COLORADO REVISED STANDARDS DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY STUDY

Examples of State Standards Dissemination and Implementation Strategies

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Examples of State Standards Dissemination and Implementation Strategies[1]

Within the context of WestEd's study of Colorado's capacity to implement its revised content standards, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) requested that WestEd identify and summarize examples of standards implementation strategies employed by other states, which CDE could use to inform its own implementation approach. A preliminary online investigation of standards implementation strategies identified several models the CDE might employ when implementing the revised Colorado Academic Standards. The following summary describes the standards implementation efforts of five states—Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, and New Hampshire. While this is not a fully comprehensive review of state implementation models, these examples represent a variety of distinct approaches and should provide useful points of reference for the CDE.[2] While all five examples involve standards, not all focus on academic content standards; we include those that focus on other than academic content standards because the strategies they use are also applicable to state content standards.

Georgia. The Georgia Department of Education (GDOE) completed development of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) in 2004. Dissemination and implementation began the same year with distribution of the standards to 181 school systems.[3] To support the implementation of the standards, the Department reported providing the following types of support:

- a five-year implementation plan;
- standards documents including sample student work and commentary;
- a manual and best practices guide;
- professional development opportunities; and
- a web-based clearinghouse of tools and information.

The state's comprehensive five-year implementation plan called for the phase-in of standards by content area and grade level, with content-specific professional development

[1] While dissemination and implementation of state standards are often seen as separate activities, WestEd approached this study with the belief that they must be fully coordinated and represent two sides of the same plan for success. Additionally, our review suggests that the strategies for each greatly overlap and are best planned and implemented in full concert.

[2] Note that information summarized in this report has not been verified directly with the respective states and may reflect practices that have been modified since publication and/or posting of the cited documents.

[3] Larrabee, B., (2004, May 19), *Teachers to get own training to handle new state curriculum*. Retrieved December 9, 2009, from http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/58857/teachers_to_get_own_training_to_handle_new_state_curriculum/index.html

provided in each phase to support the subsequent year's rollout and the alignment of GPS following each implementation.[4] Professional development included train-the-trainer sessions for local education agency staff in the first year, followed by implementation training, content area follow-up training, and train-the-trainer sessions each subsequent year.[5] Both principals and teachers were trained in the course of the rollout. Furthermore, in addition to identifying the specific concepts and skills students should acquire, Georgia's performance standards documents themselves also provide suggested tasks and assignments, sample student work illustrating performance expectations, and commentary that links student work to standards.[6]

In addition to making available a manual for instruction, the GDOE issued the *Georgia Standards for School Performance Implementation Resource: A Collection of Best Practices*, which provided exemplars of performance actions, evidences, artifacts, and sources for school improvement.[7] Professional development and collections of student work have been provided on an ongoing basis; test alignment and GPS updating has also occurred.

The GDOE also created a state-of-the-art web-based clearinghouse—GeorgiaStandards.org—which offers a variety of tools and information supporting implementation of state academic standards.[8] Resources include FAQs; frameworks; videos; quiz generators; course and lesson authoring tools; flashcards; testing, surveying, web authoring, podcasting and presentation tools; online training modules; webinars; and an on-line, interactive best practices tool.

Iowa. As mandated by the state legislature, the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) began rollout of the Iowa Core Curriculum in the 2008-2009 school year. To support the

[4] Cox, K., (n.d.), *Georgia performance standards: Charting a course for academic excellence*. Retrieved January 29, 2010, from http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/DMGetDocument.aspx/performance_standards.ppt?p=4BE1EECF99CD364EA5554055463F1FBB77B0B70FECF5942E12E123FE4810FFF57BB1F0F40FD7ACBBA127DCDE6F315FEE&Type=D

[5] See *2006 GSS implementation resource*, http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/tss_school_improve.aspx?PageReq= TSSSchoolImpGSSPImp2006; *Professional learning,* http://www.gatechlit.org/training.asx

[6] See https://www.georgiastandards.org/Standards/Pages/BrowseStandards/BrowseGPS.aspx

