

An Executive Summary of States' Description of Common Core State Standards to Support Students with Severe Disabilities

Charles Dukes, Ed.D., Ph.D. Sharon M. Darling, Ph.D., & Kristina Bielskus-Barone, M.Ed.
Executive Summary prepared by Lauren Berlingo, M.Ed.

Project Summary

- Select State Department of Education and School District websites were reviewed to determine how policy related to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was communicated to teachers of students with severe disabilities.
- The State Department of Education websites in the four most populous states adopting the CCSS (as of 2016) were chosen for review: California, New York, Illinois, and Pennsylvania along with 12 school districts (three per state) within those states.
- The *Perceived Quality of Websites Instrument* (PQWI), developed for this study, consists of 12 questions designed to capture a frequency count of the different resources detailed on the websites.
- Websites and information were reviewed (August 30, 2016 and September 30, 2016. to determine if there was instructional guidance for teachers or information in general about students with severe disabilities in relation to the CCSS.

Process

- California, New York, Illinois, and Pennsylvania were selected for review. Once the states were selected, three individual school districts were randomly selected to reflect one of three categories (city, suburb, or rural) and geographic diversity (north, south, east, and west). (N=16)
- The PQWI was developed specifically for this study. The authors brainstormed about information support teachers might need to translate the CCSS into educational programming. Then, each author independently developed questions to be used for the review. Through common discussion, the authors added/deleted questions for the PQWI. Ultimately, 12 questions were chosen based on commonalities.
- All 16 state and school district websites were reviewed using the PQWI. Reviews of each website were conducted using the PQWI and a specific search logic (also developed for this study).
- PQWI recorded presence and/or absence and frequency of information made available to teachers of students with severe disabilities.

Background

- Both general education teachers and special education teachers expressed concern about translating the CCSS in educational practices, particularly for students with severe disabilities.
- A great deal of concern centered on the inadequacy of materials provided for translation of standards into educational experiences, as well as the lack of professional development related to implementation of the CCSS.
- For this study, State Department of Education and specific school district websites were reviewed as a means to understand how the translation of the CCSS might operate for teachers of students with severe disabilities.



Image retrieved from:
<https://www.pcssd.org/common-core-state-standards>

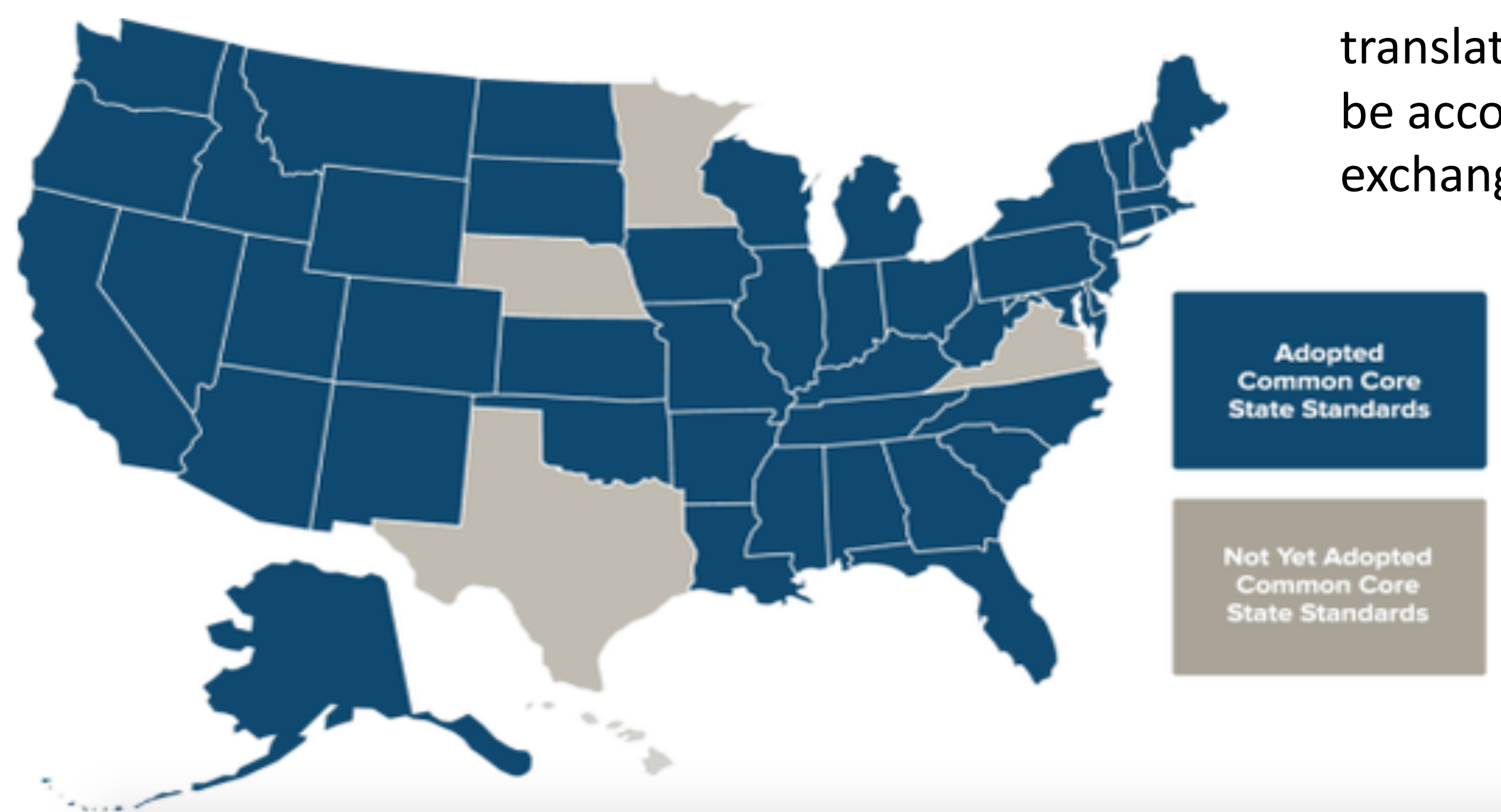


Image retrieved from: <https://misswyman.weebly.com/academics.html>

Findings and Conclusions

- This study was conducted to gain an understanding of the translation of the CCSS to educational practice for students with severe disabilities.
- State Department of Education and school district websites served as the main source for disseminating information. Unless it was a large urban school district, such as New York City Department of Education and Chicago Public Schools, the district websites were dependent on the state website to supply information and resources in regard to content.
- Little information regarding students with severe disabilities is available at the state or local level. There is little guidance in regard to translation of the CCSS to practice for students with severe disabilities.
- Information regarding students with disabilities was inconsistent from state to state, with a lack of uniform standards aligned with the national CCSS initiative.
- State and school district information is connected to the national CCSS initiative in different ways, which may result in inconsistent implementation.

Recommendations for Action

Policy is implemented at the state, district, and school level. Thus, it is necessary for policy makers to pay attention to challenges associated with translation of policy into practice at different levels. Resource should be allocated at each level to help support the translation of policy instructional policies. This may be accomplished using websites to offer information exchange as well as virtual professional development.

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Corresponding author:

Charles Dukes
Florida Atlantic University
Email: cdukes@fau.edu
Website: <https://www.fau.edu/education/faculty/dukes/>
Phone: 561.297.1081