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Aligning Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Materials Adoption Processes With Common Core Standards

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

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Assembly Education Committee
Hon. Julia Brownley, Chair





Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Materials Adoption Processes

Curriculum Frameworks

- Provide guidance on how to teach each content standard in a given subject.
- Include information on instructional approaches for helping students master content standards, appropriate professional development, requirements for instructional materials, and instructional strategies for addressing the needs of special populations.

Instructional Materials Adoption Process

- Chapter 481, Statutes of 1998 (AB 2519, Poochigian), requires the State Board of Education to adopt standards-aligned instructional materials for grades K-8. (High school materials are adopted locally.)
- State adopts new materials for most subject areas every six years.
- School districts must purchase newly adopted materials within 24 months.
- Staggered adoption cycle—requires school districts to purchase new materials virtually every year.
- Instructional materials evaluated based on academic content standards, curriculum frameworks, program/evaluation criteria, and social content standards.
- Most states (30 out of 50) use a local-level selection process for instructional materials. California is the only state with a “hybrid” process—a state adoption process for K-8 materials and a local-level selection process for high school materials.



Framework and Adoption Processes Currently Suspended

- ☑ As part of the February 2009 budget agreement, the state suspended the instructional materials adoption process until 2013-14.
 - Consequently, the curriculum frameworks process also has been suspended.
 - School districts can continue to use previously adopted textbooks.
 - Instructional Materials Block Grant funds are “flexed”—can be used for any educational purpose.

- ☑ The Governor’s Budget proposes to suspend the adoption process (and consequently, the frameworks process) for two additional years, until 2015-16.

- ☑ If the state were to resurrect its existing processes, it would need to begin developing curriculum frameworks a few years before the adoption process resumes. This would require additional funding of several hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.



State Considerations in Transitioning to Common Core Standards

- Suspension of existing process provides an opportunity to implement Common Core Standards with less disruption, as no curriculum frameworks/instructional materials are currently in the midst of development/adoption.

Curriculum Frameworks

- What would be the objective of California-specific frameworks?
- Could California rely on curriculum frameworks developed in other states and/or nationally?

Instructional Materials

- To what extent could California benefit from a national market for instructional materials? Would more choice of materials lower costs and improve quality?
- Should California streamline its existing instructional material adoption process to ensure benefits from a national market?