

COLORADO REVISED STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY STUDY

RESULTS OF STATEWIDE SURVEYS

Prepared for the Colorado Department of Education by

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Colorado Revised Standards Implementation Capacity Study Results of a Statewide Survey

Introduction and Methodology

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has completed the revision of the state's Model Content Standards to include early school readiness and postsecondary competencies as well as to reflect both workforce readiness and 21st century skills. All 13 sets of revised standards were adopted by the State Board of Education on December 10, 2009. At the behest of the CDE, WestEd collected two types of information to inform the CDE as it implements these revised standards in districts and schools across the state: (1) input from teachers, school principals, and district administrators via online surveys; and (2) exemplars of standards implementation strategies employed by other states. This report summarizes the results of the online surveys. Summaries of implementation strategies will be released in a separate report.

A series of three related online surveys—targeting teachers, school principals, and district administrators—was developed by WestEd through an iterative process that incorporated input and feedback from the CDE. WestEd conducted a needs analysis based upon preliminary information provided by the CDE in order to recommend the process, content focus, and format of the surveys. Upon feedback from the CDE on these recommendations, WestEd drafted an initial survey; this and all subsequent drafts were reviewed by the CDE and revised accordingly.

Each of the three surveys was comparable to the others in substance; they differed only in specifics related to each of the three target audiences (e.g., descriptions of roles). Each survey consisted of 16 questions and included both closed-ended (Likert-scale, multiple-choice, and categorical) and open-ended response formats. Substantive survey questions elicited information about familiarity with the former Model Content Standards, with the standards revision process, and with the revised standards themselves; they also sought to ascertain attitudes regarding the appropriateness and use of the revised standards, willingness to incorporate the revised standards into classroom practices, and potential obstacles to standards implementation, and they solicited recommendations of ways the CDE might communicate with constituents and support implementation efforts statewide. Demographic questions were included in the surveys to determine the extent to which survey respondents represented the diversity found across the state. Also included in each survey was a question regarding involvement in the standards revision process and a question regarding involvement in other program innovations; the latter question was intended to assess engagement in other activities that might impact willingness and capacity to implement the revised standards.

All members of the three targeted audiences—teachers, school principals, and district administrators—statewide were invited to participate in these surveys. Information about and links to the surveys were disseminated throughout the state by the CDE. No individual identifying information was collected or connected to survey responses.

The surveys were fielded on November 16, 2009, and remained open until December 4, 2009. Paper copies of surveys were provided upon request by the CDE, and qualified WestEd staff entered all paper survey responses into the online survey database.

Copies of the three surveys can be found in Appendix A of this report.

Results

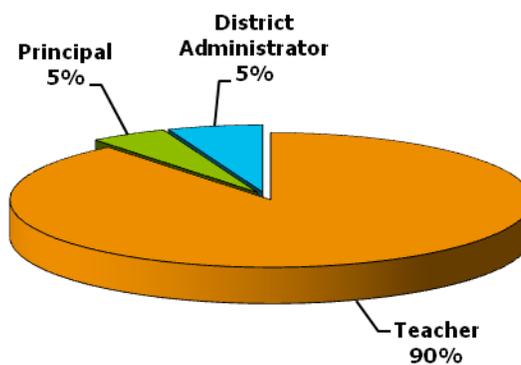
At the request of the CDE, demographics questions were positioned at the end of each survey. Demographics information is summarized first in this results section, however, in order to contextualize the subsequent description of results from the substantive survey questions.

I. Respondent Demographics

Which of the following is your primary role as an educator? (mandatory question)

A total of 1,567 surveys were fully or partially completed across the three surveys¹. As shown in Figure 1, teachers comprised the largest number of respondents (90%, n=1,401), followed by principals (5%, n=83) and district administrators (5%, n=83).

Figure 1. Which of the following is your primary role as an educator? (Select one.)



Which of the following describe your role? (mandatory question)

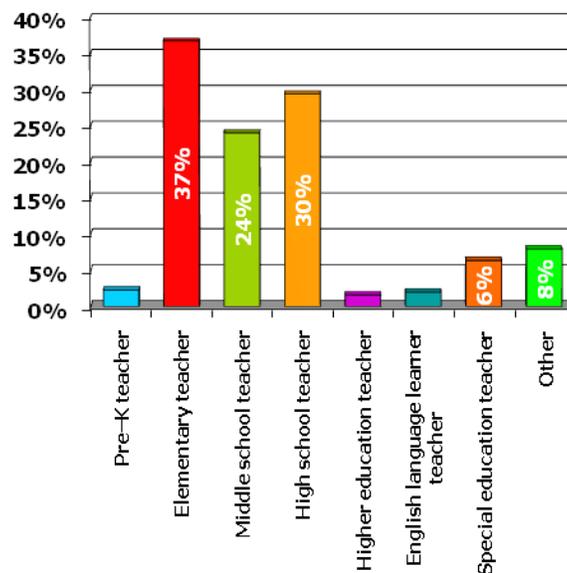
To accommodate the logistics of the online survey format, this demographic question was included in the substantive portion of each survey and was mandatory (i.e., respondents were required to answer the question in order to continue with the survey). It is included in this demographic section of the report, however, to contextualize the description of results from the substantive survey questions.

Teachers. As illustrated in Figure 2, among the 1,401 teachers who responded to the question, the largest representation came from elementary schools (37% of responses), followed closely by high schools (30% of responses); middle school teachers made up nearly a quarter of responses (24%). Special education teachers comprised another 6% of the sample. Pre-K teachers, ELL teachers, and higher education teachers were only minimally represented in this sample (2.3%, 2%, and 1.6%, respectively)².

¹ An additional 479 respondents responded to only the first question of the survey and are thus not included in totals reported in this report.

² Throughout this report, percentages under 5% will not be labeled in figures.

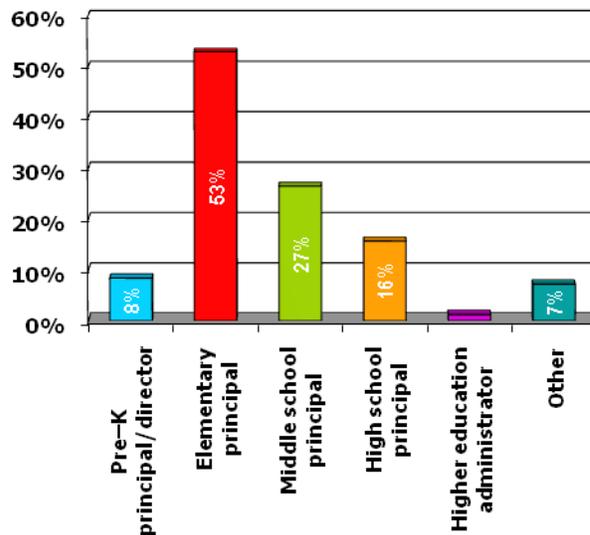
**Figure 2. Which of the following describe your role? (Mark all that apply.)
TEACHERS**



Because respondents were directed to mark all applicable categories, it must be noted that each teacher may be represented in more than one group. One hundred and twelve respondents (8%) provided information in the “other” category, although again these responses may overlap with other categories selected. While a systematic coding of these open-ended responses was not within the scope of this report, the most often-cited categories included curriculum coaches, literacy specialists/interventionists, art and music teachers, librarians and media teachers, Title 1 instructors, and counselors. A full listing of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B of this report.

