

Failure to Launch: Oklahoma Academic Standards in Mathematics

Dr. Kate Raymond and Dr. Stacy Reeder

This article examined Oklahoman teachers' perceptions of the Oklahoma Academic Standards in Mathematics one year after implementation using both quantitative and qualitative measures. We collected data using a quantitative survey sent to all teachers of mathematics in the state of Oklahoma. Throughout the state, 569 teachers responded to the survey. We also conducted follow-up interviews with a purposefully chosen sample who were representative of our respondents in terms of geographic locations within the state, years of experience, and grade level taught. We found that professional development experiences that focused on understanding how to use the new standards made a greater impact on teachers' perceptions and use of the standards than experience, location, or grade level taught. Participating teachers who experienced professional development on the standards reported:

1. greater confidence in their ability to implement the standards.
2. greater perceived potential of the standards to positively impact mathematics education in Oklahoma.
3. significant changes to their teaching practices in accordance to the standards

However, only 30.3% of responding teachers reported receiving one or more days of professional development around the standards.

Participants with and without professional development experiences agree on some of the challenges they faced in implementing the standards, including:

1. a lack of alignment between their district adopted textbook and the Oklahoma Academic Standards in Mathematics which required them to search for or create alternative curriculum materials.
One participant compared teachers in Oklahoma to "scavengers, here looking for whatever we can piecemeal together, to teach what we need."
2. a need for continuing professional development about how to interpret and implement the new standards.

Participants called for experiences that allowed teachers to work in groups both within and across school districts to identify and develop high quality materials that aligned with the Oklahoma Academic Standards in Mathematics.

The findings demonstrate the critical need for professional development. Regardless of what textbook or other curriculum may be used, teachers need professional development in the use of those curriculum materials in support of the state standards.