

The Politics of Current Education Reform in the United States

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History of Education in American Politics

- **Mistrust of Central Authority going back to Country's Founding and Codified in US Constitution**
- **Local Tradition of American Educational Reform**
- **History of local policy interpretation and implementation**

40 Years of American Education Reform

1980s: Focus on minimum competency testing

1990s: State Standards Movement

2000s: Test-Based Accountability

2010s: “Common Core State Standards”
National Standards

Common Core State Standards

- Developed by consortium of state governors and chief state school officers
- Focused on English language arts and mathematics
- Benchmarked internationally
- Backward mapped from college/career readiness
- Voluntary
- Adopted by 45 of 50 US states in 2010-2011
- Supported by Federal Government through funding of assessment systems (\$350 million) & competitive state grants (\$4.35 billion)
- Increasingly become part of the political debate in the country

Arguments on Both Sides of the Common Core Standards

Supporters

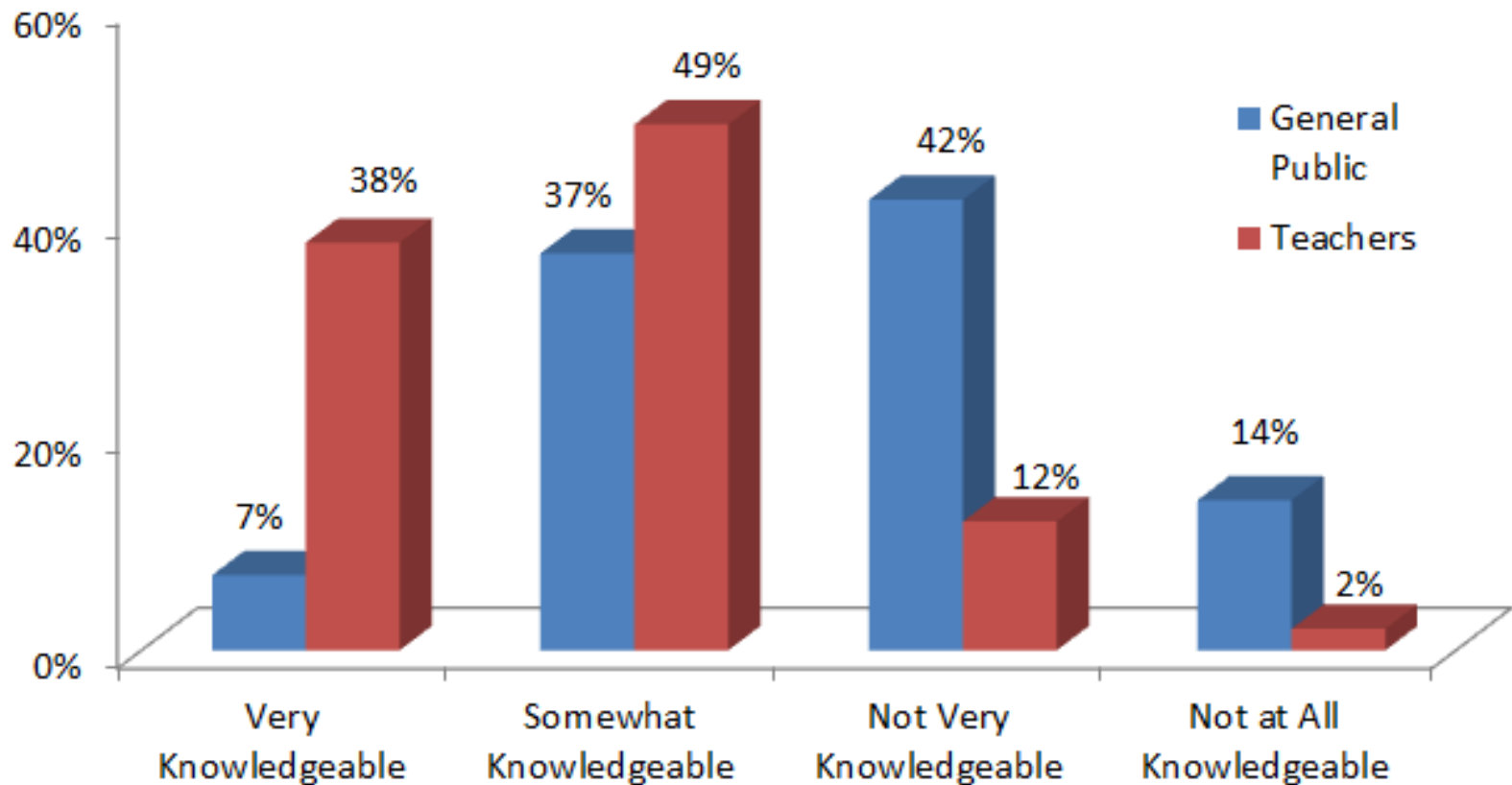
- More rigorous
- Incorporate latest research on how students learn
- Internationally benchmarked
- Aligned assessments
- Help students who are mobile