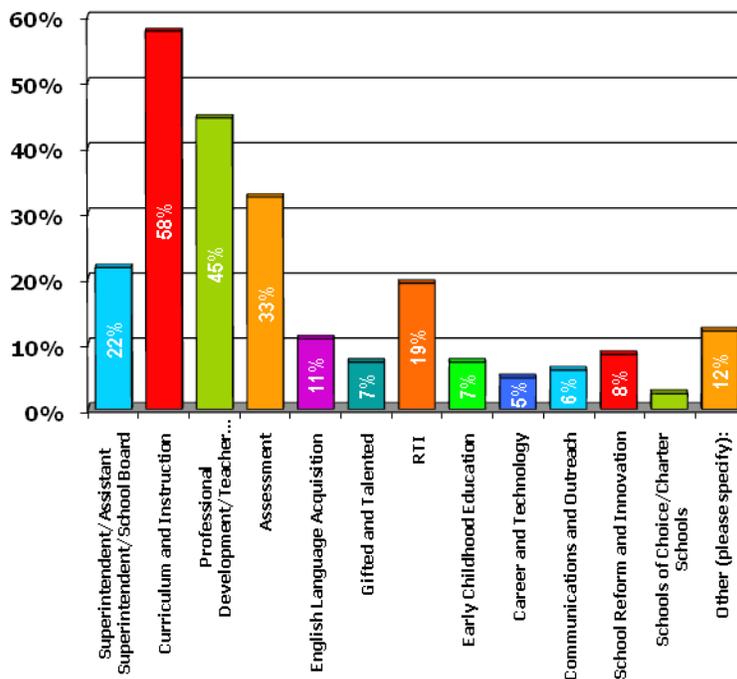
Principals. As shown in Figure 3, over half of school principals indicated they were principals of elementary schools (53%), followed by 27% who indicated they were principals of middle schools. High school, Pre-K, and higher education principals were much less represented in this sample (16%, 8%, and 1% of responses, respectively). As with teachers, because respondents were directed to mark all applicable categories, each principal may be represented in more than one group. Only six respondents (7%) provided information in the “other” category; these included five assistant principals and one program coordinator. A full listing of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B of this report.

Figure 3. Which of the following describe your role? (Mark all that apply.)
PRINCIPALS



District administrators. Eighty-three respondents completed the district administrator portion of the survey. As shown in Figure 4, the most common role selected by district administrators was Curriculum and Instruction (58% of responses), followed by Professional Development/Teacher Support (45% of responses).

Figure 4. Which of the following describe your role? (Mark all that apply.)
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS



All roles received over 5% of responses with the exception of schools of choice/charter schools (2.4%). A full listing of categories is provided in Figure 4.

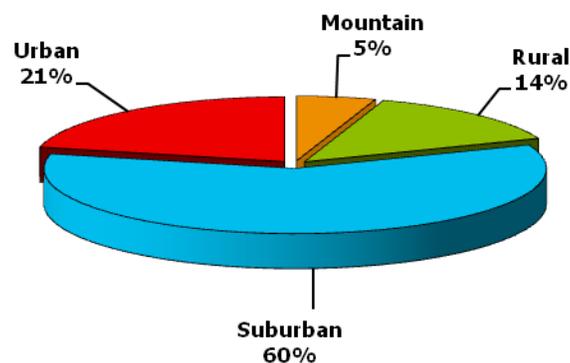
Because respondents were directed to mark all applicable categories, each district administrator may be represented in more than one group. Only ten respondents (12%) provided information in the “other” category. Two of these indicated human resource specialist, while the remaining roles had one respondent each: preschool program, International Baccalaureate coordinator, director of fine arts, SPED administrator, world languages, wellness coordinator, secretary, and transportation. A full listing of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B of this report.

With the exception of the questions summarized above, all remaining demographic questions were optional. As not all respondents answered each demographic question, the total number of respondents for any of the following demographic questions may not equal the numbers reported for the previous questions. Also, given the format of the online representation of the survey, responses from teachers, principals, and district administrators to the following demographic questions were collected together; therefore, summaries of demographic information that follow are reported in the aggregate across targeted audiences and not broken out by audience.

Which one of the following best describes your community? (optional question)

Of the 1,532 respondents who indicated their geographic location, the majority (60%) described their community as suburban, followed by urban, rural, and mountain, as shown in Figure 5.

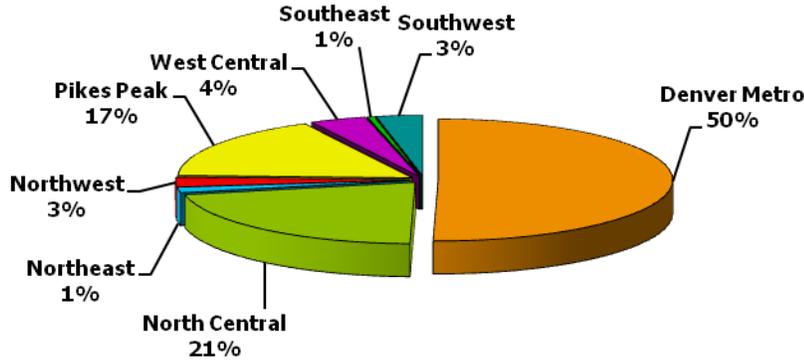
Figure 5. Which one of the following best describes your community? (optional)



In which geographic region do you work? (optional question)

The results of this question were consistent with responses illustrated in Figure 5. Among the 1,531 respondents who responded to this question, half indicated that they lived in the Denver metro area, followed by 21% in the North Central region and 17% in the Pikes Peak region, with the remaining 12% spread across the remaining regions, as shown in Figure 6.

