



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on August 20, 2014

## Surveys: Americans, Teachers Souring on Common Core

Support for the Common Core national educational standards has plummeted in the past year among Americans who are familiar with the standards, according to two polls released this week.

Among the general public, 53 percent of Americans support Common Core, according to an *EducationNext* [poll](#), compared with 65 percent in 2013. The drop was even more precipitous among teachers. In just that one year, support for Common Core among teachers has sunk from 76 percent to 46 percent.



A Phi Delta Kappa International [poll](#), conducted by Gallup, noted that 60 percent of respondents oppose “having the teachers in your community use the Common Core State Standards to guide what they teach.”

Paul E. Peterson of *EducationNext* explained that the difference between the polls relates to the difference in the questions asked. Whereas the *EducationNext* poll asked generally about Common Core, the Phi Delta Kappa International survey question implied that the Common Core would directly impact classroom teaching. This, Peterson [noted](#), “tells us that opposition to Common Core is likely to rise if it is perceived as interfering with local curricular decisions.”

A full education curriculum map includes not only standards of performance used to measure students, but also subject content, goals, and approved resources. Currently, Common Core standards contain only the standards framework, into which almost any subject content and resources can be placed by states, local school boards, or textbook companies. For example, the Common Core Social Studies standards have zero subject content requirement, such as which parts of U.S. history to learn.

The [Common Core](#) does include process standards, such as, “Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.” These standards can be applied to important historical primary source documents such as the U.S. Constitution and George Washington’s Farewell Address, left-wing propagandist texts such as the writings of Howard Zinn, or even quasi-pornographic texts that one [Maryland parent was arrested for protesting](#) earlier this year.

Nearly all of the outrage against Common Core that has made headlines in recent months is the result of decisions by [local school boards](#) or [textbook companies](#) as to what will be taught and how it will be taught.

But as the federal government has added [financial incentives](#) to implement Common Core — or a carbon copy of it — a more detailed national curriculum map is perhaps inevitable so long as the federal government is issuing educational grants to states. Oklahoma, which repealed the Common Core standards earlier this year, has had to seek a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education in order to avoid losing grant money targeted to Common Core educational standards. But Secretary of Education



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Arne Duncan [stated](#) in a June press conference that Oklahoma may not lose any federal funding as a result of their decision.

But this is not to imply that the infinitely malleable Common Core standard framework would necessarily improve educational performance, even if implemented locally. Massachusetts — which has in recent years had the [highest performance on standardized tests in the nation](#) — has [lowered its state standards in order to adopt the Common Core](#).

The public opinion surveys both revealed continued widespread ignorance of Common Core. “When it comes to Common Core State Standards,” Peterson wrote, “both surveys suggest that about half the public has little, if any, knowledge about the initiative. In the Ednext poll, respondents are bluntly asked if they had previously heard of the standards, without giving respondents any specific information. 57% admit they have not heard of Common Core.”

*For a deeper understanding of Common Core, see Alex Newman’s seminal article on Common Core [here](#) or Brian Farmer’s in-depth article [here](#).*



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