



NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TEACHER STANDARDS

*Approved by the Nebraska State Board of Education
for Public Comment, May 5, 2011*

Introduction to the Teacher Standards

State educational policymakers across the nation are embracing educator effectiveness reforms as one of the keys to improving teaching and learning. These reforms should be predicated on clear standards that define effective practice for teachers and principals.

In January 2011, the Nebraska State Board of Education authorized the drafting of possible performance standards for teachers and principals. This process began with the formation of a 41 member committee drawn from thirteen of the state's educational stakeholder groups representing teachers, principals, higher education representatives, school board members, and parents. The purpose of this committee was to prepare a set of draft standards for consideration by the State Board.

The committee determined that the purpose of the Nebraska Standards is to define effective practice in order to improve teaching and learning. Therefore the draft standards address the roles of teachers and principals, defined as those educators whose primary task is working directly with students in a school setting. Local districts may wish to create standards for educational specialists not covered by the Teacher and Principal Standards.

Following the structure of Nebraska's curriculum standards, the draft Teacher and Principal Standards are organized into two elements: a broad standards statement followed by several example indicators. The indicators are designed to be examples of effective practice that clarify and develop the standards; they are not an exhaustive list and can be enhanced by local districts as they use the standards.

The committee's development of standards and indicators was informed by the profession's national standards. For teachers, these include the 2010 Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards and the Framework for Teaching developed by Charlotte Danielson. For principals, these include the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008 policy standards. In addition, standards developed by other states served as a valuable resource.

The standards are designed to encompass a broad range of effective practice that characterizes our state's best teachers and principals. Three vital themes recur throughout both sets of standards rather than being contained in single statements. These include the appropriate use of technology for students living in an online world, cultural competence and a respect for diversity in our increasingly multicultural state, and a commitment to teacher and principal accountability for the growth and maintenance of high levels of student achievement.

The draft standards are being considered by the State Board of Education with the intent that they be viewed not as a state mandate, but rather as a useful resource which provides a framework of effective practice to voluntarily guide local districts, institutions of higher education, and state and local policymakers as we strive together to ensure Nebraska's continuing commitment to improve educational achievement for all of our children. The State Board reaffirms its fundamental view that curriculum and instruction are best left to individual districts, and that the Nebraska Department of Education should serve as a resource for districts in that regard.

Nebraska Teacher Standards Draft

Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge - The Teacher demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards needed to provide all students with effective opportunities for learning, development, and achievement.

Example Indicators: The Teacher:

- Possesses a strong command of the content and related instructional strategies in the discipline(s) he or she teaches.
- Understands multiple research-based instructional approaches, strategies, assessments, and interventions.
- Understands the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of students, how they learn, and how they differ.
- Understands cultural and societal influences and their impact on teaching and learning.
- Understands how national, state, and local standards impact teaching.
- Understands the components of an effective curriculum.
- Accepts responsibility for the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.

Standard 2: Planning and Preparation - The Teacher integrates knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and standards with established curriculum to develop rigorous and meaningful instruction for all students that supports the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.

Example Indicators: The Teacher:

- Develops coherent and relevant units, lessons, and activities that enable students to achieve standards, learning goals, and instructional objectives.
- Designs and adapts lessons based on student progress, assessment results, and interests.
- Uses a variety of appropriate, research-based teaching strategies.
- Develops instruction that is effective in light of cultural and social influences.
- Considers students' prior knowledge, abilities, and individual needs to ensure that instruction is differentiated and rigorous.
- Integrates a variety of resources, including technology, to provide challenging, motivating, and engaging learning experiences.

Standard 3: The Learning Environment - The Teacher develops and maintains a learning environment that promotes active student engagement in learning, development, and achievement.

Example Indicators: The Teacher:

- Ensures a safe and accessible environment.
- Establishes, communicates, and maintains effective routines, procedures, and clear standards of conduct.
- Creates a positive learning climate of openness, mutual respect, support, and inquiry, and interacts with students in ways that demonstrate and promote respect for diversity.
- Establishes a collaborative learning community built on trust and teamwork that is consistent with the full development of students as individuals.
- Establishes high expectations that cultivate learners' self-motivation and encourage pride in their genuine accomplishments.
- Strives to understand the school and its people, how they came to their current state, and how to connect with their traditions in order to move them toward academic success.

Standard 4: Instructional Strategies - The Teacher intentionally uses a variety of effective instructional strategies to ensure growth in student achievement.

Example Indicators: The Teacher:

- Uses a range of developmentally and culturally appropriate instructional strategies and resources that are targeted to meet learning goals.
- Modifies, adapts, and differentiates instruction and accommodations based on data analysis, observation, and student needs.
- Communicates effectively with students to promote and support achievement.
- Assumes various roles in the instructional process appropriate to the content, purposes of instruction, and the needs of students.
- Engages students by using varied activities, assignments, groupings, structure, and pacing, as well as a variety of instructional techniques such as direct instruction, inquiry, questioning, and discussion.
- Uses strategies that enable students to develop skills in critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Uses existing and emerging technologies to support and promote student learning.
- Collaborates with students to implement active learning experiences, drawing upon family and community resources.

Standard 5: Assessment - The Teacher systematically uses multiple methods of assessment to measure student progress and to inform ongoing planning, instruction, and reporting.

Example Indicators: The Teacher:

- Develops and uses varied and appropriate assessments and accommodations based on instructional objectives and student needs.
- Uses both formative and summative assessments and the resulting data to inform instruction, monitor student progress over time, and provide meaningful feedback to each student.
- Ensures that assessment instruments and procedures are valid and address the cultural, societal, and linguistic diversity of students.
- Develops or selects appropriate assessments and interprets the resulting data, both individually and with colleagues.
- Uses strategies that enable students to assess, monitor, and reflect on their own work.
- Compiles and reports assessment data to accurately document student progress over time.

Standard 6: Professionalism - The Teacher acts as an ethical and responsible member of the professional community.

Example Indicators: The Teacher:

- Uses a variety of self-assessment strategies to reflect upon professional practice.
- Actively pursues meaningful professional development.
- Contributes to and advocates for the profession.
- Protects the established rights and confidentiality of students and families.
- Adheres to school policies, procedures, and regulations.
- Models ethical behavior in accordance with established standards.
- Maintains accurate records, documentation, and data.

Standard 7: Vision and Collaboration -The teacher contributes to and promotes the vision of the school and collaborates with students, families, colleagues, and the larger community to share responsibility for the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.

Example Indicators: The Teacher:

- Actively participates in the development and implementation of the school's vision, mission, and goals for teaching and learning.
- Contributes to the continuous school improvement process
- Establishes and maintains collaborative professional relationships.
- Uses effective communication strategies, including technology, taking into account the cultural, societal, and linguistic needs and resources of students and families.
- Collaborates with students, parents, families, and the community to create meaningful partnerships in the learning process.

Nebraska Teacher/Principal Standards Stakeholders Group

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