

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[1] For examples of reports in favor, see National Council of Teachers of Math, Fordham Institute
[2] For examples of reports in opposition, see Heritage Foundation, Diane Ravitch

in Delaware, added that the new standards are also creating a culture of experimentation and innovation among teachers in her district.

As states made the decision to implement the new standards, superintendents report they were rarely asked to provide input, despite their extensive knowledge of their district's entire education system. This lack of communication, as well as a lack of state support for the districts comes up throughout the survey; superintendents feel that support from their states and state agencies is insufficient, and that more communication would benefit their implementation of the new standards.

The political debate around the new standards is a hurdle that has been difficult to get past. While misinformation is widespread, community support for the standards is mixed. The education community supports the standards, while the broader community's support for the standards is lower than that of the education community. Support for the new assessments is lower for both groups than for the standards. Respondents do not believe the broader community understands the relationship between the standards and the assessments, which is considered the main problem with the new standards for many community members.

As we hear in the public backlash and the complaints of educators, the assessments pose the largest problem. They are the biggest obstacle for the respondents, and, for those who have begun to test, the testing is not going smoothly. Technology problems pose the largest problem for the assessments. Support from both the education community and the broader community is also lower for the assessments than the standards themselves, and understanding of the relationship between the standards and assessments is seen to be limited. This misunderstanding is very important, given the frustration seen regarding the assessments. Delaying the assessments, especially the high-stakes actions tied to the assessments, would give superintendents more opportunity to implement the standards and prepare their schools for the assessments themselves. A delay in implementing new assessments would also improve community and teacher support for the standards.

II.   Findings

The findings reiterate what AASA members had been reporting less formally and show that superintendents are very involved and invested in the implementation and success of the new standards and assessments. As superintendents actively work to update their districts' curriculum, materials, professional development, and technological capacity, students and teachers are beginning to be affected by the new standards and assessments. The transition has been bumpy, but superintendents remain optimistic about the new standards and are working to ensure the implementation of the new standards leads to successful outcomes for their students.

Adoption

The survey respondents have overwhelmingly already adopted CCSS. Out of the total responses, 86.5 percent have decided to adopt CCSS, while 8.3 percent have decided to adopt or are considering adoption of other new non-CCSS new state standards. Less than one percent report that their states are not considering new standards, be they CCSS or other state standards. Of those implementing either CCSS or other new state standards, most have already implemented the new standards. Over half (55.3 percent) are

at least two years into the implementation, while 7.1 percent are implementing in the next school year (2014-2015).

Given the overwhelming confusion regarding the standards and assessments by the public, it is encouraging that respondents overwhelmingly (92.5 percent) see the new standards as more rigorous than previous standards. Only 2.1 percent see them as less rigorous. In summary, given the time to be properly implemented, these new standards will provide a more rigorous curriculum and will ensure that students who graduate from high school are more ready for careers or college and will need less remediation.

Governors, state boards or state superintendents have considered pulling out of the testing consortiums because of issues with the assessments and political backlash (including Louisiana, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and South Carolina). Indiana has since withdrawn from the standards and implemented its own set of state standards, "Hoosier Core," which differs little from the CCSS standards. At the time of the survey, the CCSS respondents are almost evenly split between the testing consortiums. Of the respondents, 35.6 percent are part of PARCC and 47.9 percent Smarter Balanced. This is similar to the percentage of states belonging to the two consortia: 31.8 percent of states in CCSS belong to PARCC and 47.7 percent to Smarter Balanced. Only 15.7 percent of superintendents say they are in neither group. Despite the move of many state lawmakers to distance themselves from the tests, most superintendents do not think their state will pull out of the standards themselves; 74.8 percent say their state would probably or definitely not pull out, and only 3.9 percent say their state will probably pull out of the standards.[3]

While the superintendents see the new standards as more rigorous and are implementing them, they report several obstacles to proper implementation. The biggest obstacles are assessments (73.3 percent), teacher training/professional development (65.2 percent), finding instructional materials (58.2 percent) and state support (52.3 percent).

