

**NEW MEXICO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**POLICY ON EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS**  
**October 1999**

Introduction                      Herein, the New Mexico State Board of Education (NMSBE) establishes policy on educational standards. This policy is provided to guide the work of the State Superintendent, the State Department of Education, local school boards, and local districts as New Mexico Standards are implemented in every classroom for all students.

August 1999  
Strategic Plan                      Establish clear and high standards in all academic and vocational subjects and ensure that assessments are aligned with content, benchmark, and performance standards; require alignment of school curricula with performance standards and revise on a regular basis (Academic Achievement 1.1).

*Standards for  
Excellence*  
6NMAC3.2                      *Standards for Excellence:*

- mandates content standards and benchmarks;
- mandates the review and systematic revision of standards;
- aligns standards and local curriculum;
- aligns standards and assessment programs; and
- sequences three cycles, namely, the Standards Revision Cycle, the Local Curriculum Revision Cycle, and the Instructional Materials Cycle.

Types of  
Standards                      The SBE established Content Standards and Benchmarks in 9 areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, the Arts, Modern, Classical, and Native Languages, Health Education, Physical Education, and Career Education.

Instructional  
Focus

The SBE recommits its endorsement of nine areas for standards. However, while all nine areas are important to achieve a productive and educated citizenry, the four core academic areas, i.e., Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, remain the focus for instruction and accountability. The four core academic areas are essential for student achievement and success. The remaining five areas provide critical guidance for comprehensive instruction.

Standards and  
Language

*Standards for Excellence* set expectations for New Mexico students and clearly state that proficiency in the English Language is of the highest importance. This Board regulation aligns with Content Standards and Benchmarks by supporting the use of a student's primary or home language, as appropriate, for teaching and learning while the student acquires proficiency in English.

Standards and  
Assessment

The New Mexico Assessment Program reflects the student expectations set forth in Content Standards & Benchmarks. Beginning in SY 1999-2000, grade level assessments are scheduled for grades 3-9. SDE Content Specialists and NM Educators have completed a review of new test items to ensure alignment and grade level sequence of standards.

Beginning with the 1999-2000 revision of New Mexico Language Arts Content Standards, Benchmarks, and Performance Standards, the organization of standards will reflect the new assessment requirements:

**K-2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9-12**

In order to meet the needs of students, teachers continue to utilize standards across grade levels and across the curriculum. Teachers employ their professional knowledge and skills to provide rich and appropriate learning experiences for students.

Curriculum  
Alignment and  
Standards

Districts must document their local curriculum alignment process with NM Content Standards and Benchmarks. The alignment process includes:

- A systematic comparison of district curricula with standards;
- Identification of gaps between standards and local curricula; and
- Writing additional curricula to address the identified gaps.

Performance  
Standards

Currently, performance standards are provided to districts as curricular guidance and as concrete links among content standards and benchmarks, local curricula, and state and local assessments. The SBE may selectively mandate performance standards to ensure specific student expectations are met.

Standards Revision,  
Curriculum  
Alignment, and  
Instructional  
Materials

In order to ensure the strategic, effective, and predictable use of resources, the state standards revision cycle, the local curriculum cycle, and the instructional materials cycle must be sequenced. The State Board may make changes to certain standards on an interim basis.

The purposes for the establishment of a sequence of cycles are fourfold:

- To ensure a standards-based local curriculum;
- To promote the selection of instructional materials based on a standards-based curriculum;
- To ensure a continuous and systematic review of ALL standards and assessments; and
- To promote the strategic use of district resources for curriculum and professional development.

Guidelines for  
Writing  
Standards

The writing groups should consist of classroom practitioners, curriculum specialists, noted New Mexicans in their fields of study, business partners, and community members. New Mexico Standards should contain the best elements of national and other states' standards. The standards should be sufficiently detailed so that teachers will know what material the students are expected to know and by what grade. New Mexico Standards must be clear, appropriately specific, usefully organized, rich in content, and substantive. Standards must seek to produce knowledgeable students with the ability to understand and solve complex problems. When appropriate, the standards should emphasize New Mexico history, cultures, and languages.

Standards,  
Pre-Service, and  
Professional  
Development

Written and assessed standards are the beginning steps in building a successful standards-based educational system. Any

educational system is only as effective as its implementation – what teaching and learning occur everyday. Considerable time, effort, and resources must be focused on pre-service education and professional development for teachers and administrators to ensure implementation. Pre-service programs must be aligned with national and state standards in order to ensure that new educators can implement standards. To create meaningful professional development, critical elements include the use of current research on effective teaching, opportunities for growth within specific subject matter areas, educator input into the design of professional development, and continuous assessment.

By statute, the professional development framework must include the approval of district plans that must address the implementation of New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks.

#### Progress Report

The State Board of Education will receive periodic reports regarding the implementation of this policy from the State Department of Education (SDE). Information and recommendations will be provided regarding the cost of standards development and implementation. As part of the accreditation process and the annual budget approval process, districts will verify the implementation of Content Standards and Benchmarks.