



Hawaii State Teacher Fellows Program
Teacher Report on the Fall 2014 Statewide Data Collection:
IMPROVING HAWAII DOE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Background:

In 2014, Hope Street Group (HSG), in partnership with the Hawai'i Department of Education (HIDOE) and the Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA), empowered 17 teacher leaders across the state to spearhead the work of amplifying the teacher voice in education policymaking decisions. Over the course of the year, Hawai'i State Teacher Fellows (HI STFs) engaged in extensive training and development designed to prepare them to build their professional learning network (PLN) and to moderate focus groups of their peers in order to gather critical teacher perspectives on HIDOE policies.

This past semester, the fellows quickly applied these skills to gather feedback about the HIDOE professional development teachers received to help prepare them to teach the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). In school year 2013-2014, the HIDOE transitioned to full implementation of the CCSS in all grade levels across the state. HSG and HIDOE officials developed a survey with input from HSTA staff and HI STFs in order to determine how to better support teachers in the implementation effort. In total, 788 teachers from across the state responded to the survey. Respondents included teachers who teach in all subjects and at all grade levels. Additionally, HI STFs lead 22 focus groups, which gave teachers another venue to voice their opinions on CCSS. Outside experts were consulted for data analysis and disaggregation of the survey and focus group data.

Findings:

HSG fellows gathered teachers' perspectives through a statewide survey released for a three-week period beginning September 29, 2014, and through multiple focus groups held in November. The purpose of this data collection was to provide the HIDOE with teacher feedback to inform future professional development efforts to meet the needs of students and teachers. Below are key findings from the data:

- **Teachers are anxious about CCSS implementation.** Participants are primarily anxious about students performing below grade level, and feel unprepared to teach the CCSS. Many are anxious about needing more time to learn and to develop new curriculum aligned to the new standards. Further, teachers are concerned about meeting expectations without adequate support from their principal, complex, and state level personnel.
- **Teachers across the state and across demographics do not feel there are enough substantive professional development opportunities to adequately implement CCSS.** Thirty-five percent of focus group participants indicated that they received little to no professional development specific to CCSS; those that had some training shared that they watched videos and participated in instructional workshops.
- **Teachers indicated that the majority of current professional development time is allocated to other state mandates,** including Data Teams, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), and monthly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), or grade level meetings. Participants indicated that a lack of time and an excess of paperwork are the biggest obstacles for teachers, leaving little professional development time to meet the expectations.
- **Teachers want more time to collaborate and to share with colleagues, teachers, and experts.** Thirty-nine percent of respondents indicated that time could best be used mandating grade level common core workshops and grade level planning time. Thirty-seven percent of participants specified that they wanted more time for collaboration with colleagues, teachers, and experts to share instructional ideas and suggestions.

As the only statewide school system in the country, it is challenging, at best, for the HIDOE to play the role of the primary provider of professional development across the entire state. Given the diverse needs and resources of different schools and communities across complexes and islands, the findings from the

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survey reinforce the need to expand and to diversify the entities that provide professional development to teachers.

Recommendations:

Given survey findings, the HSG recommends that the HIDOE work to integrate the following characteristics into future professional development:

- **Additional support and resources for coordinated professional development.** As a single local education agency (LEA) and state education agency (SEA) that has both district and state responsibilities and a very small SEA-based professional development staff, it is challenging, at best for HIDOE to play the role of the primary provider of professional development across the entire state. In fact, the majority of teachers responding to the survey indicated that the professional development received to prepare for the implementation of the CCSS came from HIDOE, and not their complex or complex area. The findings from the survey reinforce the need to expand and to diversify the entities that provide professional development to teachers. In addition to the aforementioned role of the CAST, HSTA could potentially play a role in providing coordinated, complementary professional development for teachers as a way to ensure that teachers' needs are met without relying on a single provider (HIDOE) to do so. Should HIDOE choose to use some combination of HIDOE staff, outside providers, HSTA, and the CAST, carefully coordinated professional development should be a priority to ensure that all teachers, regardless of their complex area, receive high-quality, consistent professional development. For additional information on quality control for professional development, see: <http://learningforward.org/publications/blog-landing/press-releases/2011/01/20/report-identifies-policies-that-support-quality-professional-development-in-four-professionally-active-states#.VI-J4U05CUm>.
- **Professional development with a proven research base.** Teachers indicated that their professional development needs are vast, but merely adding more professional development is not necessarily the answer. What matters more is how it is planned and implemented. The HIDOE should also consider how other mandates, such as: SLOs and Data Teams, could be better aligned with CCSS implementation to maximize limited professional development time. Some states and school districts across the country, have integrated research-based, best practices in professional development. Additional information on this issue, can be found below:
 - [Learning Forward](#) in the state of Kentucky
 - [Human Capital Case Study](#) at Long Beach Unified School District in Long Beach, California
- **There should be follow up after professional development.** High quality professional development requires follow up; however, teachers indicated that principals did not follow up on the CCSS professional development received. HIDOE should examine why follow up has not occurred and what it can do to support principals in this regard. In addition, professional development must be sustained over time rather than one-shot, one-time events or videos.
- **Peers are given time to collaborate in small groups during professional development.** Teachers clearly want to share and to learn from one another in small group settings that allow teachers to focus on common areas of need. The HIDOE might consider how to use strategies like Complex Area Support Teams (CAST) to deliver more consistent and differentiated professional development in smaller complex settings. In addition, it might also consider differentiation and small group collaboration through complimentary professional development for teachers through HSTA's community representatives.