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## STUDY ESTIMATES COST OF TRANSITION TO NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS AT \$16 BILLION

*Cost far exceeds sums doled out in federal grants used to persuade states to adopt*

BOSTON/ WASHINGTON, D.C./SAN FRANCISCO – Aligning state and local educational systems to the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and math will cost the 45 states plus the District of Columbia that have adopted them nearly \$16 billion over seven years according to a new study published by Pioneer Institute, the American Principles Project, and the Pacific Research Institute of California. This does not include additional spending for reforms to help students *meet* the new standards.

“Very few of the states that adopted Common Core vetted the costs and benefits beforehand,” said Theodor Rebarber, lead contributor to the analysis, [\*National Cost of Aligning States and Localities to the Common Core Standards\*](#). “While test-development costs will be covered by federal grants, these states are also likely to see their overall expenditures increase significantly.”

The study, which only calculates expenses directly associated with the transition, finds that states are likely to incur \$10.5 billion in one-time costs. These include the price of familiarizing educators with the new standards, obtaining textbooks and instructional materials aligned with the standards, and necessary technology infrastructure upgrades.

An estimated \$503 million will be incurred in first-year operational costs like technology training and support and higher assessment costs for some states.

AccountabilityWorks (AW), which developed the analysis, estimates that an additional \$801 million will be incurred annually in years two through seven for ongoing support of the enhanced technology infrastructure and the introduction of new assessments that are currently under development.

“The nearly \$16 billion in additional costs is nearly four times the federal government's Race to the Top grant awards,” said Pioneer Institute Executive Director Jim Stergios. “With state and local taxpayers footing 90 percent of the bill for K-12 public education, the federal government's push to get states to adopt national standards and tests amounts to one big unfunded mandate.”

The study uses California, whose current academic standards are [\*among the nation's best\*](#) but has adopted Common Core, as an example. AccountabilityWorks estimates the Golden State will incur additional costs of over \$1 billion for technology and support, \$606 million for professional

development and \$374 million for textbooks and materials over seven years. The additional costs would exacerbate California's recent budget woes, which have been even worse than what most other states have endured.

"In coercing states to adopt the Common Core State Standards program, the US DOE and various private trade groups have denied the American people and their elected state legislators any meaningful chance to study either its academic quality or cost implications," said Emmett McGroarty of the American Principles Project. "Sadly, now state and local taxpayers will have to pay for Common Core's distortion of the democratic process."

The study includes several recommendations. The first is that the 45 states and the District of Columbia that have adopted Common Core and joined one of the two federally-sponsored testing consortia should engage in a public discussion about the costs and benefits of adoption and whether it represents the best investment of scarce education resources.

"The cruel irony is that in their chase for elusive federal grant dollars states have largely ignored the cost of implementing the national education standards that the US DOE and DC special interests are foisting on them," said Lance Izumi, Koret Senior Fellow in Education Studies at the Pacific Research Institute. "Especially in deficit-plagued states like California, it was simply fiscal madness to agree to the national-standards regime and its massive future costs."

AccountabilityWorks also recommends that states conduct a technology feasibility assessment to determine their readiness to implement the standards, ensure that thorough professional development is available to all teachers so students have an adequate opportunity to learn the material they will be tested on, identify the resources needed to fully align instructional resources and materials with Common Core, and analyze the future annual costs associated with national standards-based assessments that are currently under development.

AccountabilityWorks is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the dual goals of research that supports sound educational policy as well as supporting states and schools in implementing high quality assessment and accountability systems. Among its initiatives, AW has conducted cost studies on the implementation of federal education initiatives, developed paper and online assessments, and conducted research on state standards. Theodor Rebarber is chief executive officer of AW. Previously he was chief education officer of a system of charter schools, served as staff in Congress and at the U.S. Department of Education, and researched state education reform at the Vanderbilt Institute of Public Policy Studies. Rebarber has testified to Congress on state costs of implementing federal education initiatives.

Pioneer Institute led a campaign in 2010 to oppose the adoption of national standards, producing a four-part series reviewing evolving drafts. The reports compared them with existing Massachusetts and California standards, and found that the federal versions contained weaker content in both ELA and math. The reports, listed below, were authored by curriculum experts R. James Milgram, emeritus professor of mathematics at Stanford University; Sandra Stotsky, former Massachusetts Board of Education member and University of Arkansas Professor; and Ze'ev Wurman, a Silicon Valley executive who helped develop California's education standards and assessments.

In addition, along with the Federalist Society, the American Principles Project, and the Pacific Research Institute, Pioneer recently released a research paper co-authored by former general counsel

and former deputy general counsel of the United States Department of Education, Robert S. Eitel and Kent D. Talbert, on the legal concerns about national standards and assessments.

- [Why Race to the Middle: First-Class State Standards Are Better than Third Class National Standards](#)
- [Fair to Middling: A National Standards Progress Report](#)
- [The Emperor's New Clothes: National Assessments Based on Weak 'College and Career Readiness Standards](#)
- [Common Core's Standards Still Don't Make the Grade: Why Massachusetts and California Must Retain Control Over Their Academic Destinies](#)
- [The Road to a National Curriculum: The Legal Aspects of the Common Core Standards, Race to the Top, and Conditional Waivers](#)

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