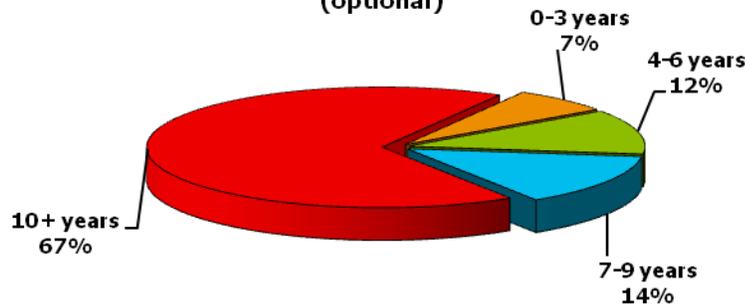
Figure 6. In which geographic region do you work? (optional)



How many years have you been involved in teaching, administration, or other roles in education? (optional question)

The majority of respondents indicated a longstanding involvement in the field of education. As illustrated in Figure 7, among the 1,541 respondents who responded to this question, two-thirds have been involved in educational roles for over 10 years. Only 7% of respondents reported three or fewer years of involvement.

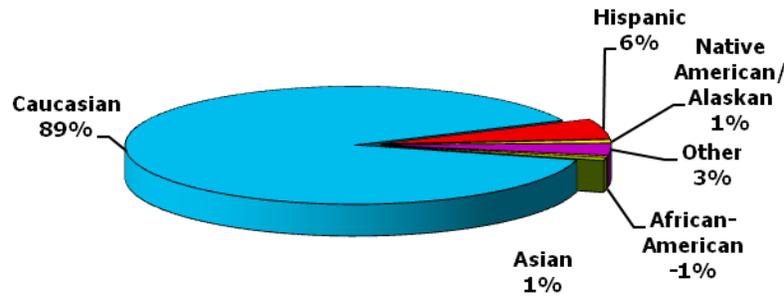
Figure 7. How many years have you been involved in teaching, administration, or other roles in education? (optional)



What is your ethnicity? (optional question)

The sample represented in these survey responses was relatively homogeneous ethnically; as illustrated in Figure 8, among the 1,405 respondents who answered this question, 89% identified themselves as Caucasian. Six percent identified themselves as Hispanic; African-American, Native American/Alaskan, Asian, and other groups were only minimally represented.

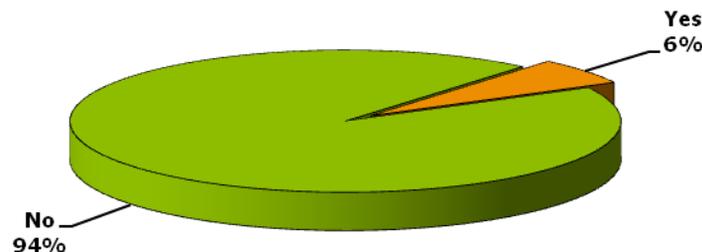
Figure 8. What is your ethnicity? (optional)



Are you involved in the current process of revising the state's academic standards? (optional question)

A total of 1,502 respondents answered this question, and the majority indicated no involvement in the standards revision process, as shown in Figure 9. This question did not allow those respondents who answered in the affirmative to specify their level of involvement. However, responses from district administrators to the survey question “How did you learn about the standards revision process and objectives of the revised Colorado Academic Standards?” suggest that at least several had served on standards review committees (see summary of results for that question for more detail). Also, the standards revision subcommittees had substantial teacher representation.

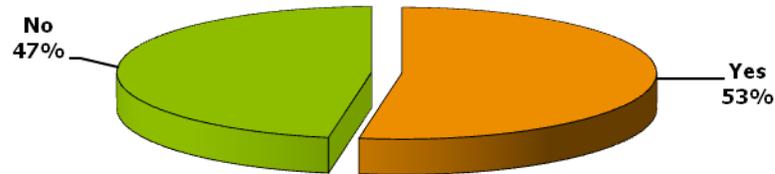
Figure 9. Are you involved in the current process of revising the state's academic standards? (optional)



Is your school currently in the first or second year of a major innovation or program *other* than standards revision? (optional question)

Among the 1,392 respondents who responded to this question, a slight majority indicated that they were in either the first or second year of a non-standards-related innovation project, as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Is your school currently in the first or second year of a major innovation or program *other* than standards revision? (optional)



Of the 733 respondents who responded in the affirmative to this question, 559 provided mention of specific initiatives. While a systematic coding of these open-ended responses was not within the scope of this report, a number of categories appeared repeatedly:

- Response to Intervention initiatives,
- introduction of new curricula or programs,
- Positive Behavior Support activities,
- literacy-related activities, and
- introduction of new assessments.

A full listing of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B of this report.

II. Substantive Survey Results

Results for each substantive survey question are summarized below. Where open-ended responses were allowed, the most common themes that emerged are summarized; full verbatim response lists are included in Appendix B. Because teachers, principals, and district administrators completed separate surveys, the following results are broken out by these three groups. Results are not broken out by any other demographic category because of limited sample sizes in most instances.

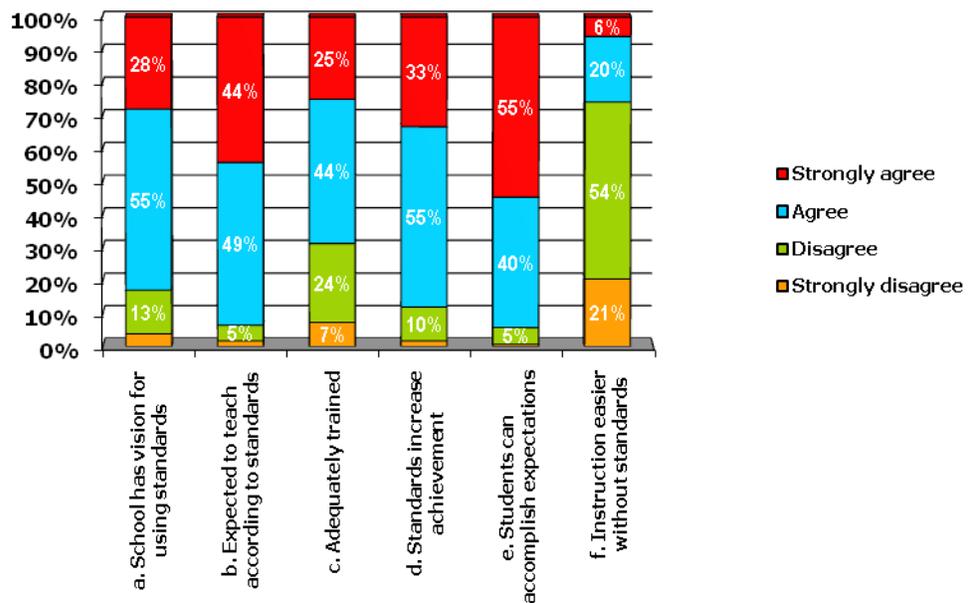
Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements concerning the current Model Content Standards³. (mandatory question)

Teachers. Responses to this question indicate that Colorado’s current Model Content Standards have been well received by teachers across the state, as shown in Figure 11. Teachers largely reported that the standards are a valuable tool for classroom instruction (only 26% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that instruction is easier without standards) and a means of

³ As this study was conducted prior to State Board of Education adoption of the revised standards, the term “current” refers to the 1995 Model Content Standards.

increasing student achievement (88% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that student achievement can increase through standards integration). They believe their schools have a vision for using the standards (83% agreed or strongly agreed) and that they are expected to integrate them into their teaching (93% agreed or strongly agreed), although fewer reported that they have received adequate training for employing them (69% agreed or strongly agreed). There is nearly universal consensus among teachers with the statement that students can meet higher expectations (95% agreed or strongly agreed)⁴.