Opponents

- Inappropriate federal government role in education
- Testing too dominant
- Business exploitation of education
- A more centralized system reduces the local control that allows for multiple purposes of education

What Public Opinion Polls Show

Knowledge of the Common Core Standards



Source: Education Next, 2014

What Public Opinion Polls Show

Do you favor or oppose having the teachers in your community use the Common Core State Standards to guide what they teach?

	National totals '14 %	Public school parents '14 %	Rep. '14 %	Dem. '14 %	Ind. '14 %
Favor	33	32	17	53	34
Oppose	60	62	76	38	60
Don't know/refused	7	6	7	9	6

Source: Phi Delta Kappan-Gallup Poll September 2014

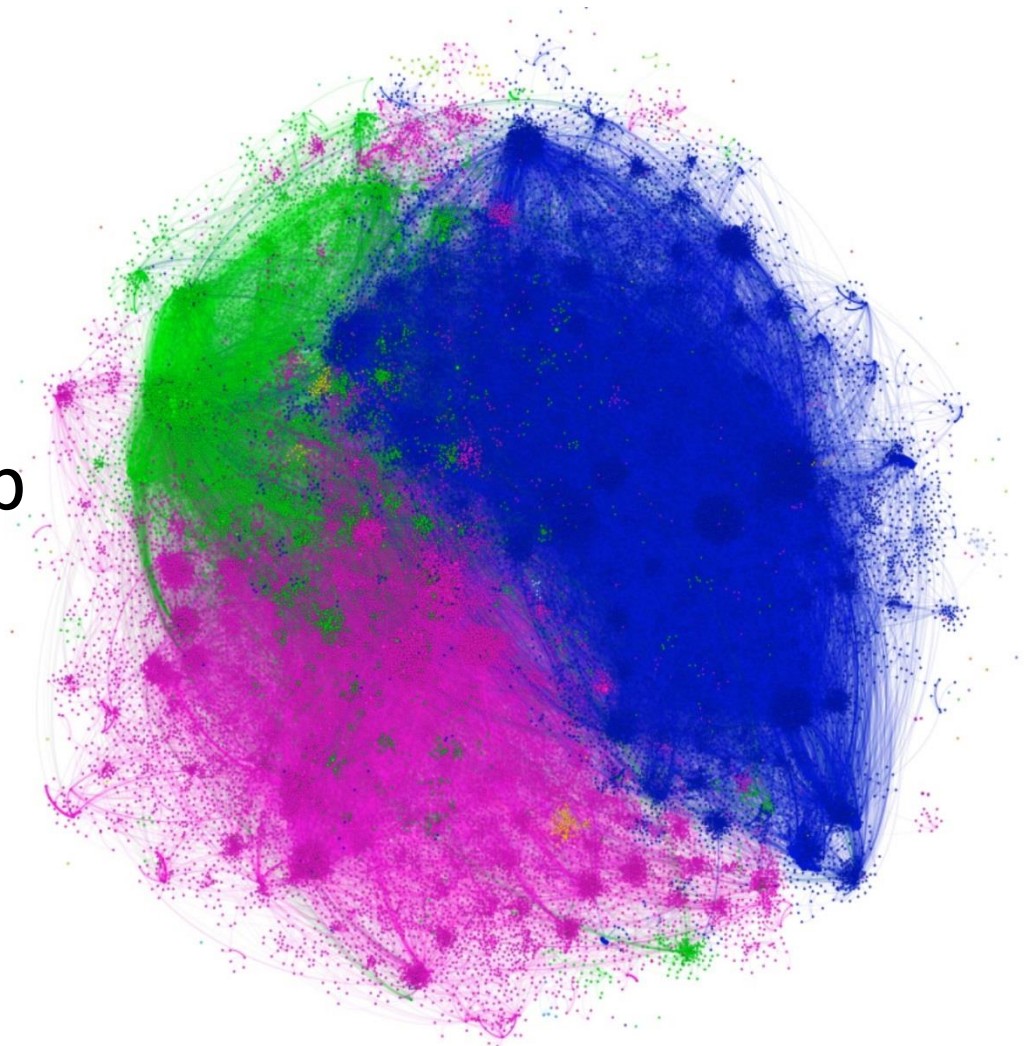


A Look at Common Core Through Twitter

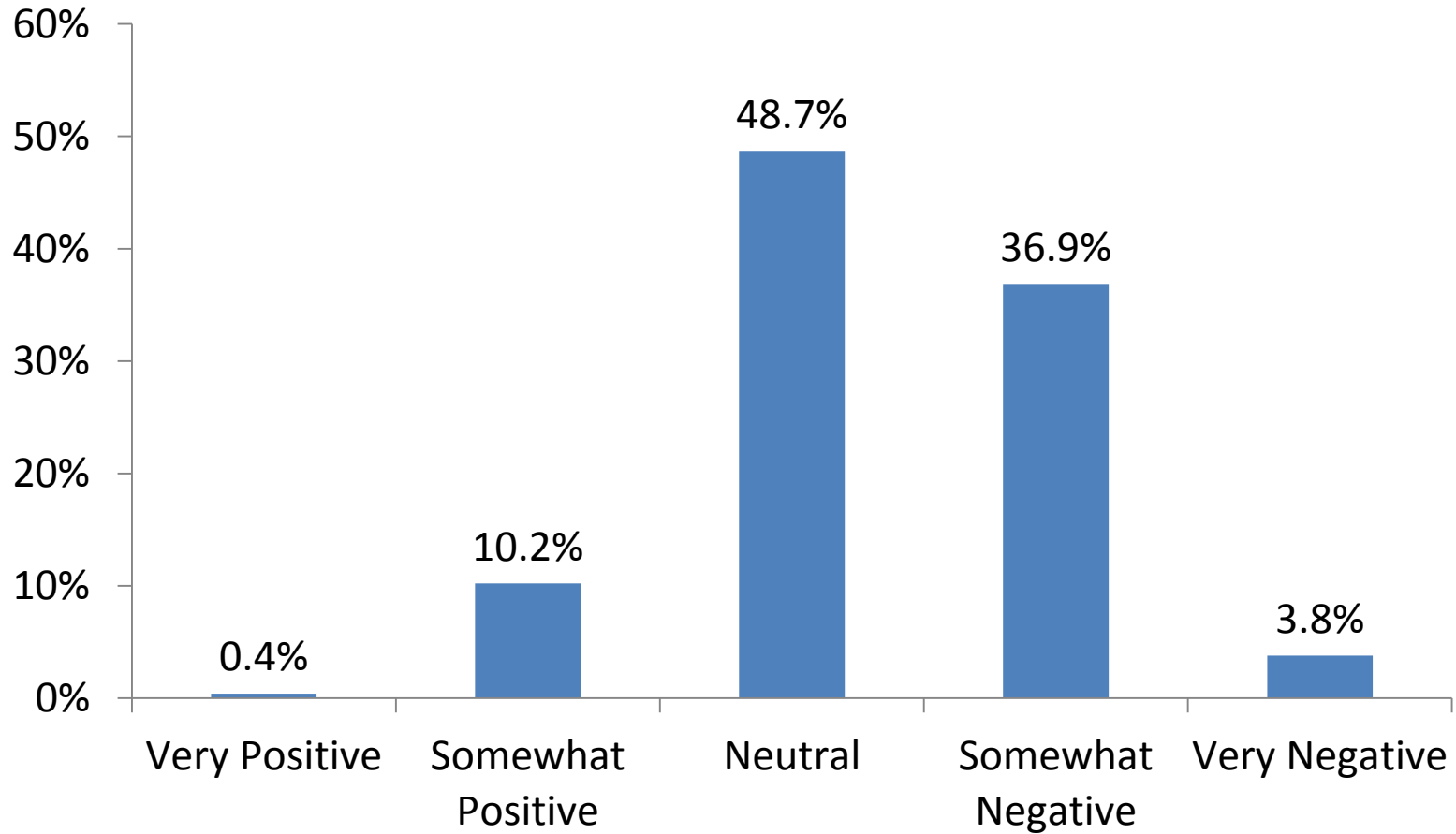
Tweets with hashtag
