



ASQ Primary and Secondary Education Brief

Education
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Editor's Note: Common Sense at its Core

By Megan Schmidt, editor

America prides itself on educating all students. But that doesn't mean all students receive the same education. Where you grow up, your family's means, local politics and the quality of your teachers and district programs are just a few factors that influence your education and your opportunities in life.

Most people agree that all children deserve to receive an education that will prepare them for college, work and life. But they can't seem to agree on the best method to make that happen.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, the last major overhaul of education, states were allowed to set their own benchmarks for success and establish their own tests to measure progress. But when students were tested and compared nationally, there were considerable differences in student performance by state. That's not good enough if we expect to compete on a global scale and thwart threats that require a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, especially in the science, technology, engineering and math subjects.

The common core state standards (CCSS) were created to bring greater equality to education. They provide national learning goals that span geographical and socioeconomic lines. Simply put, CCSS outlines what students should know and be able to perform at the end of each grade. The curriculum, the teaching methods used and every other aspect of teaching is left to the local teachers, teachers, administrators and school boards to decide.

This approach is in line with how top-performing countries such as Sweden and Singapore handle education.

Needless to say, the CCSS have roused controversy among teachers, parents and politicians. Still, more than 40 states have adopted the national standards and are committed to improving the education it provides. What is clear from CCSS debates is that both sides care about student learning. But there seems to be fear and misunderstanding among supporters and nonsupporters alike. In this issue of the Primary and Secondary Education Brief, learn more about how the CCSS change education delivery and learning by making sure you don't miss:

- [“Establishing Common Ground,”](#) a Q&A with Joe Crawford, an award-winning educator, quality practitioner, author and consultant at Partners4Results in Mukwonago, WI.
- [“Common Questions About the Common Core,”](#) a webinar with Jill Jackson, a speaker, author and former educator who leads Jackson Consulting in Pasadena, CA.

Even if the CCSS isn't fully mature in its initial implementation, it's a positive first step toward reducing fragmentation and variation in the education system. From healthcare to manufacturing, organizations in other sectors have made standards and continuous improvement an integral part of how they operate. It's only common sense to align education toward common learning goals.

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