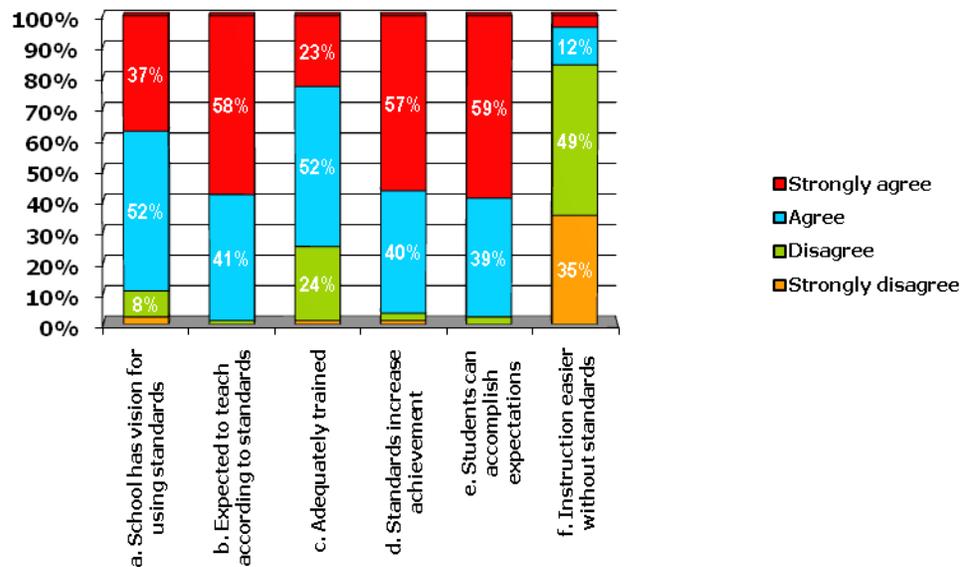
Figure 11. Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements concerning the current Model Content Standards.
TEACHERS



Principals. Principals responded even more positively to statements regarding the importance and use of the Model Content Standards. As illustrated in Figure 12, there is nearly universal consensus across all statements. Principals were more likely than teachers to report that teachers are adequately trained to implement the standards (75% agreed or strongly agreed). They were also more likely than teachers to view standards are a valuable tool for classroom instruction (only 16% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that instruction is easier without the incorporation of standards).

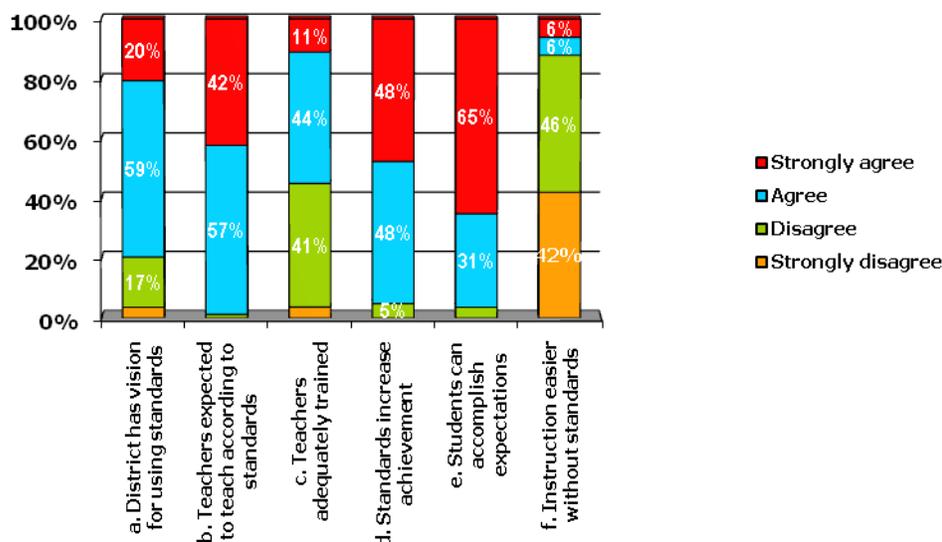
⁴ Throughout this report, figure labels include abbreviated versions of statements included in the corresponding survey questions. For verbatim listings of question statements, please see Appendix A of this report.

**Figure 12. Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements concerning the current Model Content Standards.
PRINCIPALS**



District administrators. District administrators’ responses were somewhat less positive regarding use of the Model Content Standards. As illustrated in Figure 13, only 79% agreed or strongly agreed that their districts have a vision for using the standards, while only 55% agreed or strongly agreed that their teachers are adequately trained in use of the standards. However, district administrators seemed to feel the most strongly that standards can be a valuable tool for classroom (only 12% agreed or strongly agreed that instruction is easier without use of standards, versus 16% for principals or 26% for teachers). These results illustrate an interesting difference in perceptions among those directly in the classroom versus those more removed from daily contact in the classroom.

**Figure 13. Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements concerning the current Model Content Standards.
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS**



Please indicate your response to each of the following statements concerning the revised Colorado Academic Standards. (mandatory question)

As shown in Table 1, teachers indicated that while they are aware of the standards revision, they do not necessarily understand the objectives behind revising the Model Content Standards or the unique characteristics of the revised standards, and they are somewhat uncertain of where to address questions and concerns about the revised standards.