Despite their important role in the education system of the state, many superintendents felt that their input was not requested in the decision to adopt or develop new standards or in planning the implementation. Nearly half (47 percent) say their input was never requested, and only 20.1 percent say their input was requested throughout the process. The other 32.9 percent say their input was requested sporadically – either initially only or once the decision had been made.

> "We were given no voice in the decision when Common Core was first adopted. We were not listened to when we tried to communicate what eliminating the Common Core would mean to meeting the timelines that had been established."
> *Superintendent in Indiana*

Implementation

Despite having little input into the standards adoption or development process, superintendents feel, overall, directly involved in most aspects of implementation of the new standards. The aspects in which respondents are most directly involved is professional development (68.8 percent directly involved, 2.1 percent not involved), and least directly involved is in materials (47 percent directly involved, 6.2 percent not involved) and community support (61.1 percent directly involved, 7.4 percent not involved).

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[3] Coming from Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio and Oklahoma

Survey respondents were asked to describe the knowledge/awareness of the standards and assessment within their community, including educators and the community in general. Education professionals in the districts are viewed as highly prepared and involved in the implementation of the standards. Eighty-one percent say that administrators/education leaders are prepared, and 85.8 percent say that they are involved. Principals are said to be prepared by 80.7 percent and involved by 87.4 percent. Teachers are reported to be prepared by 79.8 percent and involved by 86.9 percent. Curriculum staff and technology staff are 79.5 and 72.4 percent prepared and 86.6 and 75.1 percent involved, respectively. State officials and school board members are seen as the least prepared (56.3 percent and 56.1 percent, respectively) and involved (53.5 percent and 41.9 percent, respectively).

To ensure teachers are ready to teach the new standards, most respondents say professional development has changed. Over half (58.2 percent) say it has changed drastically or a great deal, while another 40.1 percent say it has changed some or a little. Since the new assessments are online and technology issues are the biggest barrier in the assessments, professional development should address technology so all teachers can prepare their students for the assessments. Technology plays a major role in professional development for 45.3 percent, some for 44.7 percent, and only a little for 7.8 percent of respondents.

While new teaching materials and textbooks are necessary to properly implement the new standards, 79.8 percent of respondents say that materials have been difficult to find. This echoes a sentiment AASA members had been sharing: the need for aligned curriculum. Our members have reported that they are not finding curricula are actually aligned to the new standards. Companies have been marketing "Common Core-aligned" materials that researchers find are also largely not aligned with the standards. The texts the researchers reviewed were found to not differ greatly from previous, pre-CCSS, texts; they lacked the higher-level thinking required by CCSS, and failed to cover 10 to 15 percent of the material stipulated in the CCSS. Despite the trouble finding appropriate texts, 70.1 percent of respondents say they have thrown out some or all materials that are not aligned with the new standards.

Funding for new materials is difficult to come by (nearly 70 percent of respondents say state support for materials is inadequate), especially after investing in new materials that do not actually align with the new standards, given the misaligned materials discussed previously. This leaves many teachers needing to produce and piece together their own materials and texts, while developing a new curriculum and implementing the new standards. This reiterates the need for more time to properly implement the standards and iron out issues before adding the high-stakes testing.

Assessments

Much of the public's confusion about the Common Core is the misconception that adoption of the new standards will lead to more testing. This misconception adds to the troubles with implementing the new tests, leading most respondents to find assessments to be the biggest problem area with the new standards. Testing has begun for 63.8 percent of respondents, and 60.3 percent of those respondents say it is going with some or great difficulty. Only 9.7 percent say it is going very smoothly. Despite the problems with the assessments, they are part of the teacher evaluation process for 48.8 percent of respondents. This kind of high-stakes testing has troubling outcomes, since the standards are not fully implemented, and many schools are not prepared for the assessments.

