



New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers: Foundations of Effective Practice

Background

Effective May 5, 2014, the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers have been updated to incorporate current research on teaching practice, new understandings of learners and the learning process, and to align to the 2011 the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards. These standards:

- Describe the performances, knowledge, and dispositions that teachers need to be effective in supporting college and career readiness for all students;
- Outline the principles of teaching practice that cut across all subject areas and grade levels and are necessary to improve student achievement; and
- Serve as the common foundation for pre-service teacher education, certification, induction and mentoring, educator evaluation, and professional development.

According to InTASC, these updated standards:

Articulate what effective teaching and learning looks like in a transformed public education system – one that empowers every learner to take ownership of their learning, that emphasizes the learning content and application of knowledge and skill to real world problems, that values the differences each learner brings to the learning experience, and that leverages rapidly changing learning environments by recognizing the possibilities they bring to maximize learning and engage learners. A transformed public education system requires a new vision of teaching.¹

Fundamental Understandings

The following fundamental understandings anchor the content of the standards:

- *Teaching and learning are dynamic processes.* Instruction is rooted in integrated and reciprocal classroom practice, and educator effectiveness is closely tied to student learning.
- *Expertise in teaching develops over time.* While the previous standards were geared more to beginning teachers, these standards are rooted in professional practice across the continuum of teacher development.
- *21st century skills are fundamental.* Teachers need to foster students' curiosity, creativity, innovation, problem solving, global literacy, communication, and interpersonal skills. Students need to understand technology and ethics and be able to synthesize information across disciplines.
- *The focus must move from teachers' teaching to learners' learning.* Teachers must acquire and apply the knowledge and skills to customize and personalize learning for learners with a range of individual differences.
- *Assessment literacy is an essential skill.* Teachers need to have greater knowledge and skill around how to develop a range of assessments and how to use assessment data to improve instruction and support learner success.
- *A collaborative professional culture improves teaching effectiveness.* We can no longer treat teaching as an isolated activity. When teachers collectively engage in participatory decision-making, designing lessons, using data, and examining student work, they are able to deliver more rigorous and relevant instruction.

¹ Council of Chief State School Officers, April 2011



- *Teachers should embrace leadership roles.* Teachers should advocate for their own and their students' needs, actively investigate new ideas to improve teaching and learning, participate in the collaborative culture, and advance the profession.

Integrated Themes

New to these updated standards is the inclusion of key themes across multiple standards. In some cases, the theme is not explicitly stated but can be inferred from the description of the knowledge, disposition, or performance within the standard. The integrated themes are as follows:

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity/innovation
- Critical thinking/problem solving
- Cultural competence
- English language learners
- Families and communities
- Individual differences
- Interdisciplinary/multiple perspectives
- Professional Learning
- Student-directed learning
- Teacher responsibility
- Technology
- Use of data to support learning

Adaptation of the 2011 InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards to the NJ State Context

Although the updated NJ Professional Standards for Teachers closely track with the 2011 InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, they are not identical. Some changes in language and organization were necessary to align the standards with New Jersey law, the prior state teaching standards, and statewide priorities. The complete text of the 2014 NJ Professional Standards for Teachers with highlights showing the divergence from the 2011 InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards can be found [here](#).

Organization

The standards are now organized under four domains:

- **The Learner and Learning**
 - Standard 1: Learner Development
 - Standard 2: Learning Differences
 - Standard 3: Learning Environments
- **Content**
 - Standard 4: Content Knowledge
 - Standard 5: Application of Content
- **Instructional Practice**
 - Standard 6: Assessment
 - Standard 7: Planning for Instruction
 - Standard 8: Instructional Strategies
- **Professional Responsibility**
 - Standard 9: Professional Learning
 - Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration
 - Standard 11: Ethical Practice

Within each standard, the elements continue to be organized under the following criteria:

- **Performances:** the aspect that can be observed and assessed in teaching practice;
- **Essential knowledge:** the understandings that one needs to support effective practice; and
- **Critical dispositions:** the habits of professional practice that underlie the performances and knowledge and play a key role in how teachers practice.



The following table compares the content of the 2004 standards with the 2014 standards and identifies key changes to the content.

Content of Standard	2004 Standards	2014 Standards	New Focus Areas in Updated Standards
Deep content knowledge of discipline(s)	Standard 1: Subject Matter Knowledge	Standard 4: Content Knowledge	Creating learning experiences to make content accessible and meaningful for students
Understanding how children/adolescents develop and learn	Standard 2: Human Growth & Development	Standard 1: Learner Development	Recognizing how patterns of learning and development vary individually; designing and implementing appropriate learning experiences
Understanding practice of culturally responsive teaching	Standard 3: Diverse Learners	Standard 2: Learning Differences	Providing inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards
Ability to do instructional planning and design and employ a variety of learning strategies to meet student needs	Standard 4: Instructional Planning and Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard 7: Planning for Instruction • Standard 8: Instructional Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning in use of assessment data and students' prior knowledge and interest • Collaborative planning among teachers and with learners to support design of relevant learning experiences
Use of multiple assessment strategies to evaluate student learning and modify instruction for continuous development of students	Standard 5: Assessment	Standard 6: Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of assessment data to engage learners in examining growth and to guide teacher and learner decision-making about learning needs • Need for teachers to prepare learners for demands of various assessment formats and make appropriate accommodations in assessment conditions, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs
Creation of a supportive, safe, and respectful learning environment	Standard 6: Learning Environment	Standard 3: Learning Environments	Collaboration with learners, families, and colleagues
Need to adapt instruction to accommodate special learning needs	Standard 7: Special Needs	Standard 2: Learning Differences	Understanding individual differences in a broader context, including attention to a learner's personal, family, and community experiences and cultural norms



Content of Standard	2004 Standards	2014 Standards	New Focus Areas in Updated Standards
Use of effective verbal, nonverbal, and written communication techniques and information literacy tools to foster inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interactions	Standard Eight: Communication	Standard Three: Learning Environments and Standard Ten: Leadership and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating respect for cultural backgrounds and differing perspectives that learners bring to the learning environment • Use of various communication strategies and technological tools to build local and global learning communities that engage learners, families and colleagues.
Need for teachers to build relationships with parents, guardian, families, and agencies to support students' learning and well-being.	Standard Nine: Collaboration and partnerships.	Standard Ten: Leadership and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with other school professionals to plan and facilitate learning • Development of skills in collaborative interaction appropriate for both face-to-face and virtual contexts.
Need for teachers to participate as active members of a professional learning community engaging a variety of learning opportunities	Standard Ten: Professional Development	Standard Nine: Professional Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning aligned with a teacher's needs as a growing professional, using feedback from evaluations, data on learner performance, and school-wide and district-wide priorities • Role of teacher as a learner continuously seeking opportunities to improve practice, drawing upon current education policy and research as sources of reflection
Compliance with legal and ethical responsibilities and use of integrity and fairness to promote student success	Standard Eleven: Professional Responsibility	Standard Eleven: Ethical Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering a school environment that protects students from sexually, physically, verbally, or emotionally harassing behavior • Collaboration with colleagues and parents to provide a safe and emotionally protective learning environment

For More Information

- View additional CCSSO resources: [http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/InTASC_Model_Core_Teaching_Standards_A_Resource_for_State_Dialogue_\(April_2011\).html](http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/InTASC_Model_Core_Teaching_Standards_A_Resource_for_State_Dialogue_(April_2011).html).
- Visit www.nj.gov/education/profdev/ or email TeachPD@doe.state.nj.us.