Table 1

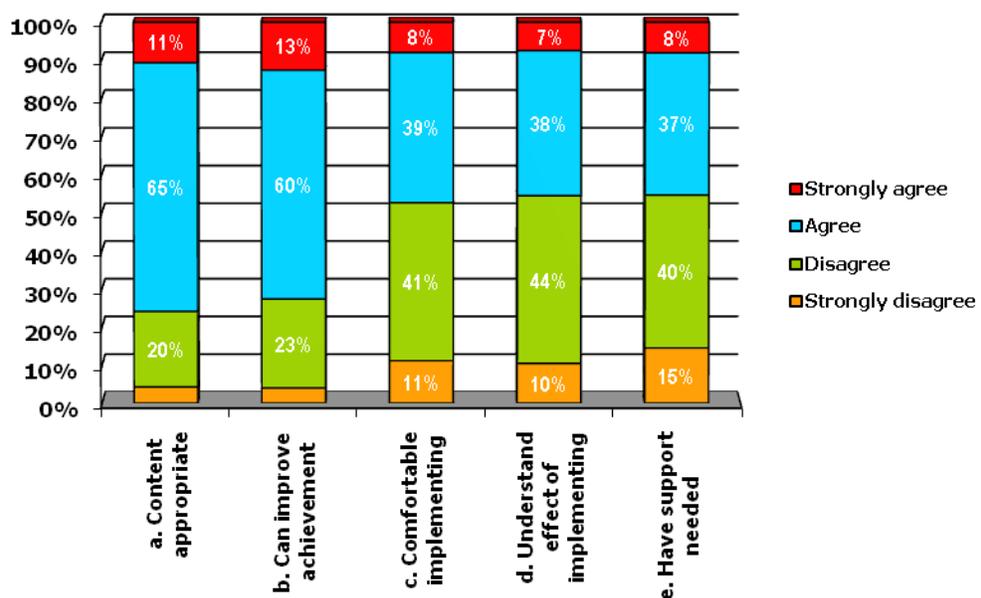
Statements	Teachers		Principals		District Administrators	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
I am aware that the state’s academic standards are being revised.	90%	10%	99%	1%	99%	1%
I understand the objectives for revising the current Model Content Standards.	50%	50%	67%	33%	88%	12%
I understand how the construction and architecture of the revised Colorado Academic Standards differ from the current Model Content Standards.	36%	64%	48%	52%	74%	26%
I know whom to talk to with concerns or questions about implementing the revised Colorado Academic Standards.	42%	58%	53%	47%	67%	33%

Principal responses followed this trend, with the exception that principals were more evenly split on knowing whom to talk to regarding questions or concerns. District administrators, however, responded positively to all statements, suggesting that they feel more informed overall than either teachers or principals.

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. (mandatory question)

Teachers. Given that teachers indicated a relative lack of understanding about how the revised standards differ from the Model Content Standards, it is not surprising that slightly over half of teachers reported being uncertain about how they will implement the revised standards, how their classroom instruction will be affected by them, and whether teachers have the support they need to implement them, as shown in Figure 14. However, approximately three-quarters of teachers reported that they felt the content of the revised standards is appropriate (76% agreed or strongly agreed) and that they can improve student academic achievement by using them (73% agreed or strongly agreed).

Figure 14. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. TEACHERS

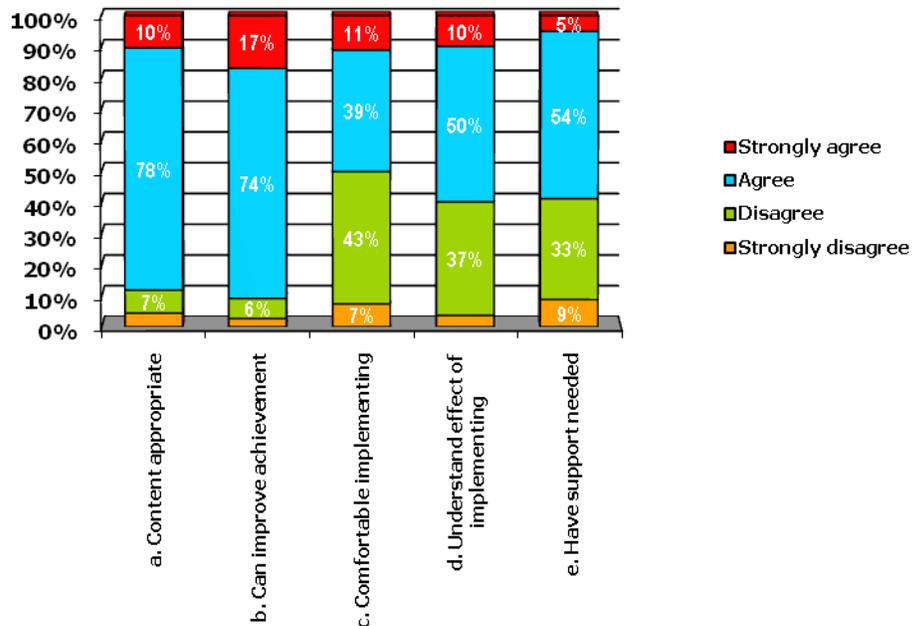


Principals. Principals tended to respond positively overall to the statements regarding the revised standards, as shown in Figure 15. In particular, they indicated strong agreement with the statements that the content of the revised standards is appropriate (88% agreed or strongly agreed) and that student achievement can be improved with the use of the revised standards (91% agreed or strongly agreed).

Similarly to how teachers responded, principals were equally divided in the level of comfort with what they need to do to implement the revised standards, although they tended to feel

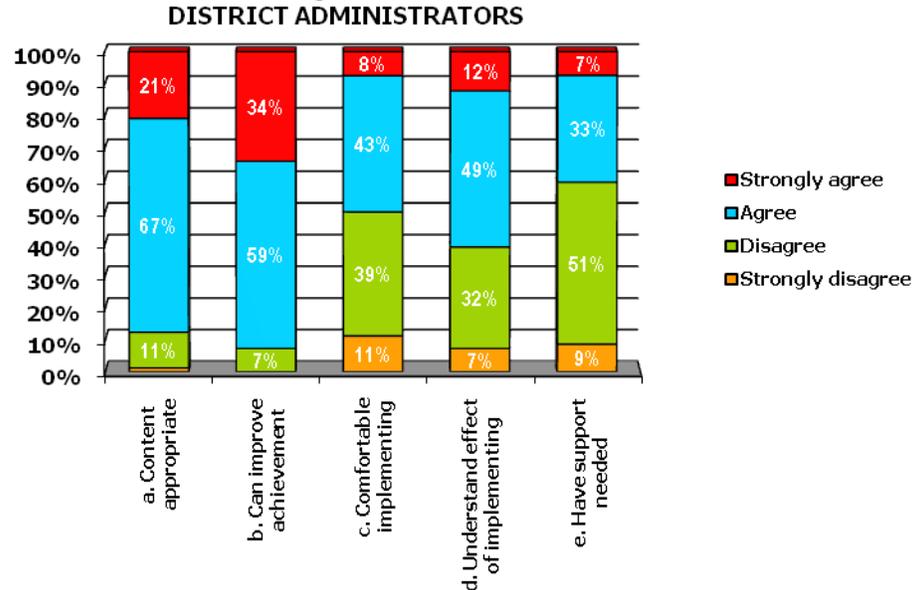
more positively than teachers about both knowing how standards adoption will impact classroom instruction (60% agreed or strongly agreed) and the availability of support (59% agreed or strongly agreed).

