

# School News & Notes

## Poll: Most Americans Still Want Cursive Taught In Schools

by Beth Miller

(NAPSA)—Cursive is back in the spotlight. For the 2013 school year, learning to read and write in cursive may be an optional part of elementary school education in many U.S. public schools. The controversy about cursive lessons in modern classroom curricula is about more than reading grandma's cookie recipes and signing credit card receipts, as many might think.



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The Back to Basics Law, signed this June in North Carolina, maintains that cursive fluency improves fine motor skills and lights up the creative parts of the brain more than typing does. And a recent College Board study showed that students who write their SAT essays in cursive score higher than peers who print them. However, most educators in the U.S. have sentenced cursive to a dismal fate. While it seems the debate is settled with the rollout of the Common Core Standards in 45 states, are curriculum designers making a mistake in eliminating it from classroom instruction?

Despite the poor prognosis handed down for cursive instruction by educators, American adults and children feel strongly about its demise, with passions often flaring on both sides of the issue. Read any article on the subject online, and marvel at the sheer number of reader comments both in support of children learning to read and write in cursive and those who see it as antiquated and useless in the 21st century. For those in favor of its continued instruction, familiar questions often arise: How will kids read historical documents? What next...will schools stop teaching spelling because of computer spell-check programs?

Beyond those oft-cited concerns, are there greater long-term implications on a generation that grows up not knowing how to read or write in cursive? Will cursive "illiteracy" harm them in the job market? What

impression will cursive-fluent adults have on other adults who do not know cursive?

According to a recent survey conducted online by Harris Interactive® on behalf of USA Gold pencils, almost 90 percent of Americans feel it is still necessary to practice reading and writing in cursive. And nearly eight in 10 adults and close to seven in 10 children believe cursive writing should be taught in schools, as it will always be necessary. When asked whether they feel that cursive writing is a skill that all workers, no matter their occupation, should know, 70 percent of U.S. adults agreed it is a skill that workers should possess. Additionally, more than half of all women in hiring positions indicated that cursive should be an essential skill for a job candidate.

Before we tell students to put their #2 pencils down for good, there are more questions to ask. There's the worry among some parents about the variances between the quality of education available at public schools and private schools. Will cursive continue to be taught in independent schools, thereby widening the knowledge gap among socioeconomic groups? Will more affluent parents find ways to teach cursive at home or seek out programs that offer it to their children in hopes of giving them a leg up in a competitive job market down the road?

Hope is not lost for cursive loyalists. Since its instruction isn't expressly prohibited in the Common Core, public school teachers may choose to continue offering cursive lessons in their classrooms. And now that we've had a chance to hear from American adults and kids in support of keeping cursive in the classroom, teachers may begin to pencil it back into their lesson plans this school year and for years to come.

Visit Target and Walmart stores or Amazon.com to purchase USA Gold #2 pencils for your students this school year. And join the conversation at [www.facebook.com/writedudes](http://www.facebook.com/writedudes) or on Twitter @thewritedudes.

Ms. Miller is a communications executive in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**And So It Is Written**

NEARLY 9 OUT OF 10 AMERICANS BELIEVE Cursive HANDWRITING IS A NECESSARY SKILL

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

70% of U.S. adults believe that all workers should know Cursive

7 out of 10

U.S. women in a position to hire are more likely to deem Cursive a necessary skill for a job candidate

64% 56%

Even Though 45 out of 50 States No Longer Teach Cursive in Schools, Most Americans Still Think It Should Be Taught

Where Cursive is Taught and Where It Isn't\*

Nearly 8 out of 10 U.S. adults and almost 7 out of 10 kids think cursive should still be taught

8 out of 10

9 out of 10

What Americans Think About Adults Who Don't Know Cursive

They never learned it in school

50% adults  
52% kids

They're less literate than adults who are cursive fluent

30% 25%

They're probably from a younger generation

62% 16%

They're probably more computer savvy

27% 22%

They're not smart

7% 11%

Source: USA Gold pencils/Harris Interactive® survey comprised of YouthQuery online omnibus conducted June 13-26, 2013 and QuickQuery™ online omnibus conducted June 13-17, 2013.  
\* Source for Common Core Adoption by U.S. States: [www.corestandards.org/in-the-states](http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states)