[7] For the most recent version of this document, see Georgia Department of Education, (2007, May), *Implementation resource: Building capacity through best practices*, http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/DMGetDocument.aspx/IMPLEMENTATION%20RESOURCE%20FINAL%205-29-07.pdf?p=6CC6799F8C1371F6EB643760914BCA5A8A3858B1870DDC35C5F4C5B30A1D34D1&Type=D

[8] See https://www.georgiastandards.org/Pages/default.aspx

implementation of the Core Curriculum, the IDOE reported providing the following types of support:[9]

- leadership team professional development;
- an implementation planning protocol;
- web-based resources; and
- a collaborative network of area education agencies (AEAs).

In the initial phase of implementation, regional K–12 leadership teams received training in the form of six half-day sessions. To engage school leadership teams, teachers, and other stakeholders in the process of dialogue, data collection and analysis, resource coordination, and capacity building related to content alignment and instructional practices, the IDOE also issued an *Iowa Core Curriculum Implementation Planning Protocol*. This protocol guides schools in launching an ongoing implementation process encompassing data analysis, decision making, and professional development, with student learning and performance held as the ultimate goal[10].

Additional resources to aid schools and local education agencies in developing implementation plans have been made available through the IDOE website.[11] Furthermore, to provide technical assistance to schools and districts, the legislature funded the creation of the Iowa Core Curriculum Network, a collaborative effort of the IDOE and AEAs. Through this network, schools could access training and facilitation in such areas as:[12]

- aligning district standards, benchmarks, and curriculum to the Core Curriculum;
- supporting instruction improvements;
- providing leadership to affect successful Core Curriculum implementation;
- identifying and communicating best practices and processes; and
- providing and disseminating necessary structures, technical assistance, and tools to schools.

[9] Iowa Department of Education, (2009, November 16), *Iowa core curriculum: Self study and implementation handbook*. Retrieved January 29, 2010, from http://www.aea13.k12.ia.us/PROGRAMS_SERVICES/CurriculumAssessment/IowaCoreCurriculum/SelfStudyImplementationPlanHandbook11-16-09.docx

[10] See Iowa Department of Education, (2008, November 24), *Iowa Core Curriculum implementation planning*, http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php? option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=6502

[11] See http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=674&Itemid=1249

[12] See http://www.iowa.gov/educate/support/index.php?_m-knowledgebase&kbarticleid=1134

Kansas. Within Kansas, school districts play a central role in communicating standards to schools and communities, with the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) providing guidance and resources in support of district implementation efforts. Such resources as reported by the state have included the following:[13]

- implementation guidelines and documentation;
- teacher development workshops; and
- a dedicated website.

In rolling out the Kansas Science Education Standards (KSES), for example, the KSDE issued standards documents that included instructional examples, teacher notes, and illustrations clarifying the meaning and intent of the indicators. School districts were also provided implementation guidelines.[14] As an example, implementation guidelines for the KSES included the following actions school districts should take when implementing the standards:[15]

1. "Use the KSES as a framework for local curriculum, including Extended Standards for special needs students. The KSES provides a framework for building local curriculum. Local curriculum, developed from these standards, determines what is taught/learned in science. Local curriculum also provides local districts with a guide for selecting instructional resources.
2. Distribute complete sets of the KSES to all K-12 science teachers and K-12 administrators. Make all grade levels aware of the assessed indicators, and include all the KSES in local district K-12 science curriculum. Local districts are advised to insure [sic] that all of the KSES are included in local curriculum and that assessed indicators are not the entire focus of the use of the standards document.
3. Match each KSES indicator with the local grade level that includes the indicator in local curriculum. Determine what local district action is needed if there are KSES standards/indicators that are not addressed in local curriculum. (Note: Once approved by the KSDE, these standards will include in the Appendix a version of the standards that show a sample grade-by-grade breakdown of the grade span indicators.)