Figure 15. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.
PRINCIPALS



District administrators. District administrators’ responses to statements regarding the revised standards tended to correspond to those of principals, with one exception. Whereas principals agreed that they have access to needed support for standard implementation, the majority of district administrators disagreed with this statement (only 40% agreed or strongly agreed), as shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.



How did you learn about the standards revision process and objectives of the revised Colorado Academic Standards? (mandatory question)

As shown in Table 2, only 26% of teachers and 22% of principals reported that they had not received information about the standards revision process or the revised standards; even fewer—8%—of district administrators indicated such. These findings suggest that the CDE has been effective in communicating information about the standards revision process across constituencies.

Table 2

Statements	Teachers		Principals		District Administrators	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
I have not received information about the revision process or the revised Colorado Academic Standards.	26%	360	22%	18	8%	7
I read about the standards revision on the CDE website.	17%	236	31%	26	60%	50
I reviewed the draft revised standards on the CDE website.	22%	305	35%	29	65%	54
I received formal updates about the revision process from my district or school administrators.	29%	404	29%	24	N/A	N/A
I learned about the revision process informally from colleagues.	40%	554	45%	37	43%	36

Informal communication with colleagues has been the primary means by which both teachers (40%) and principals (45%) have learned about the revision process. District administrators were substantially more likely than teachers or principals to have utilized the CDE website to read about and review the revised standards. Because respondents were directed to mark all applicable categories, each respondent may be represented in more than one group.

Teachers, in particular, provided open-ended comments for this question (n=228 teacher comments, n=8 principal comments, n=27 district administrator comments). A number of teachers reported in their comments that they learned about the revision process through personal communications and through their initiative in staying current. Teachers and principals reported union communications and listservs as vehicles through which they received information regarding the standards revision process. Conferences were another commonly reported vehicle. Specifically, the following conferences were mentioned: CCTM, CAEA, CEA, PERA, SVVEA, and CAMLE.

District administrators were more likely to report learning about the standards revision process through formal communications, such as regional meetings, stakeholder meetings, tour sessions, CEA communications, and conferences. Several district administrators who provided open-ended comments reported having served on standards revision committees.

A full listing of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B of this report.

How could the CDE most effectively communicate its vision for implementing the revised Colorado Academic Standards? (mandatory question)

As shown in Table 3, hosting local and/or online seminars was the most popular option for teachers, principals, and district administrators, followed by posting updates on the CDE website and sponsoring online networking websites. Using the *CDE Scoop* was not an attractive option to either teachers or principals.

Table 3

Statements	Teachers		Principals		District Administrators	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Post updates on the CDE website	43%	607	59%	49	63%	53
Host local and/or online seminars for teachers and administrators	62%	861	66%	55	83%	69
Use the <i>CDE Scoop</i>	8%	108	19%	16	55%	46
Sponsor best-practices online networking websites	38%	527	35%	29	66%	55

Again, because respondents were directed to mark all applicable categories, each respondent may be represented in more than one group.

Teachers, in particular, provided additional comments in response to this question (n=377). Common recommendations included communicating with teachers via district offices or teacher unions, providing models of effective implementation, using email to reach teachers directly, and providing on-site training opportunities. A full listing of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B of this report.

Twenty principals provided recommendations, including face-to-face on-site trainings and workshops, e-mail updates, professional development focused on mapping curriculum to the revised standards, and ongoing lessons in each subject that aligns to the revised standards. A full listing of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B of this report.

Twenty district administrators also provided recommendations for ways the CDE might communicate its vision for standards implementation. Recommendations included both in-person and remote communication and training opportunities as well as the provision of best practices. Webinars, regional in-service training sessions, training/implementation guides, and personal conversations were also recommended. A full listing of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B of this report.

Which of the following , if any, do you see as potential obstacles to implementing the revised Colorado Academic Standards? (mandatory question)

As shown in Table 4, one-fifth of teachers reported not foreseeing any obstacles to implementing the revised standards, a substantially higher percentage than principals (11%) or district administrators (2%). Similarly, teachers were substantially less concerned than either principals or district administrators about the standards matching curriculum or assessments, about teachers not being accustomed to using standards systematically, and about a lack of personnel to train teachers in using the standards. Teacher responses were more comparable with principal responses regarding a lack of financial resources, time, and supportive material to address the needs of ELL and special needs students. District administrators overall reported greater concerns across all statements than did teachers or principals.

Because respondents were directed to mark all applicable categories, each respondent may be represented in more than one group.

Teachers, in particular, provided additional comments for this question (n=265 teacher comments, n=13 principal comments, n=26 district administrator comments). Themes that emerged in teacher comments included a lack of time, finances, and other supports, and the desire to tie the new standards into what they currently implement in their classrooms. A number of teachers also reported not knowing enough about the revised standards to comment on potential obstacles.

Table 4

Statements ⁵	Teachers		Principals		District Administrators	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
We don't foresee any obstacles to implementing the revised Colorado Academic Standards.	20%	285	11%	9	2%	2
Our curriculum will not match the revised Colorado Academic Standards.	26%	368	43%	36	47%	39
Our assessments will not match the revised Colorado Academic Standards.	28%	392	57%	47	59%	49
I/our teachers and administrators are not accustomed to using standards systematically.	9%	122	17%	14	23%	19
I/We lack the personnel to train teachers and administrators to implement the revised Colorado Academic Standards.	28%	390	41%	34	53%	44
I/We lack financial resources to train teachers and administrators to implement the revised Colorado Academic Standards.	43%	595	49%	41	86%	71
Scheduling demands do not allow the time needed for training in the new standards.	51%	709	58%	48	65%	54
We lack support materials on how to implement academic standards for English language learners and/or students with disabilities.	33%	466	41%	34	45%	37

Sample teacher comments that represent common themes follow; a full listing of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B of this report.

We need money and time to get these implemented.

Few resources to train the trainers to travel throughout the state to deliver the services needed.

My school district does not have knowledgeable staff to train teachers.

Textbooks currently in use do not match the revised standards, and we see no new materials in sight.

⁵ Precise statements vary by teacher, principal, and district administrator surveys. Verbatim wording is available in Appendix A of this report.

[Our district] already has a set of benchmarks that we are expected to follow. I am not sure how these match up with Colorado or National standards. Should I follow district or state or national standards?

Principal comments included the following. Themes that emerged included the need for time to implement, coherence with existing resources, and adequate support. A full listing of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B of this report.

