

Louisiana teachers more likely to teach to state standards, study finds

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Teachers in Louisiana are doing better than peers in other states in using classroom materials and providing instruction that is aligned with their state standards, according to a new RAND Corporation report.

Louisiana [teachers](#) are more likely to consult classroom resources that address their state standards, and they report teaching and thinking about instruction in ways that differ from the norms seen among teachers in other states, according to the report.

Researchers say the findings may be linked to the way Louisiana state education officials have worked with teachers to help them understand the state standards and address them in the classroom.

"State education leaders in Louisiana have adopted strategies intended to help teachers address their state standards more deeply and thoughtfully in their classrooms," said Julia Kaufman, the study's lead author and a policy researcher at the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit research organization. "The success in Louisiana may offer lessons for other states about how to encourage teachers to better align classroom activities with these standards"

Actions taken by Louisiana education officials include having a coherent academic strategy focused on alignment and quality in the state's education system, transparent and regular communication about academics across layers of the education system, and support for local decision-making and ownership of change by districts and teachers.

Researchers say the adoption of the Common Core State standards and similar state-developed standards, such as the case in Louisiana, represent an opportunity for states to reimagine how to provide teachers with clearer messages

about what they can do every day in their classrooms to support student learning.

Students in Louisiana have made significant strides in being more career and college ready, despite being the fact Louisiana is one of the poorest states in the country. The state's high school graduation rate and the number of students enrolled in college both are at all-time highs.

The RAND study is based on information collected using the RAND American Teacher Panel, a representative sample of 2,700 teachers across the nation who are surveyed periodically about national education issues. The study includes representative samples of teachers from California, Louisiana, New Mexico and New York.

A previous RAND study based on the panel found mixed evidence about whether teachers nationally were using instructional materials with some demonstrated evidence of alignment to their state standards. In general, the study found that mathematics teachers were more likely to use materials aligned with state standards than English language arts teachers.

The new RAND study compares Louisiana teachers to their peers nationally, examining teachers' use of instructional materials, their understanding of state standards and whether teachers align classroom practices with state standards.

The study found that mathematics teachers in Louisiana were far more likely - by more than 30 percentage points - to draw upon instructional resources aligned with state standards than their peers in other states that have similar standards. English language arts teachers in Louisiana also were significantly more likely to draw upon instructional resources aligned with their state standards than their peers in other states.

In addition, Louisiana teachers were 10 to 20 percentage points more likely to consult online resources for their instruction that are aligned with or have a clear relationship with state standards. English language arts teachers in Louisiana also demonstrated a more-accurate understanding of approaches and classroom practices aligned with their standards, and reported more standards-aligned classroom practices, compared to teachers in other states.

Provided by RAND Corporation

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