[13] See Kansas Education Resource Center, http://www.kerc-ks.org

[14] Marlette, S. M., & Goldston, M. J., (2003), *Implementation of the Kansas science education standards: A principal/teacher perspective*, paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Eucation of Teachers of Science, St. Louis, MO. Retrieved December 28, 2009, from the ERIC database. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED474532)

[15] Standards Development Committee, Kansas State Department of Education, (2007), *Kansas science education standards*, http://www.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=yBCIHNkZFsU%3D&tabid=144&mid=5789, pp. x-xi.

4. Develop local curricula that integrates science learning with concepts and skills of other curriculum areas, especially math.
5. Classroom teachers select developmentally appropriate instructional strategies to develop the understanding and abilities described in the KSES. The importance of inquiry does not imply that all teachers should pursue a single approach to teaching science.
6. Develop local assessments that support the KSES and extend beyond learning the measured Kansas Science Assessments.
7. Provide ongoing, research-based professional development for K-12 science teachers (all grade levels, not just assessed grade levels) to assure that all students have a highly qualified teacher. Science teachers need professional development time and support for a creative teaching and learning environment described by the KSES as lab-based, inquiry science.
8. Provide the resources needed for science learning: highly qualified science teachers, adequate class time, a rich array of learning materials, equipped and safe science classrooms, and the resources of the communities surrounding the schools.
9. Focus on K-12 student learning in science, while meeting the science learning requirements of federal "No Child Left Behind" legislation and Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA). Inform all science teachers of Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) assessment schedules and procedures…Each school should include science student achievement targets in the School Improvement Plan.
10. These standards provide a framework for local curricula for science knowledge and skills for all students to attain. For students going beyond the expectations of all students…these standards provide a conceptual framework upon which to build advanced curriculum.
11. Provide information about the KSES to all community members who support science learning, including parents.
12. Participate in teacher development workshops on KSES implementation provided by KSDE."

KSDE also provided teacher development workshops on KSES implementation. In addition, the KSDE has developed the Education Resource Center (www.kerc-ks.org), a dedicated website offering teachers tools for aligning classroom instruction and assessment to state academic standards. Resources available on the website include:

- information on how each standard spans previous and subsequent grade levels;

- worksheets for assessing alignment of current curriculum to the standards;
- a series of instructional activities geared toward the teaching of each standard;
- classroom assessments designed to measure what students know and what they need to learn in relation to the standards; and
- a list of helpful materials for additional information on teaching and assessing each standard.

Maine. In Maine, a statewide system of standards and assessments was developed by the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) and the State Board of Education and approved by the legislature.[16] Implementation of the System of *Learning Results*, however, was a local function. The MDOE "encourages all districts to begin or continue the development of a comprehensive assessment system, not only to comply with the provisions of the legislative acts…but also to create an integrated system of curriculum, instruction and assessment."[17] To enable these efforts, the MDOE has reported providing the following supports:

- a resource guide and materials;
- web-based resources;
- support for redesigned state assessments; and
- independent studies of implementation progress to identify deficiencies and recommend additional efforts.

To support standards implementation, the MDOE issued the *Grand Ideas and Practical Work: The Maine Local Assessment System Resource Guide* (1998).[18] The MDOE also has provided curriculum and assessment resources, a full calendar of professional development opportunities, and dedicated support staff to support implementation efforts. Website resources have included multimedia and web presentations, overview material, and key documents.[19] An Assessment Design Team of educators and assessment specialists was

[16] Maine Department of Education, (1997, July), *Maine Learning Results*, http://people.maine.com/publius/almanac/encycweb/htm/learnrs.htm; *Learning Results: Parameters for essential instruction*, http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/pei/ch132_0708.pdf; *Maine's revised Learning Results: Parameters for essential instruction*, http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/career/documents/MLRRolloutCED.pdf

[17] Spruce, M., O'Shea, C., Rosenblum, J., Keller, T., Kierstead, J., Rolfe, P., et al., (1998), *Grand ideas and practical work: The Maine Local Assessment System Resource Guide*. Retrieved January 29, 2010, from the ERIC database. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED426083), p. i.

[18] Spruce et al., 2009.

