

## There's No Revolt Against Common Core

Don't buy the buzz about new polling showing Common Core is terminally unpopular.

By Carmel Martin, Opinion Contributor



Parents still want high school standards.  (ISTOCKPHOTO)

**HEADLINE-MAKING POLLS** suggest a full-blown revolt against school tests and the Common Core. But polls aren't always what they seem at face value. A closer look at national polling data reveals something very different: Both parents and teachers alike broadly support holding all students to high academic standards and taking a balanced approach to testing in schools.

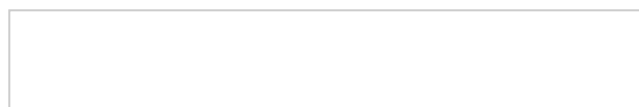
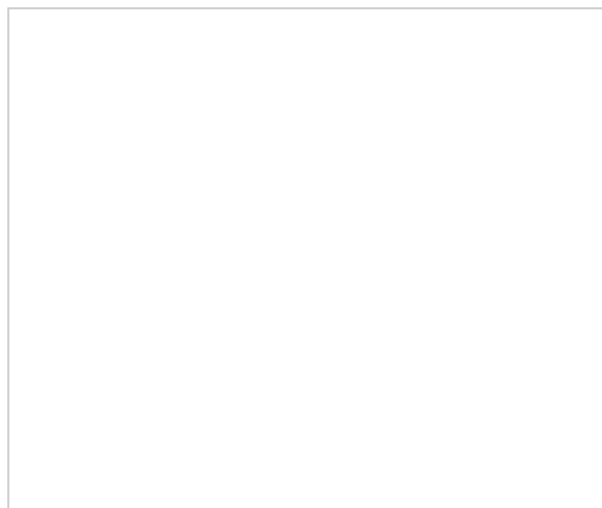


A [recent annual survey](#) on educational issues released by Phi Delta Kappa and Gallup showed that a majority of the public opposes the Common Core State Standards, which are now in place in 43 states and the District of Columbia. The poll also found that roughly two-thirds of respondents believe that there is too much emphasis on testing in schools, compared to just 14 percent who believe that standardized test scores are "very important" in measuring school effectiveness.

So does the public really oppose the Common Core? And does it think tests are useless and should be scrapped? Well, not exactly. While the poll does highlight anxieties about the transition to Common Core and confirms real concerns about the overuse of tests in our nation's public schools, a deeper dive into survey results paints a much more nuanced picture.

[ **READ:** [No Common Core Calamity](#) ]

Perhaps the first and most important thing to note is that the PDK poll appears to be an outlier when it comes to Common Core. According to a recent Education Next [poll](#), nearly half of the American public support the standards, while only 35 percent oppose. The goals of the Common Core – i.e. raising standards so the United States is more competitive with other countries – are even more popular than the specific standards, with nine in 10 voters expressing their support in a recent [poll](#) by Public Policy Polling.



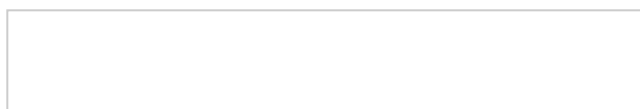
Support for the Common Core is also strongest among groups that would benefit the most from raising standards for students. People of color, whose children have long been underserved by our educational system, overwhelmingly support the new standards. African-Americans and Hispanics are more than twice as likely to support Common Core as oppose it, according to Education Next.

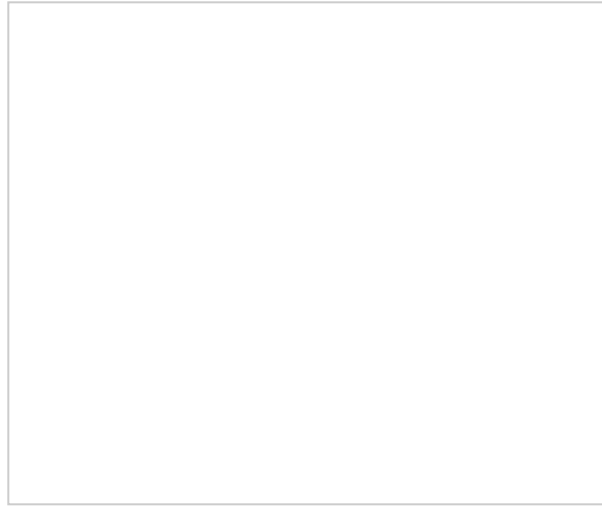
So what about testing? Upon first read of the PDK poll, it's easy to conclude that people hate tests. But the actual results are quite different from the headlines: According to PDK's own data, almost 60 percent of those polled believe that tests are very or somewhat important in measuring school effectiveness. Nearly 70 percent say that using tests to measure what students have learned is very or somewhat important for improving public schools.

