**Colorado Common Core Implementation Costs**

by Henry W. Burke

8.23.13 (Revised)

It will cost Colorado $231 million (net amount) to implement the Common Core Standards (CCS).  Where will Colorado find $231 million to implement the mediocre Common Core Standards?

I will call your attention to an excellent Pioneer Institute report, "National Cost of Aligning States and Localities to the Common Core Standards," dated February 2012 (PI report) and my report, "States' Taxpayers Cannot Afford Common Core Standards," by Henry W. Burke, dated 10.15.12 (Burke report).  These are the links to the reports:

<http://pioneerinstitute.org/download/national-cost-of-aligning-states-and-localities-to-the-common-core-standards/>

<http://educationviews.org/states-taxpayers-cannot-afford-common-core-standards-2/>

I also wrote a companion report applicable to the states that did not adopt the Common Core Standards, "Non-Common Core States Will Save Millions of Dollars," by Henry W. Burke, 10.18.12:

<http://educationviews.org/non-common-core-states-will-save-millions-of-dollars-2/>

Colorado gave up very good state standards to adopt the inferior Common Core Standards.  According to a 2010 Fordham Institute report that compared the state standards with the Common Core Standards, Colorado had good English Language Arts standards ("Too Close to Call").

I encourage you to realistically evaluate the costs versus the benefits for the State of Colorado.  I will focus only on the cost of implementing the Common Core Standards (CCS) versus the dollar awards received from the federal government.

I thought I would offer a little insight into the CCS implementation costs.  This explanation includes the Pioneer report figures and my assumptions.  Obviously, I cannot speak for the Pioneer Institute nor its partners in the white paper, Accountability Works and Pacific Research Institute.  These are strictly my thoughts, assumptions and calculations.

The Pioneer Institute report identified four cost categories for CCS implementation.  The categories are: Testing, Professional Development, Textbooks, and Technology.  Pioneer calculated the total CCS implementation cost over a 7-year time period.

The PI report included bar graphs (without dollar figures) for each state in Professional Development, Textbooks, and Technology.  The Appendices to the PI report showed exact dollar figures for each state in only the Textbooks and Technology categories.  This is the link to the Pioneer Institute Appendices:

<http://www.accountabilityworks.org/photos/Appendices.Common_Core_Cost.AW.pdf>

Consequently, I had to derive figures for Testing and Professional Development for each of the 46 states.  My goal was to duplicate the Pioneer figures as closely as possible.  My nationwide totals for the four categories agree quite closely with the Pioneer Institute report.

**A.  Colorado CCS Loss**

The State of Colorado submitted a proposal to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Race to the Top (RTTT) program and received a rank of No. 14 in Phase 1 and a rank of No. 17 in Phase 2 of that competition.  The 12 "winning" states under Phase 1 and Phase 2 of RTTT received a total of $3.94 billion.  Colorado was not awarded any funds under the Phase 1 and Phase 2 competitions.  In subsequent competitions, Colorado received $73,778,692 ($73.779 million) for competitive stimulus awards.

In the Burke Table 1, CCS Loss Per State, the CCS Total Cost for Colorado is $304.494 million; and the federal competitive award total is $73.779 million.  The difference is $230.715 million.

[$304.494 million - $73.779 million = $230.715 million]

This means Colorado will have to find $231 million to pay for the implementation expense of CCS.

**B.  Colorado CCS Cost**

In the Burke Table 2, CCS Cost Per Student, we can see that Colorado has a CCS Cost per Student of $366.  This is slightly below the average cost per student of $379 (average cost for the 46 CCS states).

Table 3, Total CCS Cost, lists the components making up the Total CCS Cost of $304.494 million for Colorado.  Testing cost is $24.702 million; Professional Development cost is $94.735 million; Textbook cost is $48.476 million; and Technology cost is $136.581 million.

In round numbers, Colorado will spend $25 million on Testing, $95 million on Professional Development, $48 million on Textbooks, and $136 million on Technology.  The Total CCS Cost for Colorado will be $304 million.

**Explanation of Figures**

**1.  Testing**

**a.  Nationwide CCS Testing Cost**

Testing is a function of the number of students tested.  Table 5 in my report shows the Total Nationwide Cost for the 46 CCS states.  My Table 5 duplicates Pioneer Figure 2B (on page 2 of the PI report).  Figure 2B shows a Total Testing Cost of $1,240,641,297.

Table 6 (Burke report) lists the number of students and teachers in each of the 46 states; the total for the 46 states is 41,805,062 students.  I obtained all of the numbers in Table 6 from the Pioneer report Appendices (NCES: 2009 - 2010 School Year).

