



NJDOE News

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State Board of Education Adopts Revised Academic Standards in Six Content Areas; Adoption of First Technology Standards Ensures 21st Century Education for NJ Students

The State Board of Education today adopted revised academic standards in six content areas of the Core Curriculum Content Standards. The standards, which reflect the knowledge and skills all students must learn by the time they graduate from high school, are effective immediately.

Standards in two of the areas (**Technological Literacy and Career Education and Consumer, Family and Life Skills**) are new and address goals expressed in Governor James E. McGreevey's 21-Point Plan for Education. Part of Governor McGreevey's plan calls for the state to incorporate technology standards into the Core Curriculum Content Standards and require high school students to pass a technology proficiency test.

Last spring, Governor McGreevey signed into law legislation requiring the State Board of Education to adopt core curriculum content standards in technology. The technology standard applies to all content areas and grade levels and will ensure that students are well-trained for success in the 21st century.

Standards in four of the areas (**Language Arts Literacy, Visual and Performing Arts, Comprehensive Health and Physical Education, and World Languages**) have been revised from standards originally adopted in 1996.

"This second generation of standards represents the best thinking of teachers, administrators, parents, students, and representatives from higher education and business" said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "The clarity and rigor of these revised standards will greatly assist teachers and administrators to improve teaching and learning for all children."

State Board of Education President Arnold Hyndman noted that today's adoption culminated a three-year review and revision process conducted in public with input from Department of Education staff, the state's education community, representatives of business and industry, and experts in the individual content areas.

"I congratulate all parties involved for their time, patience and expertise that has led to the State Board's adoption of these standards," Dr. Hyndman said. "We owe our students high quality instruction that will prepare them to succeed in an ever-changing world. That's why we have built into our regulations a review of the standards every five years."

"I thank all board members for their close scrutiny of the standards as they evolved over time, especially during the last several months," Hyndman said.

Below are highlights for each of the content standards adopted today. The complete standards can be found on the Department of Education's Web-site at the following link:

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

A primary goal for reading, and cornerstone of Governor McGreevey's education reform initiative, is that *Students will read well and independently by the end of the third grade*. In order to accomplish this goal, the revised standards emphasize early literacy and reflect both state and national perspectives on reading achievement. In addition, the standards contain learning benchmarks at more grade levels and emphasize phonics instruction in the primary grades as recommended by Achieve, Inc., which had conducted an independent review. The revised standards also reflect national standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Changes from the original 1996 standards focus on greater detail of instruction and evaluation of student knowledge and skills at more grade levels. The revised standards also contain more concrete examples of how students can demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The standards pertain to all of the arts disciplines (dance, music, theater, visual art).

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The revised standards are influenced by significant reports that have been released since 1996. They include *Physical Activity and Health*, a report of the U.S. Surgeon General; *Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports*, a report produced by the federal departments of Health and Education, and *A Call to Action*, a 2001 national report that emphasizes the need for education and public health strategies to prevent and decrease the prevalence of overweight and obesity. The knowledge and skills in the revised standards are now cumulative, meaning that the student progress goals begin at a basic level in the earlier grades and become more complex in successive grade levels.

WORLD LANGUAGES

In general, the revised standards clarify and emphasize the context and purpose of communication. They now reflect student

expectations at the Novice, Intermediate and Pre-Advanced learner ranges as outlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. The standards also make connections with other core content areas and have been designed to serve as clear guides for the development of local and state assessments. The revised standards now include learning expectations at grade 2 in addition to grades 4, 8 and 12.

TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY

Technological literacy, which was part of the former Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards in 1996, has been elevated to a separate and distinct content area. The change was made in recognition of the growing recognition that achieving computer and information literacy through technology education is vital for all students. Governor James E. McGreevey has recognized this need and made Technological Literacy one point in his 21-Point Plan for Education. The standard is based on Standards for Technological Literacy (STL): Content for the Study of Technology, which was developed as part of a study conducted by the National Science Foundation and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

CAREER EDUCATION AND CONSUMER, FAMILY, AND LIFE SKILLS

These standards, formerly known as the practical arts, identify key career development and life skills that students must accomplish in order to achieve continuing success in various life roles for personal growth, whether they go to college or go directly to work after high school. Business and industry representatives have identified vital career and technical education skills, which include career awareness and employability skills, critical thinking, self-management, interpersonal communication, character development and ethics, consumer and personal finance, and safety. Students learn teamwork and problem-solving skills through structured learning experiences that can include out-of-school experiences that can be paid or unpaid. Students participating in these experiences are exposed to the requirements of specific job titles or job groups, learn employment skills, and learn how to make career choices.

New Jersey was one of seven states that had developed state-level standards by 1996. Now, 49 states have standards. New Jersey's original standards in language arts literacy, mathematics, science and social studies were evaluated independently by Achieve, Inc., an independent, bipartisan, nonprofit organization created by governors and corporate leaders to help states and the private sector raise standards and performance in America's schools, and by the Council of Chief State School Officers.

The revised standards reflect the review of state-level panels of educators from a cross-section of public education. The panels reviewed relevant documents, including independent evaluations of the original standards before drafting revised content standards. The revisions were then made public and subjected to review and commentary prior to adoption.

In July 2002, the State Board adopted revised Core Curriculum Content Standards in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics and Science. Language Arts Literacy standards were revised since that time to meet requirements in the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Standards in one core curriculum content area continue to be revised. Standards in social studies are now being reviewed by the State Board of Education and may be adopted this fall.