

# Common core state standards



These standards were designed by a group of teachers, school chiefs, administrators, and other experts. The CSS are suggested targets in English Language Arts and Mathematics that set the skills a student should possess in order to proceed to the next level of education. There is no clear divide on the standards between Republicans and Democrats; both have expressed their concerns. But, the controversy reached its peak when the Obama administration slowly started to support the CSS (Biddable).

Proponents of the CSS argue that the standards ensure that all students will have the same set of skills, the standards will make sure all students are college ready, and that the standards are a new state-led effort instead of a federal effort. I believe that all states should abolish the CSS because children with disabilities should not be expected to learn the same way as advanced students, the CSS takes away from the tradition and individuality of independent/ parochial schools, and the problem in education is not standards but poverty.

The CSS have not made success easy for students with learning disabilities. According to the CSS, students with disabilities " must be challenged to excel within the general curriculum" (Herbert 10). In addition to students with disabilities, dents without disabilities learn different things in different ways, mature at different rates, and have different talents and goals. There is no reason for states to have standards that require students to learn the same things at the same time, and learn them the same way (McCauley).

The CSS " moves all kids largely in lock-step, processing them like soulless widgets" (McCauley). In a recent discussion, Drexel University and University

of Pennsylvania special education student teachers expressed their frustrations in trying to teach special-De students within the confines of the CSS (Bells 2). The CSS are supposed to boost national achievement levels, but by restricting these students to subject matter beyond their cognitive abilities, the standards are ultimately lowering student achievements. The CSS also take away from the tradition and individuality of independent/parochial schools.

Parochial schools are private schools that are affiliated with some religious organization and whose curriculum includes religion along with all major subjects. As a graduate of Catholic schools, I believe it is important that the traditions and religion classes be kept alive in these schools. The standards were approved thou consideration of how they would affect Catholic schools (Strauss 4). The Catholic education is geared at preparing students for a life of spirit, truth, and faith in God, all of which are never mentioned in the CSS.

Adopting the standards into Catholic schools will essentially diminish them of their tradition to help children not only obtain an education but to develop their faith. As an education major, I have observed many Catholic schools. On the walls, on the boards, and in the hallways, there are examples of prayer and religion everywhere. Taking this away would be taking away the identity of these students. This will ultimately lead to the some students being ashamed of their religion. Another issue that arises is the involvement of the federal government.

Independent and parochial schools are independent in their finances and governance and in most cases rely on tuition for funding. The CSS are state-

led efforts but, because these schools are free from state and federal government financing and guidance, they will not be able to afford the implementation of the CSS. One of the reasons people believe CSS are needed is because of the idea that America's school system has low national test scores. This is not because the current standards are not working; the real issue is poverty. The reason for low-test scores is that about 23% of American students live in poverty.

Finland, which has the highest- ranking test scores, has only 5% of students living in poverty (Crasher 37). Poverty stricken children in Queens, NY that have a lack of health care, food insecurity, and lack of library access will not succeed as well as a student going to a school in the Upper East Side of New York City. For example, studies show that food-insecure children are more likely to have slow language development, and problems in social behavior and emotional control (Crasher 38). This results in missed school days, causing students to repeat grades, which leads to low achievement scores.

Instead of spending money on implementing the standards, schools need to spend the funds on sufficient food programs, improved health care (including more school nurses), and more money going towards libraries in lower-income schools. Some in favor of the CSS believe that the standards will ensure that all students, no matter what race, gender, or state they are in, will have the same set of skills when graduating to each new grade level (Gardner and Powell 50). Although this is a great action in theory, the idea that every single student in America will know the exact same things is a major personalization.

Even with the CSS, children with disabilities are physically and mentally incapable of learning the same things at the same rate as a student in advanced or gifted programs. The CSS have also increased the rigor of the curriculum students are learning. Therefore, students who are already struggling to not fall behind will struggle even further causing the students, parents, and teachers to suffer. In addition to underachieving students, overachieving students will also be negatively affected by the standards.

Children who learn faster than others, or who are naturally smarter than their peers will be forced to learn at the same pace as students who are not as gifted. This will result in students being bored and losing all interest in school. If every single child in America had the same cognitive abilities, the CSS would be the answer; but they are not. Other proponents believe that the CSS will make sure all students graduating from high school are college ready. The problem with this is, America has too many over educated students; the professional work force does not have enough jobs for American students when they graduate.

If all students are college ready, no one will want to work at grocery stores, fast food restaurants, mechanic shops, etc. If every student gets a degree and starts work in the professional world, the economy will eventually fail. There will be no farmers to produce groceries; there will be no waitresses; there will be no janitors or cleaning services. In order for this country economy to produce money, there needs to be people who do not earn college degrees. One major reason people are supporting the CSS is because they are state-led instead of being dictated by the federal government.

The federal government is largely imposing the CSS. The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, both of which do not represent states, created the standards. The hasty adoption by most states was federal action. To compete for a part of the \$4.35 billion Race to the Top (ADD DEFINITION) reward, a federal government led education effort, states had to adopt the CSS (McCauley). When the CSS came about, the Obama administration only gave states two options: adopt the CSS or make sure a state university certified a student as college ready. Also, the U.S.

Department of Education funded two programs that created the national tests that coincide with the CSS (McCauley). With all of this federal involvement, the CSS is no longer a state-led effort. It is a "one-size-fits-all" program that ignores the needs of the individual states. The reason to oppose the CSS is not because of the content, some of which is great, the reason is that the CSS lacks most qualities needed to be considered authoritative, or to even be considered standards. Sadly, the CSS is generating in America's education system severe and lasting damage that would take decades to reverse.