When I divided $1,240,641,297 by 41,805,062 students, I obtained a factor of $29.67681993 per student.  This Testing cost factor was applied to each of the 46 states to get the Testing cost for each state.  My Total Testing Cost of $1,240.641 million agrees with the Pioneer Figure 2B number.

**b.  Colorado CCS Testing Cost**

Colorado has a total student enrollment of 832,368 students.  When I multiplied 832,368 students by the $29.6768 factor per student, I obtained $24.702 million.

[832,368 students  x  $29.67681993 per student = $24,702,035]

**2.  Professional Development**

The purpose of Professional Development is to train the teachers on the new Common Core academic standards.  Professional Development is a function of the number of teachers that must be trained.  Pioneer used a Professional Development cost of $1,931 per teacher.

Colorado has 49,060 teachers.  When I multiplied 49,060 teachers by $1,931 per teacher, I obtained $94.735 million. [49,060 teachers  x  $1,931 per teacher = $94,734,860]

Incidentally, my calculations produced a Professional Development Cost for California of $605.938 million.  The PI report bar graph showed the number $606 million for California.  This verifies that my calculation assumptions and methodology are correct.

**3.  Textbooks**

 I obtained the Textbook cost for Colorado directly from the Pioneer Institute Appendix.  The Table in the Appendix showed a Total Textbook Cost for Colorado of $48,476,110 ($48.476 million).

The PI Appendix listed the following numbers for Textbooks and Instructional Materials:

**Colorado Textbook Cost** (Millions of Dollars)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Textbook Cost  ($ Millions) |
| K | 4.595 |
| 1 | 4.406 |
| 2 | 3.498 |
| 3 | 3.538 |
| 4 | 3.168 |
| 5 | 3.098 |
| 6 | 3.534 |
| Subtotal -- K - 6 | 25.837 |
|  |  |
| 7 | 3.554 |
| 8 | 3.575 |
| Subtotal -- 7 - 8 | 7.129 |
|  |  |
| 9 | 3.991 |
| 10 | 3.737 |
| 11 | 3.945 |
| 12 | 3.837 |
| Subtotal -- 9 - 12 | 15.510 |
|  |  |
| Total -- K - 12 | 48.476 |

**4.  Technology**

I obtained the Technology cost for Colorado directly from the Pioneer Appendix.  The PI Appendix lists the Total Technology Cost for Colorado as $136,581,281 ($136.581 million).

The PI Appendix provides the following information:

**Colorado Technology Cost** (Millions of Dollars)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description | Technology  Cost  ($ Millions) | Total  Technology  Cost  ($ Millions) |
| One-Time Costs | 55.676 | 55.676 |
| Year 1 Operations | 6.369 | 6.369 |
| Years 2 - 7 Operations (Annual) | 12.4226 | -- |
| Total for 6 Years (Years 2 - 7) | 74.536 | 74.536 |
| Total Technology Cost |  | 136.581 |

**C.  Urgency of Decision**

We know that the total cost to implement CCS in Colorado will be $304.494 million ($304 million), but we have not said anything about the timing.  The timing for the expenditures is extremely important!

A sizeable portion of the total CCS implementation cost is spent early in the implementation.  In the Pioneer Report Figure 2B, two-thirds (about 66 %) of the Total Cost falls into the up-front, one-time cost period.  Pioneer shows a one-time cost of $10,522,885,028; the Total Cost is $15,835,121,347.  When I divide these two numbers, I get 66 %.

For Colorado, the figures are as follows:

**Timing of Colorado CCS Costs** (Millions of Dollars)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cost Category | Up-Front,  One-Time Cost   ($ Millions) | Years 1 - 7  Cost  ($ Millions) | Total Cost --  Up-Front &  for 7 Years  ($ Millions) |
| Testing | -- | 24.702 | 24.702 |
| Professional Development | 94.735 | -- | 94.735 |
| Textbooks | 48.476 | -- | 48.476 |
| Technology | 55.676 | 80.905 | 136.581 |
| Total Cost | 198.887 | 105.607 | 304.494 |
| Percentage of Total | 65 % | 35 % | 100 % |

As this table shows, 65 % of the total cost ($198.887 million) is incurred as an up-front, one-time cost.  If Colorado has any interest in dropping the CCS, the state should act very soon.  Much of the CCS implementation expense (65 %) hits very early in the process.  If the state delays the decision to drop CCS, it could waste $199 million on a system that it is not going to use.  The decision is urgent!

Please contact me if you would like copies of my two reports.

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