



## WORKFORCE READINESS AND THE COMMON CORE FACT VS. FICTION

Raising the bar for students in the U.S. is imperative to foster college and career readiness and keep our nation globally competitive. Unfortunately, New York's path to adoption of new, more rigorous education standards has been fraught with misinformation. The Business Council of New York State created this fact sheet to set the record straight on the Common Core State Standards.

**FACT: The Common Core State Standards were developed by the states with input from education experts.**

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were developed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers with input from parents, teachers, school administrators and education experts. The CCSS provide guidelines of what students should be expected to know in each grade level; they are *not* a curriculum or assessment. New York adopted the internationally-benchmarked standards in January 2010, to help earn federal competitive grant dollars.

**FACT: The U.S. is being outpaced by other countries in math and reading scores.**

Between 1995 and 2009, U.S. students' performance on math, science and reading assessments increased at a "middling" rate; while approximately 24 countries have improved at a faster rate. Students in countries such as Colombia, Poland, Portugal, Germany and Lithuania improved at twice the rate of students in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

**FACT: A "skills gap" currently exists because employers are unable to find a trained workforce to fill open positions.**

Employers are having difficulty finding skilled workers to fill open positions, not only in terms of technical and/or academic skills, but in relation to "soft skills" such as showing up on time and working in groups. A recent study found that as many as

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<sup>1</sup> Hanushek, E., Paul E. Peterson and Ludger Woessman. *Achievement Growth: International and U.S. State Trends in Student Performance*. Harvard Kennedy School (2012).



600,000 manufacturing jobs went unfilled because employers were unable to find workers with the right skills.<sup>2</sup>

**FACT: There is broad support for the standards in the business community.**

The following list is just a *small* cross-section of the organizations that support the Common Core in New York: Amplify; Buffalo Niagara Partnership; DuPont; Dynamic Applications, Inc.; Eric Mower + Associates; FAME (Finger Lakes Advanced Manufacturers' Enterprise); Hillside Family of Agencies; IBM; Watkins Glen International; Orange County Chamber of Commerce; Rochester Business Alliance; The Business Council of Westchester; The Pike Company; Time Warner, Inc.; Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce; Turnaround for Children, Inc.; Xerox Corporation; and Rudin Management.

**FICTION: U.S. students are well-prepared for college and/or career upon graduation from high school.**

Approximately 35 percent of students who graduate high school in New York State are considered college and career ready.<sup>3</sup> Further, the state university system spends \$70 million annually on remediation<sup>4</sup> for students to play catch-up.

**FICTION: Third-party vendors have access to student data now because of the Common Core.**

Utilizing third party vendors for non-proprietary education data services is common practice, and it has been for years; this is *not* a new development. There are strict guidelines under the federal Family Educational Rights Privacy Act pertaining to authorized uses of student data. States and school districts *are* able to contract with third-party providers for certain purposes, and such providers must maintain rigorous security protections.

**FICTION: The standards require more testing in schools.**

The State of New York has not created any new tests with the implementation of the Common Core. The number of locally-administered tests *does* vary district by district, however, and the New York State Board of Regents recently approved measures that will help reduce local assessments.

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<sup>2</sup> *Boiling point? The skills gap in U.S. manufacturing.* Report sponsored by Deloitte and The Manufacturing Institute (2011).

<sup>3</sup> Statistic based on students' scores on math and English Regents exams. Source: NYSED Office of Information and Reporting Services.

<sup>4</sup> State University of New York. (2012). *SUNY forms task force on remedial education* [press release].