AASA opposes the continued reliance on using one-time, snapshot testing for accountability and high-stakes decisions. This one test cannot be expected to properly measure both student learning and teacher

effectiveness. In addition, 32.1 percent of respondents report that the scores from the reading and math assessments are even part of the evaluation for teachers of subjects other than reading and math. Teachers and their advocacy groups are very opposed to these policies because they do not evaluate the teachers appropriately and have the potential to unnecessarily hurt schools with low test scores by forcing out effective teachers.

A major problem with the new assessments is in the lack of necessary technology and bandwidth, rather than in the tests themselves. A recent Education Week report on the field testing of PARCC and Smarter Balanced tests illustrates this; the districts running these trials report that students found the tests harder than previous tests, but enjoyed the style of the tests more than previous standardized tests. The biggest problems found in the field testing were technological; computers froze or restarted, forcing students to retake the tests, or the website was reported to be down. The tests themselves are being improved through the field testing, but technological issues will be multiplied as districts implement the tests in all schools and for all students starting next year.

Similarly, superintendents are more worried about the capacity of schools in their districts to handle the online assessments than the assessments themselves. For example, 41.9 percent of respondents say that schools in their states are not ready to implement the online assessment, and 35.9 percent say they lack the infrastructure to support online assessments. Only 10.2 percent say their state was fully prepared in both funding and bandwidth capacity to implement online assessments and 35.7 percent say their district is fully prepared in both funding and bandwidth capacity to implement online assessments. AASA has been actively involved in the modernization of the E-Rate program, which could increase the amount of money available to support school and library connectivity; this would help with these technology issues. However, even more funding and more time to work out the details are also necessary before these tests are distributed.

State support

Over half of respondents (52.3 percent) are receiving both federal and state support. Of the rest, 21.8 percent report receiving no state or federal support, 22.1 percent receive state only, and 3 percent receive federal only. Despite the majority of respondents receiving support from the state, state support of the implementation is still considered extremely inadequate. It is most inadequate in funding (82.7 percent designated it as inadequate, 16.2 percent adequate and 1.1 percent ample) and materials (69.8 percent report it as inadequate, 27.4 percent adequate and 2.9 percent ample). While it is still not enough for most respondents, the state support is seen to be most adequate in professional development (6.6 percent ample, 36.2 percent adequate and 57.3 percent inadequate) and curriculum (4.9 percent ample, 35.8 percent adequate and 59.2 percent inadequate). Superintendents are being asked to do a lot with very little support, financial or otherwise. More support from the state and federal level would help districts improve implementation, technology, professional development, curriculum development, and more.

State support has changed for respondents in several ways since the adoption of the new standards including for 18.8 percent of respondents who say their states are considering legislative proposals to decrease state policy or funding support for the standards. Other changes include an increase in support for professional development (16.9 percent) and decrease in state funding support (10.8 percent). The level of state support was reported to be unchanged throughout the implementation of the new standards by 26.6 percent of the superintendents.

Given a list of resource options that the state could provide, the option that was said would be most useful is a clearinghouse of approved/aligned curriculum and instructional resources (30.5 percent). Other choices include best-practice examples of implementation (18.4 percent), professional development materials (16.7 percent), best practice examples of assessments (14 percent), and consistent communication with state officials (13.8 percent). Asked separately, just over half of all respondents (58.2 percent) say they would want their state to provide a new curriculum aligned with the new standards for some or all subjects and levels.

Community support

Despite the prevalence of anti-Common Core voices in the news, respondents overall feel that the standards are supported by the community, especially the education community. Of the respondents, 78.3 percent agree that the education community supported the standards, but only 51.4 percent agree that the broader community supported the standards. Not surprisingly given the complexity of the issue, 56.8 percent do not think the broader community understands the standards. Just as they are the biggest barrier to successful implementation for superintendents, the new assessments are supported less than the standards themselves. Only 27.4 percent say the broader community supports the assessments, and 47.5 percent say the education community supports the assessments.

Overall, 73.3 percent think the political debate has gotten in the way of successful implementation. The political backlash mostly stems from misunderstanding and misinformation, especially of the relationship between the standards and testing. By serving as a scapegoat for all of the problems in education throughout the country, the new standards are attacked daily, and parents and other members of the community are damaging the chances of a smooth transition to the new standards.