[19] See http://www.maine.gov/education/standards.htm

established to redesign state assessments and to assist in the development of high quality local assessments. In addition, the MDOE has participated in the Re-Inventing Schools Coalition, which provides various resources promoting district-level adoption of standards-based education and assessment.[20]

Furthermore, the MDOE funded five studies between 2002 and 2006 to evaluate the progress of standards implementation and the development of local assessment systems.[21] Drawing on surveys and interviews with Maine teachers and administrators, the studies reported the following findings:

- Leadership and administrative support were key variables in the success of implementation efforts.
- Successful districts relied on previously established curriculum teams or committees and/or designated an overall curriculum coordinator.
- The provision of administrative support (e.g., rearranging schedules, providing teacher stipends, coordinating regional partnerships) facilitated implementation.
- MDOE's responsiveness to questions, resources, and professional development were effective supports for implementation, while changes in state policies, a lack of clear state leadership, and the late delivery of guides were hindrances.
- Frequently cited obstacles to implementation included lack of teacher time for training and professional development, lack of funding for assessment costs, inadequate systems for managing and report assessment data, and the complexity of the local assessment systems mandated by the MDOE.
- Professional development to help teachers make connections between content standards was an ongoing need.
- Effective tools included MDOE response to questions, published guides to local assessment systems, online resources, and state-sponsored professional development.

Among the recommendations drawn from these findings were the following:

- undertake efforts to increase the level of public support for and understanding of standards-based education;

[20] See http://www.reinventingschools.org/learning/

[21] Harris, W. J., & Fairman, J. C., (2006, February), *Implementing standards-based education in Maine: Progress, challenges, and implications* (Orono, ME: Center for Research and Evaluation and University of Maine, College of Education and Human Development). Retrieved January 29, 2010, from http://libraries.maine.edu/cre/White_Paper/SBE%20Report.pdf

- provide clear and consistent goals for standard-based education;
- develop a more practical (i.e., simplified) roadmap for assessing student achievement;
- provide adequate funding and time for professional development; and
- provide adequate funding and models for data management systems.

New Hampshire. The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) rolled out new minimum standards for public school approval beginning in July 2005.[22] While not content standards, the dissemination and implementation of these school approval standards employed many of the tools and strategies used by states when disseminating and implementing content standards.

To support the implementation of their school approval standards, the NHDOE reported providing the following types of support:

- technical assistance to the field;
- robust website resources; and
- a series of guidance documents.

To support their standards implementation, the NHDOE developed a collaboration with professional associations and other groups to accurately and effectively disseminate information about the standards. Outreach opportunities included regional New Hampshire Standards for School Approval meetings, regional New Hampshire School Board Association sessions, and Commissioner's meetings. In addition, the Commissioner, the Chairman of the State Board of Education, and NHDOE staff made themselves available upon request to attend regional educational meetings, school board meetings, and other similar gatherings in order to disseminate information. The NHDOE also provided technical assistance to districts, working with local professional development centers to host workshops focusing on connecting standards to curriculum and to conduct summer standards institutes. The NHDOE also developed online professional development courses.

Website resources provided by the NHDOE included the *ICT Literacy Toolkit,*[23] which offers literacy standards and assessment information gathered from national, regional, and local sources, including materials on standards, research, case studies, ePortfolios, and

[22] New Hampshire Department of Education, (2005, November 21), *Ed 306—standards for school approval*. Retrieved January 29, 2010, from http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/standards/Ed%20306%20~%20Standards%20for%20School%20Approval120205present.ppt

[23] See http://www.nheon.org/ictliteracy/

presentations. New Hampshire Educators Online[24] also provides an interactive search engine for frameworks and lesson plans; an online clearinghouse of professional development materials with access to online teacher professional development courses, practice guides, implementation surveys, and an online network of support centers; sample projects tying curriculum to the standards; blogs; FAQs; and a user-friendly checklist to help local districts determine the minimum standards for school approval.

Summary of Dissemination and Implementation Strategies

As indicated above, states have employed a variety of strategies for disseminating and implementing new standards, including guidelines, protocols, and materials; professional development opportunities; in-field technical assistance; collaborative networks; and web-based tools and resources. All of these may provide useful points of reference for the CDE.

[24] See http://www.nheon.org/