

The August 2016 Board Report from the Superintendent covers the following topics:

1. Use of Atlas Curriculum System
2. Recent article related to Common Core Standards
3. Leroy Workshop
4. New Teacher Induction Meeting
5. Administrative Theme for 2016-17

1. Use of the Atlas Curriculum System

- a. The district has been using the online inventory for Atlas for the past 5 years.
- b. We have an opportunity to repurpose the function of the product and we are going to be asking how this can serve staff, parents, administrators, and students?
- c. We have revisions to make as it relates to K-5 science, some K literacy, and enhancing the assessment and resources section of many of the curriculum maps we have.
- d. We will be working within the Leadership Team structures to gather feedback from staff as to their understanding and development of improved uses of Atlas, and continuing to communicate to parents how this can be a useful tool.

2. Common Core standards

- a. Included is an article from District Administration magazine outlining some less than stellar achievement reports related to Common Core Standards
- b. Our buildings have already begun scheduling spring test dates for PARCC and SAT.
- c. We are eager to see if an IL partnership between ECRA and Measured Progress could result in the ability to utilize Measured Progress as a 3-8 grade assessment that is aligned with SAT. This has been successful in Michigan and Maine to provide some articulated benchmark assessments.

3. Leroy Workshop

- a. Gary Tipsord, superintendent of the Leroy Schools, attended our leadership coaching workshop and was impressed with the way our coaching and facilitated conversation structure was working with our admin and leadership teams.
- b. He has asked me to come work with 25 of his admin and teacher leaders, so I will be assisting them on August 8th and 9th.
- c. I will be taking personal leave time for those two days.

4. New Teacher Induction Meeting

- a. We will be meeting with our new teachers at 8 a.m. Monday, August 15 to being orienting and inducting them into the protocols for many different areas of our district.
- b. Hopefully many of you will make the new teacher luncheon at Grace Methodist Church on the 15th as well, this is always a great kickoff to the year.

5. Administrative Theme for 2016-17

- a. I have a video that I'd like to share with the Board at the meeting.

- b. The video may help you understand this year's theme and it may resonate with you as well, if not as a board member, then perhaps in your personal or professional life outside of board work.

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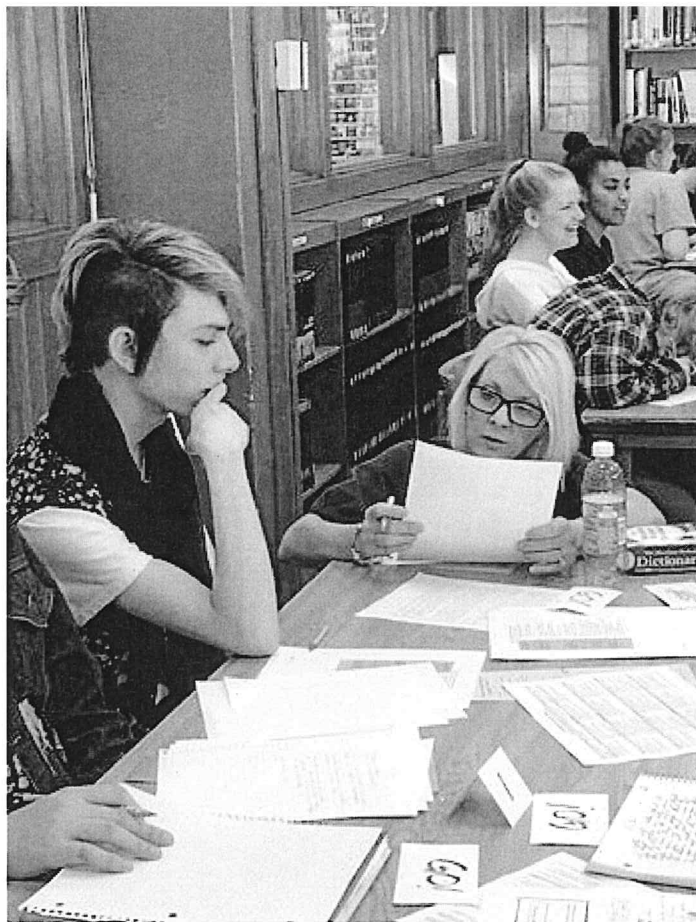
NEWS UPDATE

