

Identifying the Costs of Standards-based K-12 Education

Margaret E. Goertz
Consortium for Policy Research in Education
GSE/University of Pennsylvania

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Guiding Questions

1. What are the major activities states must undertake to develop and maintain a standards-based K-12 education system?
2. How does the nature of these activities vary across states?
3. What are the cost/expenditure components for these activities?

Major SBR Activities

1. Standards-setting

- Developing/revising academic content standards
- Setting performance standards
- Disseminating standards/training

Major SBR Activities

2. State assessment

- Aligning assessment with standards
- Item development
- Test construction
- Test administration
- Test scoring
- Score reporting
- Technical review, validation of system

Major SBR Activities

3. State accountability system

- Data system (student, school, district)
- Reporting (school, district)
- Identifying school status, monitoring progress
- Other accountability measures (process, etc.)

Major SBR Activities

4. Rewards and Sanctions

- Rewards to successful/improving schools
- Sanctions for underperforming/failing districts, schools and/or students
- Intervention for failing schools, districts
- Intervention for failing students

Major SBR Activities

5. Alignment with other policies
 - Teacher preparation and program approval
 - Teacher certification and licensure
 - Curriculum (textbook adoption in selected states)

Major SBR Activities

6. Instructional Delivery System

- Supporting teachers, schools and districts to implement new or revised standards
 - Professional development
 - Curriculum alignment
 - Resources for expanded standards (adequacy studies)
- Supporting students to meet more challenging standards
 - Programs/resources to address special education needs

Sources of Variation: Standards-setting and Assessment

1. Frequency of activity (e.g. Years in revision cycle of standards and assessments; number of standards and assessments)
2. Process for setting content and performance standards
3. Who is involved (e.g., SEA, expert panel, contractor, education/citizen panel, community meetings)

Sources of Variation: Rewards and Sanctions

1. Intervention for failing schools, districts
 - Needs assessments
 - Instructional audits
 - School improvement action planning
 - District capacity building
 - PD: workshops/training; curriculum and instruction; data analysis; assessment; leadership training

Sources of Variation: Rewards and Sanctions

2. Intervention for failing students (in states with high school exit exams, promotion gates)
 - State requires remediation for low-performing students
 - State specifies a process for identifying eligible students
 - State requires individual learning plans

Sources of Variation: State Context

1. Size, student demographics
2. History of state SBR policies
3. Role of state in funding education
4. Fiscal health of state

Expenditure Components

1. Salaries
2. Contracts, consultant fees
3. Teacher stipends
4. Meeting and travel costs
5. Grants to regional units, districts, schools

Example of Framework

Activity	Frequency	Process	Who is involved	Types of expends	Fixed/ variable
Developing content standards	Years in revision cycle	Who develops? Expert, educator or community panel?	SEA Consultant Teachers Business Public	Salaries Fees Stipends Meeting costs	Fixed per subject area; variable by number of subjects
Setting performance standards	Years in revision cycle	Who sets? SEA Teacher panels Others	SEA Teachers Others	Salaries Fees Stipends Meeting costs	Fixed per subject per test; variable by number of tests
Disseminate standards	Years in revision cycle	How disseminate stds? Educators trained?	SEA Other providers	Salaries Fees Travel Print/web costs	Fixed per subject area; variable by number of subjects ¹⁴

Issues

1. What are distinctive SBR activities and costs, and what costs would be incurred even if instruction were delivered without a SBR system?
2. Should SBR costs be considered part of cost of K-12 education or an additional cost?
3. What are “state” versus “local” costs of SBR?
4. To what extent are local costs covered by state funding of K-12 education?