The district has too many initiatives that will get in the way of effectively implementing and training teachers.

We do not necessarily need time to "train" on how to use the standards...but we do need funding to give teachers time to dig into them...refine their essential learnings and common assessments to realign. This will take time...and if I want the teachers to be prepared for fall 2010 I will need to pay them to come in this summer.

Our teachers have been making a concerted effort on teaching to standards for about five years. It has taken a great deal of time and burned many out. These changes will be more of the same work for most so it will not be more work, just a continuation of the past few years. Some are disheartened as they finally felt like they had things down.

It will take time to make the switch in those areas that differ from the old standards.

The biggest potential obstacle to implementing the revised standards will be creating critical mass with teachers, administrators and school districts in understanding the why of the revision, as well as the necessity of the why to implement.

Our district-wide Pacing Guide steers our instruction, and the staff use it for scope and sequence of instruction. It will be key for our district to update the pacing guide to reflect the new standards.

Cost of changing curriculum or assessments.

Most ECE settings do not have CO academic standards unless they get federal funding, which is a problem.

Several themes emerged in district administrator comments, including a concern over insufficient time, financial, and other resources, a lack of fit with existing curricula and assessments, and a lack of clear communication of objectives and expectations. Sample comments follow, with a full list of verbatim comments provided in Appendix B of this report.

Budget cuts will impact staff development funds for training and/or curriculum work.

Money and time, especially with the drastic reductions in funding.

Mainly the obstacles will be being sure that the curriculum and assessments currently being used will align with the new standards.

All of the work the district has done to align curriculum, instruction, assessment, and staff development will need to be re-done to align with new standards which will take time and resources, neither of which are plentiful.

Unclear awareness of what is contained in the new standards.

Which of the following tools and/or support would help you effectively implement the revised Colorado Academic Standards? (mandatory question)

As shown in Table 5, targeted professional development was the most popular support option across teachers, principals, and district administrators, followed by best practice guides, online resources, and on-site coaches. Very few respondents indicated that no support is necessary.

Table 5

Statements	Teachers		Principals		District Administrators	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
No support is necessary	5%	66	2%	2	0%	0
Targeted professional development	69%	968	81%	67	87%	72
On-site coaches	36%	501	57%	47	58%	48
Best practices guides	60%	840	77%	64	76%	63
Online resources	58%	817	65%	54	71%	59

Because respondents were directed to mark all applicable categories, each respondent may be represented in more than one group.

Teachers, in particular, provided additional comments for this question (n=184 teacher comments, n=8 principal comments, n=21 district administrator comments). Additional professional development and both time and financial support were themes that emerged in these open-ended responses. Sample comments follow, while a full listing of verbatim responses is included in Appendix B of this report:

TIME to meet with my teammates/colleagues and strategically plan our curriculum.

TIME to digest, TIME to plan, TIME to design curriculum.

If we receive adequate support right now while excitement about the new standards is high, I think we can effectively train staff for the classroom. That said, we need to start training ASAP, so that pieces of curriculum for next year will be ready to go. Changing core lesson content needs to be done thoughtfully, not in a rush at the last minute while trying to comply. If we knew where to start, and had good best practices guides to help, we could begin shifting instruction now - trying things out to see what works for our school culture.

Instructional strategies that are rooted in staff evaluations.

Professional development time to revise my curriculum to more closely align with Colorado Academic Standards.

Other teachers in my district and in some other schools could use the professional development. However, it is mostly upper administration that needs the message that teaching with the standards is good teaching, not just opening the basal and reading a script or following a pre-designed program.

What recommendations would you give the CDE regarding ways it could evaluate the effectiveness of the revised Colorado Academic Standards and its efforts to implement them? (optional question)

This optional open-ended question asked respondents to comment on ways the CDE could evaluate the effectiveness of the revised standards as they are implemented. Overall, 378 teachers, 20 principals, and 28 district administrators provided responses to this question. While a systematic coding of these open-ended responses was not within the scope of this report, often-cited categories for teachers included listening directly to teachers, providing information and updates to teachers, providing training, and implementing assessments that correspond with the standards. A sample of teacher comments includes the following, with a full listing included in Appendix B of this report:

Listen to the teachers in the trenches who are actually doing the work.

CDE needs to send people INTO the field to see and experience what is happening in the classrooms across the state.

Get the message out there in a clear and consistent manner.

Develop specific year to year guidelines as to what content as well as skills you expect students to learn for high school science.

Have clear channels for communicating expected changes and mandatory evaluation sessions for teachers in every school to record feedback.

Ask the Districts to design a survey about best practices being used with regard to the standards. We could also design an in-district assessment rubric for classroom connection to standards.

Develop assessments to match the standards. Then we could pre-assess before we start the standards.

Revise the CSAP to mirror the standards.

Do not rely so heavily on standardized testing. Be sure the standards align with typical cognitive development stages.

Among principals, a common response theme was to solicit feedback from teachers and principals. Principals also recommended training, a focus on student growth, and ensuring that the revised standards correspond with both the CSAP and national/international standards. A sample of comments includes the following, with a full listing included in Appendix B of this report:

Train districts for implementation.

Keep them simple. Elementary teachers who teach a variety of subjects have a difficult time keeping all the standards in mind. I know the standards sound great, but when there is an overwhelming amount of them to deal with, you eventually get teachers who focus on what they can manage, and let the others go.

It is imperative that the Colorado Standards be aligned to National and International Standards. It is also imperative that the assessment (CSAP) be carefully aligned to the new standards.

Get feedback from teachers and sites directly, not via district administrators.

See what is working in Core Knowledge schools.

Once rollout officially happens in January, allow opportunities for feedback from our school district. Allow administrators, teachers, and central administration the opportunity to work with them in order to develop interim assessments that ultimately give us a snapshot of student growth.

Ensure professional development is available for all educators and include ECE educators to allow for long term success for children.

Among district administrators, gathering feedback from schools and districts emerged as a common theme, as did a focus on student growth. Providing training and a clear communication of expectations and allowing time for standards to be implemented also emerged as themes. A sample of comments includes the following, with a full listing included in Appendix B of this report:

Survey various stakeholder groups (perceptions).

Ask the district offices for their feedback since they will have data.

Pre-post and long range surveys of teacher, administrators and district level curriculum specialists.

Measure the rate of growth of CSAP scores and CBLA results over time to determine if the rate of improvement/decline changes over time.

Effectiveness will be determined by student achievement on the assessments used.

Implementation MUST be done with local high quality embedded staff.

Develop a set of CSAP-like assessments that do not make districts guess about what to emphasize during instruction.

Clear communication in hard copy print as to what is contained in the new standards.