# Five years in, results paint complex picture of Common Core

## In Kentucky, the first state to adopt standards, student achievement has improved

By Alison DeNisco — District Administration, August 2016

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Feedback in words: A Jefferson County Public Schools teacher in Louisville, Kentucky, gives a student feedback on a Common Core-aligned writing assignment.

**M**ore than five years after many states implemented Common Core, the impact on student achievement remains unclear—though some states show small academic gains, with persistent achievement gaps.

“Common Core is alive and well,” says Adam Ezring, policy director of the Collaborative For Student Success, a nonprofit that supports use of the standards. “While it’s still too early to know the full impact of the standards, we’ve seen some promising results from early adopters.” More than 40 states have Common Core or very similar standards in place, he adds.

In Kentucky, the first state to adopt the standards in 2010, student achievement has improved overall. In Tennessee, another 2010 adopter, fewer students need remediation, Ezring says.

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However, the number of states that have left the PARCC and Smarter Balanced testing consortia does not bode well for the future of the standards, says Tom Loveless, senior fellow of governance studies at the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institute (see map, page 15).

“One of the main objectives of Common Core advocates was the idea that you could\_\_\_\_\_

measure a kid's math ability in Maine, and it would be comparable to a student in Wyoming," Loveless says. "But those across-state comparisons have been completely blown out of the water because of the fragmentation of both PARCC and Smarter Balanced."

Backing from teachers has also waned, according to an Education Next poll: In 2013, 76 percent of teachers supported the Common Core. In 2015, only 40 percent did.

Standardized testing results are mixed: Researchers from the Brown Center found that fourth- and eighth-grade students in states that spent money on more activities related to Common Core adoption outperformed their peers on the National Assessment of Educational Progress between 2009 and 2013.

But between 2013 and 2015, students in non-adoption states made larger NAEP gains than those in Common Core states, leading some to question if the largest impact of the new learning standards has already occurred.

Many educators say it is still too early to draw conclusions about how the standards are affecting student assessment data, as states are in different stages of implementation.

## **Eye on Kentucky**

In Kentucky, more than 70 percent of elementary school students scored "proficient" or better in both reading and math on the state's pre-Common Core standardized tests. After introducing Common Core-aligned assessments in 2012, proficiency levels dropped to 48 percent in reading and 40 percent in math.

But scores soon began to rise: By spring 2015, 54 percent of Kentucky's elementary school students were proficient in English and 49 percent hit the mark in math.

At Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville—Kentucky's largest district with 100,600 students—teachers and administrators revamped the curriculum and created an online bank of teacher resources in preparation for full Common Core implementation in 2011-12.

After an initial dip in test scores, all student groups in the district had a 6 percent increase in reading and math proficiency from 2012 to 2015. However, African-American student scores increased only 5 percent. Scores for all groups plateaued this year, says Assistant Superintendent for Academics Karen Branham.

Jefferson County started with its youngest students to narrow the achievement gap. In 2014, the district piloted a kindergarten readiness camp teaching reading and math

skills for 300 students from low-income families, with tremendous gains in reducing the gap. This year it expanded to 1,200 students.

Many teachers still struggle to understand the complexity of the standards, says Jenni Aberli, a high school English/language arts specialist in Jefferson County. It is especially difficult for first-year teachers whose college programs did not prepare them adequately for the complexities of the Core, she adds.

The district now works with local Bellarmine University for professional development in literacy education for their teachers and principals.

“Higher standards for kids aren’t the problem,” Aberli says. “It will take time and work—it’s not easy, but it’s the right work.”

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