> "The political debate has been incredibly frustrating. The standards are good standards and have provided an impetus for positive change in the instructional approach taken in our district. In the political debate, the left has met the right and public educators are stuck in the middle simply trying to do what is best for our students and our teachers."
> *Assistant Superintendent in Montana*

Given this misinformation, it is crucial that many superintendents are also working to inform the public about the standards and assessments. Seventy-nine percent of superintendents agree that their districts are actively informing stakeholders about the new standards, and 69.7 percent agree that their districts are informing stakeholders about the assessments. However, only 52.1 percent are allowing opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback, and only 43.4 percent for the assessments. To get the message out further, 59.8 percent are preparing school-level staff to answer questions on implementation, and 53 percent on assessments.

The most active groups in the implementation of the standards have been education groups, but they are not seen to be particularly engaged. The most active groups are the teachers' unions or organizations, which only 63 percent say have been active. Outside of education groups, 61.5 percent say state officials have been active, and 50.3 percent say national organizations. The least active groups are non-instructional support staff (16.5 percent) and community leaders (17.7 percent).

III.   Comparison of Responses by Standards Adopted and Poverty Level

The responses were also broken out to determine the effect of which standards are being adopted or implemented (CCSS or non-CCSS) and by the level of poverty in the schools. The new standards are being implemented differently for superintendents with CCSS and those with other standards and for superintendents in high-and low-poverty districts. One big difference between the responses was in the perceived change the new standards will bring. CCSS respondents see the new standards as more rigorous than non-CCSS respondents, and respondents in high-poverty districts see them as a more significant change than respondents in low-poverty districts, as shown in Tables 2 and 6.

Another way in which these respondents differed significantly was in the preparation of staff to implement the new standards. Superintendents in non-CCSS districts and in high-poverty districts both report that staff in their schools, especially teachers, principals, and curriculum and technology staff, are not as prepared to implement the new standards than respondents in CCSS districts or low-poverty districts, as shown in Table 1, below. This lack of preparation could make the implementation much more difficult in these districts. This is especially troubling for high-poverty districts, which also have more technology issues and a more difficult to educate student population. More time and professional development are especially crucial for these districts.

Table 1: Preparation of staff for implementing new standards																
	CCSS				Non-CCSS				Low-poverty				High-poverty			
	Teachers	Principals	Tech Staff	Curriculum Staff	Teachers	Principals	Tech Staff	Curriculum Staff	Teachers	Principals	Tech Staff	Curriculum Staff	Teachers	Principals	Tech Staff	Curriculum Staff
Very prepared	22.1	31.4	29.6	45	17.4	26.1	23.9	32.6	28.4	40.2	47.6	65.8	22.4	28.6	25.6	40.5
Somewhat prepared	58.5	50.2	44.3	35.3	54.4	45.7	32.6	39.1	56.8	41.5	34.1	25.3	55.3	49.7	48.1	39.2
Not very prepared	7.4	6.4	7.5	5	19.6	19.6	26.1	17.4	3.7	3.7	4.9	1.3	9.3	9.3	8.1	7.0

CCSS respondents and non-CCSS respondents

The survey was targeted to districts implementing the Common Core State Standards as well as districts implementing new college-and-career-ready state standards other than Common Core. These responses differ from CCSS responses in several important ways, including the rigor of the standards, timing of standards and assessments, and community and staff support and preparation. In the adoption of the new standards, non-CCSS respondents will implement the standards later than CCSS respondents; 23.1 percent more non-CCSS respondents are implementing their states' new standards in the 2014-15 school year than CCSS respondents.

