

public education study-part 1

Question 1

The current role of the federal government in public education is

Much too small too small about right too large
much too large

Question 2

1. What should be the role of the federal government in public education? (Rank)
 - a. To ensure that all students preK-12 receive a quality education.
 - b. To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.
 - c. To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.
 - d. To monitor state efforts for funding
 - e. To measure teacher effectiveness through test data.

Question 3

A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree
Strongly disagree

In the 1970s

- A few states developed content standards for basic skills in core content areas (usually English language arts and mathematics)
- Some states developed high school exit exams to define minimum performance standards for high school graduation
- Performance standards varied from state to state
- In states without exit examinations, performance standards often varied from school to school within a single state
- Diploma requirements varied from state to state

In the 1980s

- 1983 - Nation at Risk claimed that the US was slipping in its education achievements compared to other industrial countries.
- Publishers competed for largest markets (TX & CA)
- Textbooks often defined curriculum
- What students were expected to learn & how well students were expected to perform depended on where they lived.
- National teaching organizations created voluntary subject-area content standards without performance standards

In the 1990s

- Some states wrote their own content standards
- Some states developed their own assessments to measure the content standards and set their own performance standards
- 1992 Early efforts at national standards funded by federal grants to professional subject-area organizations
- State education agencies modified subject area standards, so that resulting state standards continued to vary widely

In the 2000s

- 2001 ESEA was reauthorized as “No Child Left Behind”
- Federal law required state standards, assessments, & reporting of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
- States created their own assessments and set their own performance standards
- States that had not already developed assessments set low performance standards to avoid sanctions
- US Dept. of Education conducted peer reviews and set regulatory limits
- AYP looked like a common measurement system, but state performance standards actually varied widely

What are Common Core Standards?

- Cooperative effort of the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers and endorsed by 41 states.
- Designed to bring alignment, rigor and consistency to student proficiency and to foster improvement in college and career readiness across the nation.

CCS Question 4

Currently the governors and state education officers have developed Common Core Standards that are national, but not federal. Should the standards be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal funding? (Choose one)

- a. Special grant programs such as Race to the Top
- b. All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education

Act where the needs qualify for funding

- c. All programs receiving federal funding from any source.
- d. All of the above
- e. None of the above

Arguments in favor of CCS

- To ensure that all children, no matter where they live in the U.S., are prepared and successful in postsecondary education: school to school and state to state.
- To ensure a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices both within and across states.
- To help students and parents by setting clear and realistic goals for success.
- To provide a benchmark as a first step to ensuring students will be prepared for success in college and work.

Arguments opposing CCS

- Cost and difficulty of changing the existing curriculum and assessments.
- Sovereignty of state in issues related to education.
- States may be prevented from developing their own far more rigorous standards. (Currently each state can increase the standards by 15%.)
- Standards are more oriented toward college than toward immediate entry into the workforce after high school.

Rigor of CCS compared to states

Fordham Institute found only 3 of 102 comparisons where state standards were more rigorous than Common Core Standards.

CCS Question 5

Should there be a national assessment aligned with the common core standards?

Yes|No

Question 5a

a. If yes, should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated (Choose one)

1. Voluntary
2. Federally mandated
3. Mandated, if fully funded

Question 5b

b. If no, what other accountability measures might you suggest

(Choose one)

1. Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments
2. Suggest that the local education districts use their own assessments or adopt one that is a nationally norm-referenced assessment, such as the Stanford Achievement Test or Iowa Test of Basic Skills
3. Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically

Many researchers say:

Common Core Standards should be federally mandated
ONLY IF

they are part of a whole program: high-quality common standards

may affect student achievement only in a system in which there are

also

- aligned assessments,
- aligned curriculum,
- accountability for educators,
- accountability for students,
- aligned professional development,
- managerial autonomy for school leaders,
- teachers who are drawn from the best and brightest, and so on

(Whitehurst)

Should there be a national curriculum?

- Various educators have been debating whether national standards and national assessments would be enough to bring about desired improvements.
- Some think that a comprehensive system, including a national curriculum as well as common standards and assessment, is necessary to foster improvement.
- Some think that a national curriculum would bring unnecessary constraints that stifle creativity and innovation.

Those who say “YES”

- A curriculum specifies the topics and methods that students will use to master the standards, and often prescribes the sequence of instruction.
- Content standards describe the knowledge and skills that students should master.
- Performance standards are implemented through assessments that measure how well students have mastered the content standards.

Those who say “NO”

- ESEA prohibits a national curriculum and it is not part of the President Obama Blueprint.
- The same reading skills can be taught by using many different texts.
- High school mathematics courses can be organized in a variety of ways.

Question 6

National standards should lead to

(Choose one)

- a) A nationally mandated curriculum to be aligned to the national standards and assessments.
- b) A national curriculum that is only suggested but not mandated.
- c) A suggested structure for states and local education agencies to develop their own curriculum.

d) No national curriculum.

Further discussion on CCS and NC

- At present, the Common Core includes only literacy standards for science and social studies. It would be difficult to reach consensus on a national curriculum in these subject areas.
- Legislators in some states continue to debate the science curriculum, arguing whether creationism should be taught as a scientific theory.
- With the exception of U.S. history and the Constitution, there is a lack of consensus about what topics should be taught in the social studies.

Question 7

What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation?

(Rank order)

- a. Provide an assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards
- b. Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching the Common Core Standards.

- c. Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers
- d. Provide information to students, parents, teachers, and school districts about student achievement
- e. Provide diagnostic information on each child

Normed vs Criterion Based

Individual student scores can be interpreted

- by rank ordering student scores (norm-referenced)
- by reporting whether students meet predetermined standards (criterion-referenced)

Normed based – designed to rank individual students in comparison to a sample (which can be an international, national, state, or local sample).

Criterion-based – designed to determine how well individual students have mastered objectives.

Question 8

Data from national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. If we have a national assessment, what information is most important to be reported to parents, teachers, students and the community?

1. Data should be “norm referenced” where students are ranked for comparisons.
2. Data should be “criterion referenced” and clearly informative so that teachers, parents, and students know how individual students have mastered criteria established at a national level.
3. Data should be used to determine “cut” scores knowing if students have mastered requirements for special grade levels.

Issues to consider if students and teachers are to be compared based upon student performance

- Is the proposed test designed to support the desired inference?
- What will be done about grades and subjects for which there are no appropriate standardized tests?

- Have the proposed statistical procedures been shown to produce accurate results?
- Can classes with very different demographic characteristics be expected to produce similar student scores, or should factors like poverty rates be considered?

More issues to consider

- Should rewards or sanctions apply to the school as a whole or to individual teachers within each school?
- What unintended strategies might people employ in order to obtain rewards or avoid sanctions (e.g. encourage dropouts, avoid cheating etc.)
- Should poor performance lead to assistance (provision of support) or sanctions (withdrawal of support)?

Question 9

Information from nationally required assessment data should be used to

(Choose one)

- a. Sanction schools not measuring up to the specific levels
- b. Reward schools that achieve high scores
- c. Rank teachers based on student test score data
- d. Reward teachers who have exemplary scores
- e. Inform districts how their population compares to others similar to theirs.

General comments (250 words maximum)