As for the so-called opt-out movement, it appears from both the PDK and Education Next polls that more people believe in opting in. In fact, only 25 percent of people in the Education Next poll support allowing students to opt out of required tests, since the information from these tests is critical to identifying and helping close persistent achievement gaps.

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Unfortunately, the politicization and misinformation campaigns that opponents of the Common Core are waging have generated confusion surrounding the standards, which in part explains the public's hesitation to fully embrace them. As the PPP poll reveals, nearly half of voters believe that the Common Core is a specific curriculum (it's not), one-third of voters believe that the standards include sex education (they don't), and a majority think that the federal government wrote the standards (it didn't).





The majority of voters support higher expectations for students, but without accurate information about what the Common Core is and does, they're uncertain about the standards. At the same time, while many believe our education policy puts too much focus on testing, they don't want to see testing abandoned altogether. Parents and teachers largely value the information that tests can provide and how they can be used to improve education, but they also believe that tests need to be balanced by all the other important factors that make a great school.

Let's listen to parents, teachers and communities by continuing to raise standards and move towards better, fairer, and fewer tests so that all students have access to a world-class education and the opportunity to succeed after they graduate high school.

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**Carmel Martin, Opinion Contributor**

Carmel Martin is executive vice president for policy at the Center for American Progress.

**Tags: Common Core, testing, K-12 education**

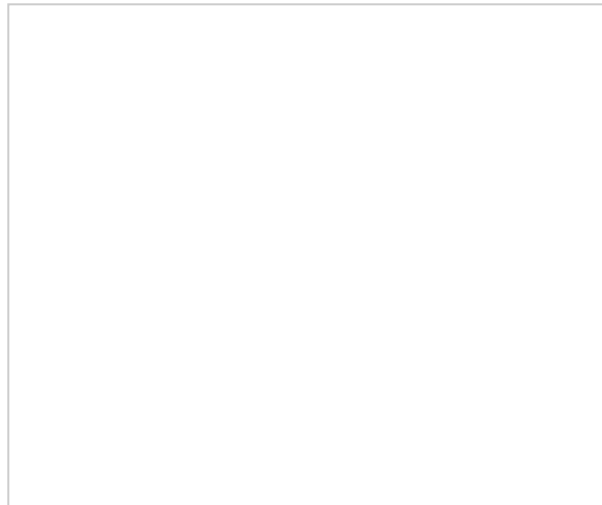
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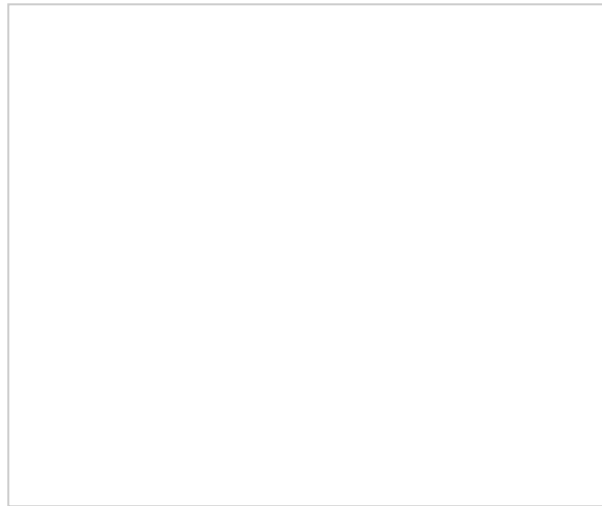
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