Table 2: How dramatically districts are changing		
	CCSS	Non-CCSS
More rigorous (significantly)	39.7%	37%
More rigorous (moderately)	54.3%	41.3%
No change	4.3%	17.4%
Less rigorous (significantly or moderately)	1.8%	4.4%

The new standards are still seen as a more academically rigorous change, but the degree of change is reported to be less drastic (See Table 2). CCSS respondents say overwhelmingly (94 percent) that the new standards are significantly more rigorous, while only 78.3 percent of non-CCSS respondents say the same. Non-CCSS respondents are also more likely to see no change in the new standards; 13.1 percent more non-CCSS respondents see no change than CCSS respondents.

Non-CCSS respondents report that they face more problems in the implementation of the new standards than CCSS respondents overall. The biggest differences are seen in problems with state support (14.3 percent higher), teacher training (13.1 percent higher) and assessments (9.8 percent higher), as seen in Table 3. However, non-CCSS respondents do feel that their input was more requested throughout the process of adopting the new standards than CCSS respondents; 4.7 percent more non-CCSS respondents say their input was requested throughout, and 10 percent fewer were never asked.

Table 3: Problem areas in implementing the new standards		
	CCSS	Non-CCSS
State support	46.6%	60.9%
Teacher training	58.6%	71.7%
Assessments	66.3%	76.1%

While assessments pose a similar problem for CCSS and non-CCSS respondents, 22.4 percent fewer non-CCSS respondents have begun testing than CCSS respondents. Assessments are also a part of teacher evaluation for 24.1 percent more non-CCSS respondents (65.5 percent of CCSS and 43.2 percent of non-CCSS) and for 25 percent more teachers who do not teach the subjects tested in non-CCSS districts (49.2 percent of CCSS and 73.3 percent of non-CCSS).

Non-CCSS respondents consider their staff to be less prepared to implement the new standards than CCSS respondents. Notably, 12.2 percent more say teachers are not very prepared, 13.2 percent more say principals are not very prepared, 18.6 percent more say technology staff are not very prepared, and 12.4 percent more say curriculum staff are not very prepared, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Staff not prepared to implement new standards		
	CCSS	Non-CCSS
Teachers	7.4%	19.6%
Principals	6.4%	19.6%
Technology staff	7.5%	26.1%
Curriculum staff	5%	17.4%

State support is, overall, seen to be inadequate for both non-CCSS districts and CCSS districts. State funding and support are seen as even more inadequate for non-CCSS respondents. It is seen to be inadequate for 97.8 percent of non-CCSS respondents, compared to 81.2 percent of CCSS respondents,

and professional development support is seen by 30.2 percent more non-CCSS respondents to be inadequate. Since the standards were adopted, 16.7 percent more non-CCSS respondents say that state funding has decreased.

Given the negative politicization of the CCSS, it is not surprising that non-CCSS respondents report having more support from their communities. They agree that the larger community supported the standards more (24.7 percent more than CCSS respondents) and even that the larger community supports the assessments more (17.6 percent more than CCSS respondents).

Table 5: Community support for the new standards and assessments		
	CCSS	**Non-CCSS**
Larger community supports the standards	49.2%	73.9%
Larger community supports the assessments	25.9%	43.5%
Political debate has gotten in the way	81.6%	80.4%

Despite this, both CCSS and non-CCSS respondents feel that the political debate has gotten in the way of successful implementation at almost identical levels, as shown in Table 5. Non-education groups are also reported to be more active in non-CCSS districts, including elected officials (27.8 percent higher), state officials (11.2 percent higher), university/higher education (32.6 percent higher), and national organizations (33 percent higher).

Comparison by poverty level

The responses were also separated by the percent of students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch in the district in order to determine poverty levels for each respondent. The responses from districts with the lowest poverty rates (zero to 19 percent FRPL) were then compared to the responses from districts with the highest poverty rates (60 percent or greater FRPL).

Table 6: How dramatically districts are changing		
	Low-poverty	**High-poverty**
More rigorous (significantly)	23.2%	55.8%
More rigorous (moderately)	69.5%	38%
No change	4.9%	3.7%
Less rigorous (significantly or moderately)	2.4%	2.2%

A key goal of CCSS and other new state standards is to hold all students, regardless of poverty or geography, to the same high standards. According to this research, administrators see that happening. High-poverty districts see the new standards as a significantly more rigorous change. The change is seen to be even more significant than respondents from low-poverty districts. Of the high-poverty districts, 32.7 percent more say the change is significantly more rigorous and 31.5 percent fewer say the change is moderately more rigorous, as shown in Table 6.

