



**National
Urban League**

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National Urban League Endorses Common Core State Standards, Part 3: Study Reveals Overwhelming Confidence in CCSS

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"Common Core promises to hold our schools and our kids – all of our kids, not just the lucky ones – to higher standards, standards that will provide them with a deeper, more durable understanding of science and math, analytical and reasoning skills in the humanities, creative problem solving across the curriculum. Skills they need to succeed as students and to compete in the global economy." Ursula Burns, Chairman & CEO, Xerox

Recently, I have spoken out in support of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the National Urban League's belief that the standards are a critical element of our nation's effort to better prepare all students for success in college and career. I chose to do this after seeing the deceptive groundswell of fear-mongering and misrepresentations by many CCSS critics that must be challenged so we can focus all of our attention on effective, high-quality and equitable implementation of the standards.

Today, I want to share not just my voice or that of the Urban League Movement, but the voices of parents – those who have the greatest role in ensuring their children are set up for success, yet from whom we have perhaps heard the least as the CCSS debate has distractingly been thrown onto political and special interest battlefields. So, this column, the third in a three-part series to set the record straight on Common Core, includes the results of a recent National Urban League study conducted of parents in four major U.S. cities – Cleveland, Los Angeles, Nashville and Pittsburgh.

The findings indicate that an overwhelming majority of parents surveyed support the goals of CCSS and believe the standards will succeed. For them and countless more, success has been clear for generations – the opportunity for children to thrive and surpass their parents' success. An impressive 81% of all parents surveyed agree that Common Core will better prepare their children for college and the workforce, and 66% anticipate that CCSS will make American students more competitive with students from other countries.

The survey findings indicate that among the most supportive groups of CCSS are African American and Latino parents who, among others underserved by the status quo, are desperately searching for ways to increase opportunity and equity, thereby shrinking the widening achievement, opportunity, skills and employment gaps faced by their children. More than 90% of African American parents surveyed believe that CCSS will better prepare their children for college and career, while 75% believe it will make them more competitive globally. Latino parents agree on those same questions at the rates of 87% and 71%, respectively.

Eighty-nine percent of respondents also express strong confidence in Common Core to accomplish its goal of preparing students to succeed in college. It is promising to see these indications that truth and fact are winning out over falsehoods in the debate over CCSS and that parents still believe in the power of a high-quality education to move their families and the nation forward. Ninety percent of respondents to our survey agree that education is still essential for social mobility in America, and they are right. We know that a college degree can be a ticket out of poverty and to a better life. As such, we must equip all children with the standards, tools and resources they need throughout their time in school to be ready for college and careers.

The National Urban League survey was conducted in February and March of this year to enable us to gain a better understanding of parental attitudes and perspectives on CCSS and to understand how parents were being impacted by the critics' distortions. What we found is that a majority of parents understand what leading educators and business leaders from Ursula Burns to Earl Graves all know – that Common Core State Standards, implemented equitably and properly, offer the best chance in a generation to raise current standards and future prospects for all of America's public school students to be prepared for the workforce and opportunities of today and tomorrow.

While the survey affirmed grassroots parental support for CCSS, it also made it clear that more must be done to increase public awareness. Only half of respondents say they are aware of CCSS and slightly more than half of those, 56%, say they understand its objectives. Further, while 70% understand that teachers will be able to customize lesson plans for their students under CCSS and that the standards do not tell teachers how to teach, a troubling 69% believe the false propaganda that the Common Core is controlled by the federal government. Let me be clear – the federal government is not, nor has it ever been, involved in the development of the Common Core. The Common Core State Standards were developed at the local and state levels by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association with critical and meaningful input from teachers, parents, school administrators and education experts from local districts across America. Thus far, 44 states and the District of Columbia have voluntarily adopted the standards.

The National Urban League and the Urban League Movement will continue to demand that accurate, timely and useful information is communicated around the Common Core State Standards and their equitable implementation. We and other civil rights partners and education reformers will present that information as far and wide as we are able and will also do everything within our power to position all of our children for success – no matter the neighborhood where they live, how much money their parents make or unsupported

assumptions that they cannot meet the standards. It is not possible to ensure equity and excellence if we do not have the same high expectations for all students and invest in them equitably. We owe it to our nation – and all of our children – to ensure the success of Common Core State Standards and other critical education reforms and investments.

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