#commoncore

Covering 6 months
from Sept 2013 to Feb
2014

189,668 tweets
66,496 Nodes

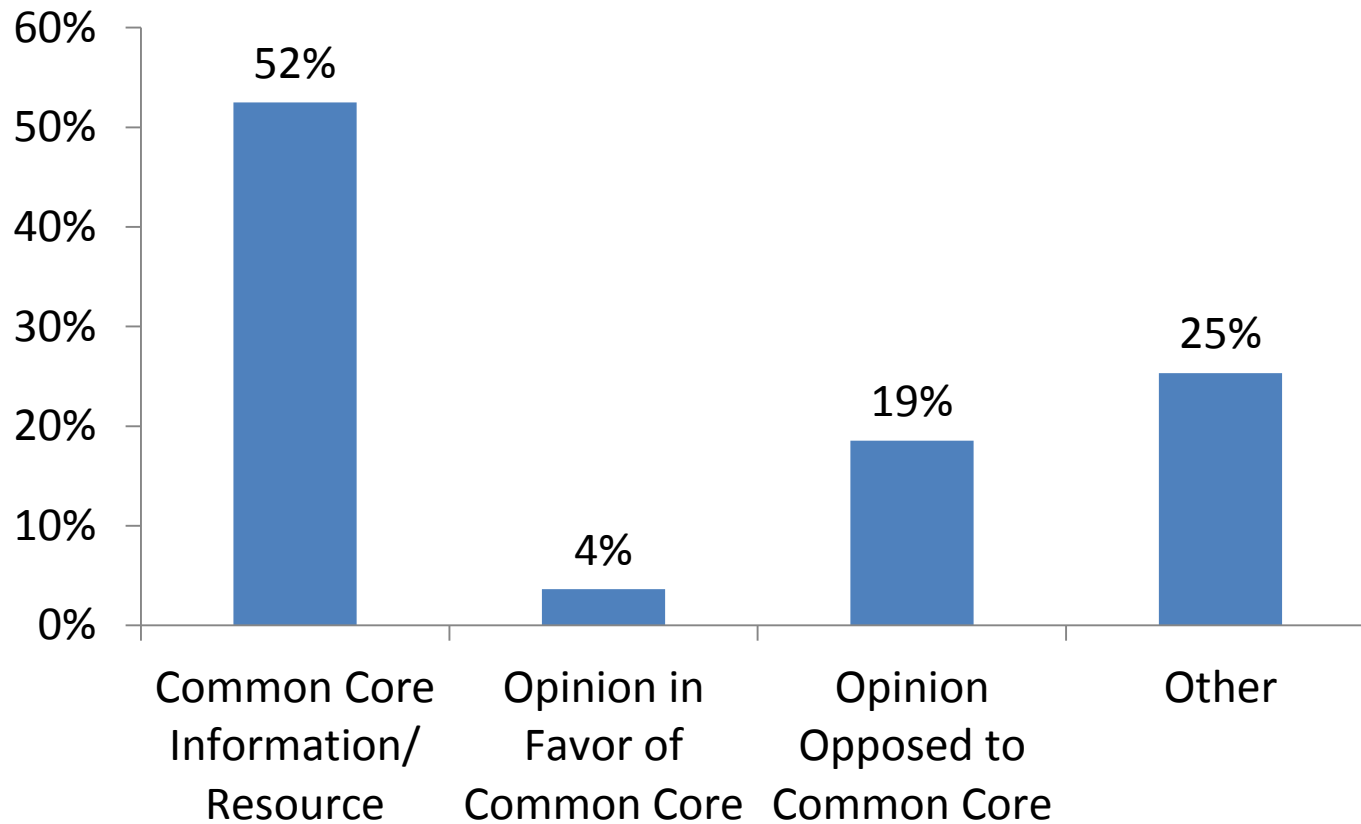


Valence of Content of Random Sample of Tweets of 400 Highest Influencers



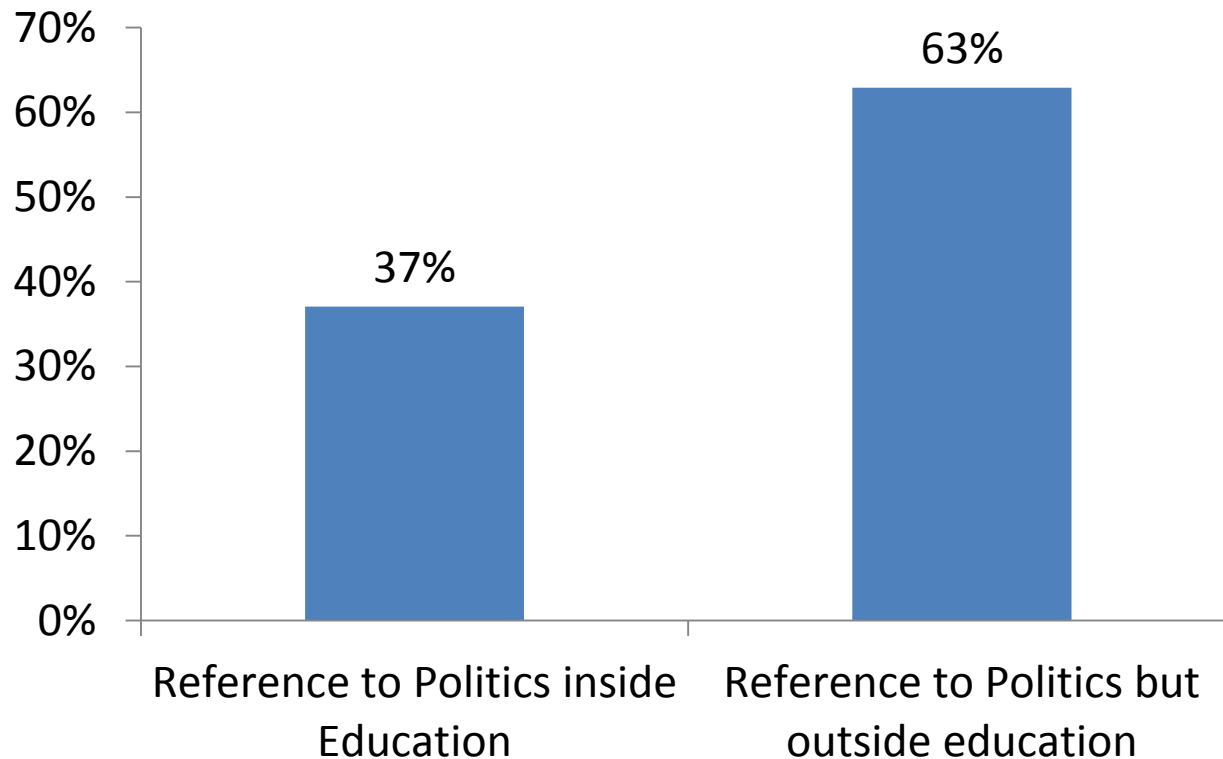
N=6,313

Information Conveyed in Random Sample of Tweets of 400 Highest Influencers



N=6,313

Political References in Random Sample of Tweets of 400 Highest Influencers



N=1,397

Summary

- The current standards reform in the United States epitomizes the centralization/decentralization dispute that has been the overriding debate of our history.
- The Common Core standards debate has shifted from inside education to the broader political discussion in the country
- Common Core Opponents are Winning the Social Media Debate.

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