Do you have any additional feedback for the CDE regarding the implementation of the revised Colorado Academic Standards? (mandatory question)

The majority of respondents did not take advantage of this last question to provide additional feedback regarding implementation of the revised standards. However, 266 teachers, 17 principals, and 27 district administrators did provide comments.

Among the 266 comments provided by teachers, common themes included the desire for more teacher involvement in standards revision and a desire for more and clearer communication about standards and standards implementation. A number of teachers voiced appreciation for the work put into the standards revision process, while others voiced concerns about the need for adequate time to implement the revised standards.

A sample of teacher comments includes the following; a full listing of verbatim responses from teachers is included in Appendix B of this report:

There should have been more teachers involved in the re-write process.

Time to effectively integrate new standards should be given.

There should be a way to email teachers or districts to get the info out there about standards changing.

Amazing work. Thank you to all who worked so hard to coordinate and provide feedback and input during the process.

Give districts time to adopt new standards. Professional development that is targeted towards implementing the new standards.

Don't rush or push the revised standards without adequate time for teachers to review them and make adjustments in instruction/assessment. If this is dumped on teachers at the beginning of the school year with expectations for immediate implementation, it will not go well.

Only 17 principals provided comments; the most representative are listed here, with a full listing included in Appendix B of this report:

Pick "best practices" districts that represent rural, mountain, urban and train them to implement standards. Then, have them model for and train other districts in a TOT model.

Great job of defining grade level expectations. Do not continue to add things to our plate to teach in other subject areas other than Math, Language Arts, Science, and

Social Studies. Please consider that all schools are looking at a possible 8% cut in our funding for next year and plan the implementation process accordingly.

CDE needs to continually provide and update information regarding the standards and how they are assessed.

You should solicit the expertise of Core Knowledge professionals

It will be imperative for schools to do full scale curriculum mapping with the standards in order to facilitate a deep understanding and implementation of them.

Our teachers need coaches who can share their expertise in the best ways to implement the use of the revised Model Content standards in the classroom for effective instruction.

My feedback is that the revised standards may provide the opportunity to fundamentally change what happens in our schools to something that is in harmony with the world we live in and "21st century" students.

Be more aggressive in communicating the new standards to teachers and community.

Among the 27 comments provided by district administrators, common themes included the need for clear guidance from the state regarding expectations, the need for support for implementation, and a desire to link the revised standards to assessments. Several district administrators responded positively to the revised standards, while others were concerned about either the process or the timing of revised standards introduction. A sample of district administrator comments includes the following, while a full listing of district administrator comments is included in Appendix B of this report:

We have the standards, why not have someone at CDE develop the curriculum and pacing guides necessary to effectively include them in our classroom instruction? Small districts like ours cannot afford to do this work, and if we wait for the larger districts to do it, and then use their curriculum as a model, we fall behind. And this is a great impediment to our student's achievement. Roll out a model curriculum, and pacing guide with the standards as a foundation for each district to use. Large districts that have the resources and staff to implement a systemic curriculum revision and alignment can choose to use the model or not. For those of us in a small district, this would be a big step toward improving instruction, and therefore, improving student achievement.

Provide feedback about the preciseness of alignment expected.

Districts won't really know what is important until the new assessment system is available.

If we are going to start with the end in mind be clearer and more specific about what tests, how often, for who and with what stakes.

The new standards represent a high-quality framework for learning targets. I like the manner in which they are organized, the explicit tie to essential questions, and 21st century connections. I am concerned when I hear rumors that Colorado may "drop" the new standards in favor of National Standards given the quality that we now have.

Implementation will be a very difficult task for elementary teachers and districts without district level support systems.

Discussion: Implications for Implementation of Revised Standards

Colorado teachers, principals, and district administrators who responded to these online surveys provided a great deal of useful information about the effectiveness of the CDE communication regarding the revision process, educators' openness to implementing the revised standards, potential obstacles to implementation, and ways in which the CDE might most effectively continue to inform and update educators across the states. Overall, a total of 1,567 educators fully or partially completed surveys: 1,401 teachers, 83 principals, and 83 district administrators. Many of these chose to provide specific comments and recommendations in addition to responding to closed-ended questions.

Importantly, a substantial number of survey respondents reported that they believe that the integration of standards into classroom instruction can positively impact student achievement and that their schools/districts have a vision for implementing standards. There is less of a sense, however, that teachers and administrators have been adequately trained in the effective use of standards. Furthermore, while educators vary in their degree of familiarity with either the revision process or the revised standards themselves, there is a strongly reported belief that the content of the revised standards themselves is appropriate and that student achievement can be improved through the implementation of the revised standards. Nonetheless, responses suggest that teachers in particular have ongoing concerns about implementation of the new standards.

Recommended vehicles for communicating updates and expectations included communicating with teachers via district offices or teacher unions, providing models of effective implementation, using email to reach teachers directly, developing online resources, and providing on-site training opportunities.

Principals reported greater concerns regarding potential obstacles to standards implementation than did teachers, and district administrators reported even greater concerns than did principals. This trend suggests a degree of concern that increases the further one is removed from daily contact with the classroom. This pattern should be taken into consideration as the CDE plans its communication strategies at the classroom, school, and district levels.

Finally, common threads throughout comments included calls for the CDE to continue to engage and listen to educators throughout the process, to help educators find ways to integrate the revised standards into existing teaching practices/materials, and to allow sufficient time for implementation:

Talk to teachers!!! Hear us and listen to our opinions.

Our district spent monumental amounts of time and energy to align our curriculum to the old standards. Show us how what we do well can be tweaked to align with the new.

Many teachers are under pressure to raise test scores, and will be resistant to standards that they feel are not aligned well with what is tested on the state assessment. I believe that there will be greater buy in when the state assessments more clearly align with the state standards.

Figure out a way to give teachers time to learn these standards. If we don't know them we can't teach them. Most of us do not believe we can do one more new thing. We just need TIME!

TIME TO PREP, TIME TO EVALUATE without (penalty) and then TIME TO ADJUST as needed.

As with all survey research, administrators of these surveys faced challenges that constrain the generalization of findings beyond Colorado educators in this sample (Fink, 1995; Fowler, 1993; Punch, 2003; Sax, 2003). Survey data are self-reported, which may introduce bias.⁶ In addition, the sample was not ethnically diverse, and few educators from mountain, northern, or southern regions responded, which may have had an impact on response frequencies and comments provided. Finally, the characteristics of non-responders are not known and may have differed systematically from those of responders. However, the results of these surveys may be useful to the CDE as it determines how best to stage the implementation of its revised academic standards.

⁶For example, participants may respond in particular ways due to a desire to agree with the state or due to concerns about possible retribution from the survey administrator (Fowler, 1993).

References

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