

# **A Policy History Of Standards Based Education In America (History Of Schools And Schooling 59)**

The concept of standards-based education (SBE) has profoundly influenced the American education system, shaping its policies, practices, and goals. This article delves into the intricate policy history of SBE, tracing its roots, evolution, and impact on the educational landscape of the United States.

## **Origins of Standards-Based Education**

The seeds of SBE were sown in the late 19th century with the rise of the Progressive Education movement. Educators such as John Dewey advocated for a curriculum centered around students' experiences and interests, emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, it wasn't until the mid-20th century that the idea of defining and assessing clear academic standards took hold.

## **The National Education Association and the 1950s**

In 1953, the National Education Association (NEA) published a report titled "Excellence in Education." This report called for the establishment of national standards in core academic subjects, arguing that it would promote educational equity and ensure that all students were receiving a quality education.

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★★★★★ 4.1 out of 5



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## **A Nation at Risk (1983)**

One of the most influential catalysts for SBE was the 1983 report "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform." This report sounded the alarm about the decline of American education and advocated for rigorous academic standards, standardized testing, and teacher accountability.

## **The No Child Left Behind Act (2002)**

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), signed into law by President George W. Bush, was a major milestone in the history of SBE. NCLB required states to develop and implement academic standards aligned with national benchmarks. It also introduced a system of standardized testing and accountability, with schools facing sanctions for failing to meet performance targets.

## **Race to the Top and Common Core (2009)**

President Barack Obama's Race to the Top program provided grants to states that adopted ambitious education reforms, including the adoption of rigorous academic standards. This initiative led to the development of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), a set of shared standards in English language arts and mathematics.

## **Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)**

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed under President Obama, replaced NCLB. While ESSA maintained a focus on standards and accountability, it also granted states more flexibility in setting their own standards and implementing assessment systems.

## **The Evolving Role of SBE**

Over the past few decades, SBE has continued to evolve, with various refinements and adjustments. Some critics have argued that the excessive focus on standardized testing has narrowed the curriculum and stifled creativity. Others have questioned the effectiveness of high-stakes assessments for all students.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement towards personalized learning and competency-based education, which emphasize mastery of skills and knowledge over seat time and test scores. However, SBE remains a cornerstone of the American education system, shaping the curricula, assessments, and accountability structures that govern schools across the country.

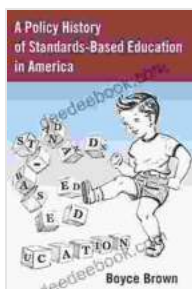
## **Impact on American Education**

SBE has had a profound impact on the American education system in several ways:

- **Increased Focus on Academic Rigor:** SBE has led to a higher emphasis on academic expectations and rigorous content, ensuring that students are challenged and prepared for college and careers.

- **Accountability and Transparency:** SBE has introduced a system of accountability, with schools and districts facing consequences for failing to meet performance targets. This has increased transparency and promoted continuous improvement.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** SBE has provided data that can be used to inform educational policy decisions, identify gaps, and target interventions.
- **Equity and Access:** SBE has helped to promote educational equity by ensuring that all students are held to the same high standards and have access to quality educational resources.

The policy history of standards-based education in America has been a complex and dynamic journey. From its roots in Progressive Education to its current form, SBE has played a significant role in shaping the American education system. While SBE has faced challenges and critiques, it remains a fundamental component of the country's educational landscape, providing a framework for academic rigor, accountability, and continuous improvement. As the education system continues to evolve, SBE will undoubtedly continue to be a subject of debate and refinement, ensuring that the American people receive a high-quality education that prepares them for success in the 21st century and beyond.

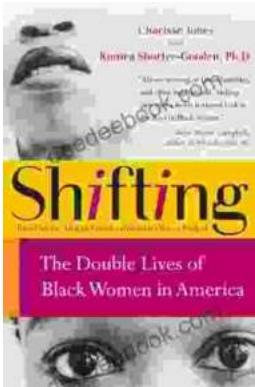


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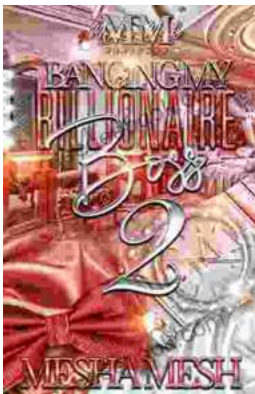
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