



Michigan voters strongly support the Common Core State Standards and restoring funding for their implementation.

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES & GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER RESEARCH
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On behalf of The Education Trust – Midwest, Public Opinion Strategies and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted a statewide survey of N=600 registered voters in Michigan. The survey was conducted August 27-29, 2013, and has a margin of error of $\pm 4.0\%$.

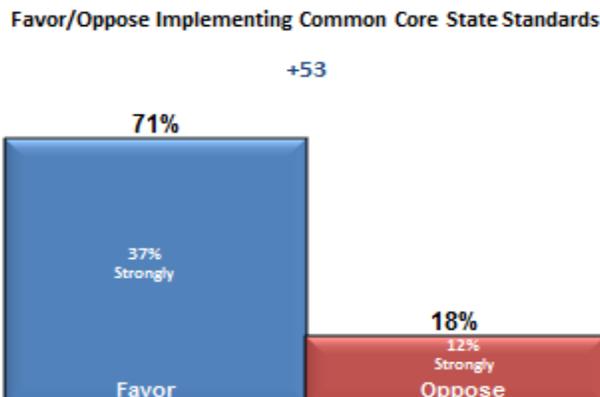
SUMMARY

Although awareness of the Common Core State Standards is relatively low, there is clear support for implementing the standards. Voters who have heard at least something about the standards have a more favorable than unfavorable opinion of them. Further, after all voters hear a basic description of the Common Core State Standards, there is very strong support for implementation across demographic subgroups, including across the partisan spectrum. Additionally, a solid majority also favor restoring the currently “paused” state funding for implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

KEY FINDINGS

- ***The majority of voters know relatively little about Common Core State Standards.*** Thirty-seven percent (37%) of voters have heard “a lot” or “some” about the Common Core State Standards, while 62% have heard “not too much” or “nothing at all.” Not surprisingly, public school parents are among the most likely to have heard a lot or some about CCSS (47% a lot or some/53% not too much or nothing at all).
- ***Based on what they have seen, read, or heard, a plurality of voters indicate a favorable impression of Common Core State Standards.*** Among those who are at least aware of the Common Core State Standards, 44% say they have a favorable impression of the standards, while 33% have an unfavorable impression. The remaining 22% are not sure or have no opinion.

- **When provided a basic description of the standards,¹ voters overwhelmingly favor their implementation, with strong bipartisan support.** Fully 71% of voters favor the implementation of Common Core State Standards, while just 18% oppose the implementation. There is intensity behind this sentiment, with 37% of voters say they “strongly” favor implementation.



There is clear support for the implementing the standards across party, and across all demographic groups: gender, age, ethnicity, education level, parental status, and region of the state.

- Republicans: 72% Favor/19% Oppose
- Independents: 65% Favor/26% Oppose
- Democrats: 74% Favor/15% Oppose
- Men: 68% Favor/19% Oppose / Women: 73% Favor/17% Oppose
- Whites: 72% Favor/19% Oppose / African Americans: 73% Favor/12% Oppose
- Public school parents: 69% Favor/25% Oppose
- Tea Party supporters: 65% Favor/27% Oppose

- **By more than a two-to-one margin, Michigan voters say state funding for implementation of the Common Core State Standards should be restored.** After being read statements on both sides of the funding debate, a significant majority (64%) of voters say that funding should be restored.

64%

Some people say funding for the standards should be restored because Michigan educators have been working on them for the past three years and they are a step in the right direction to teach our children real learning – not just test taking skills. They will help better prepare our students for life after high school – whether that means a job or college.

...while...

27%

Other people say funding for the standards should not be restored because we cannot be sure they will improve education in our state. These standards are a misguided, “one-size-fits-all” approach to education that takes control away from local Michigan school districts and gives it to the federal government.

There is bipartisan majority support for restoring funding. Republicans say by 58% to 36% funding should be restored, Independents side 59% to 32% in favor of restoring funding, and Democrats support restored funding by 72% to 20%. Even a majority of Tea Party supporters say funding should be restored (52% restore funding /43% do not restore funding).

¹ The Common Core State Standards have been adopted by forty-five states, including Michigan, which participated in their development with state governors, state school chiefs, and teachers involved in writing and reviewing them.

The goal of the standards is to help all students have the knowledge and skills they need in English and math and that students would be held to consistent standards so that they will be prepared for their next steps after high school, whether they choose a college or career path.

- **Just ten percent (10%) of voters would be less likely to vote for a member of the State Legislature who voted to restore funding for Common Core State Standards, while one-third (34%) say they would be more likely.** Close to half (48%) of voters said it would make no difference to their vote.
- **When presented with both sides of the debate related to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, the majority of voters side with supporters.** After hearing arguments on each side, by more than 20 points, voters side with supporters.

56%

Supporters say these Common Core State Standards are clear, consistent, and rigorous. Michigan chose to adopt them so our students will have the same knowledge and skills as their peers in other states and will be better prepared for college and careers. Right now, there is too much “teaching to the test” and these standards change that by emphasizing real learning and real world skills, like critical thinking and problem solving. While the standards will be the same across the forty-five participating states, each local school district in Michigan will still control their own curriculum and textbooks.

...while...

34%

Opponents say these new Common Core State Standards were developed by government executives, private companies, and foundations, and there is no evidence they will work in a classroom setting or improve education in our state. The standards are an attempt to nationalize education in the hands of the federal government and impose a “one-size-fits-all” approach to teaching and measuring student ability. States should make their own education decisions so we can have a system that recognizes each child is different and that not all students are going to college after high school.

Again, we see bipartisan support for the Common Core State Standards. Republicans side with supporters 52% to 39%, and Democrats side 65% to 28% with supporters. Additionally, the majority of other demographic sub-groups side with supporters, including by gender, age, ethnicity, education level, parental status, and region of the state. Even among voters who say they support the Tea Party, more than four-in-ten favor the Common Core (43% supporters/52% opponents).

- **After hearing from both sides of the debate about the standards and whether or not to restore funding, a solid majority still favor implementation of the standards.** Even after both sides of the argument are presented, 57% of voters still favor implementing the Common Core State Standards, while just 28% oppose the implementation.
- **Once voters have heard both sides of the debate, the impact on voting for a state legislator remains virtually unchanged.** Just 13% say they would be less likely to vote for a state legislator who supports the Common Core State Standards and restored funding, while 33% say they would be more likely. Forty-seven percent (47%) say it would make no difference to their vote decision one way or the other.