However, high-poverty districts are in states that are slightly more likely to pull out of the standards. Of the respondents from high-poverty districts, 10.9 percent more say their state will "probably not" pull out of the standards, while 10 percent fewer say no definitively. High-poverty districts are also in states that

belong to neither testing consortium or have recently withdrawn from a testing consortium. Respondents in high-poverty districts are more likely to not be a part of PARCC or Smarter Balanced (14.2 percent more than low-poverty districts), as shown in Table 7. Amid this insecurity of the standards and the assessments, fewer high-poverty districts have begun testing (10.5 percent fewer). These districts are also more likely to evaluate teachers on reading and math scores, whether they teach those subjects or not (15.1 percent more say they do).

Table 7: Security in the standards and assessments		
	Low-poverty	**High-poverty**
Will <u>probably not</u> pull out of standards	41%	34.6%
Will <u>definitely not</u> pull out of standards	44.6%	34.6%
In PARCC or Smarter Balanced	93.8%	79.6%
In neither testing consortia	6.3%	20.4%

In the implementation of the new standards, respondents from high-poverty districts say they are less directly involved in community support and teacher evaluation. In community support, 16.2 percent fewer say they are directly involved, while 19.3 percent fewer report being directly involved in teacher evaluation. They also say their staff are less prepared than low-poverty districts to implement the new standards; 11.7 percent fewer say principals are very prepared, 13.5 percent fewer say other administrators are very prepared, 21.9 percent fewer say technology staff are very prepared, and 25.3 percent fewer say curriculum staff are very prepared.

While more respondents from high-poverty districts report receiving support from both federal and state than respondents from low-poverty districts (19.3 percent more say both, and 14.9 percent fewer say neither), the respondents from high-poverty districts still see less improvement in state support as they transition to the new standards. Of high-poverty districts, 10.6 percent fewer say state support for professional development has increased, and 10.4 percent more say their states have considered legislative proposals that would decrease state policy or funding support for the new standards

Respondents from higher poverty districts see less understanding in the community about the new standards and assessments than respondents from low-poverty districts. Respondents from higher poverty districts say the education community has less understanding of the relationship between the standards and assessments; 16.9 percent fewer agreed that there was a clear understanding, and 15.5 percent more disagreed that there was a clear understanding. Respondents from higher poverty districts are less actively involved in informing stakeholders; 12.7 percent fewer strongly agreed that their districts are actively informing stakeholders about the standards, and 10.4 percent fewer agreed that their districts are actively informing stakeholders about the assessments.

IV.   Conclusion

When given the space to write what would be most useful for their implementation of the new standards, the respondents overwhelmingly say they need more time and money. This clearly backs up the position AASA and other major education groups[4] have taken on the Common Core; slow down to get it right. While the standards and assessments are overwhelmingly seen to be more rigorous and better geared for college and career readiness than previous standards, major changes cannot happen overnight. Before requiring states to attach high stakes to the assessments, districts and schools should be given the time to properly implement the standards and ensure sufficient bandwidth and proper equipment for the assessments.

> "It is too much too fast. While the concept is good, the state needs to be better organized instead of dumping everything on districts at once."
> *Superintendent in South Dakota*

The new standards present an opportunity to address education inequities, as seen in the different responses from high-poverty districts, but they also present increased challenges for poor districts. These districts must be given the necessary state and federal funds to properly train teachers, identify and obtain necessary materials, and implement the online assessments.

About AASA
AASA, The School Superintendents Association, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders in the United States and throughout the world. AASA advocates for the highest quality public education for all students, and develops and supports school system leaders.

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[4] For example, Learning First Alliance, American Federation of Teachers, National School Boards Association

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