

# ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT STANDARDS SUPPORT REVIEW

## What is standards-based education?

Standards-based education is a process for **planning, delivering, monitoring and improving** academic programs in which clearly defined academic content standards provide the basis for content in instruction and assessment.

- In standards-based education, **the standards** help to ensure that students learn what is important, rather than allowing textbooks to dictate classroom practice.
- **Student learning** is the focus of standards-based education. Standards-based education aims for a high and deep level of student understanding that goes beyond traditional textbook-based instruction.

## Why are Standards Important?

**1. Standards provide clarity and a fixed point of reference for students and teachers on what content and skills should be mastered at each grade-level.**

- Academic Standards provide a set of clear and rigorous expectations for all students.
- **Teachers know what they are expected to teach and**

**students know what they are expected to learn.**

- A standards-based system provides a common set of expectations and helps educators identify and measure what students know and can do.

**2. Standards guide instruction that is focused on student learning.**

- Standards serve as a basis for instructional planning that ensures all teachers first consider what they want students to know and be able to do as a result of their instruction.

**3. Standards provide a common language with which to have conversations about educational attainment.**

- In order for teachers, students, parents and administrators to clearly communicate about student performance, there needs to be a common language to engage in conversations about performance. Standards provide the basis for this common language.

**4. Standards help ensure equal educational opportunities.**

- Standards help ensure that in districts with high levels of student mobility, children will not be left behind academically because of a family move to a new school.
- Standards help narrow the achievement gap between different student populations, such as white and minority students, urban or rural and suburban students, and U.S. and international students.

**5. Standards assist in identifying struggling students.**

- One of the benefits of a standards-based system with assessments that are aligned with the standards is that students who are struggling can be identified early and provided with the targeted assistance that they need to become successful.

**6. Standards meet federal guidelines.**

- The No Child Left Behind Act mandates that all states create rigorous standards that specify what every child should know and learn in grades three through eight.

## How can standards be useful to you?

**Students:** Standards are useful for students because **they clearly describe learning expectations.** Students know what they are expected to learn. They know how to meet high standards and are prepared for future academic study, as well as success on the state achievement testing system.

**Teachers:** One of the benefits of a standards-based education system is that the consistent use of standards by teachers across classrooms and grade levels makes it easier to analyze the performance of groups of students by and across grade levels. In this way, teachers can identify gaps in the curriculum and areas of low performance by students; a growing body of research indicates that when correctly implemented, **standards-based systems increase student learning because they clearly describe learning expectations.**

**Parents:** Standards are useful for parents because they indicate expectations for their children. Further, the standards help assure equity. The **standards are for all students in all schools.**

## How can an effective professional development system be planned in a

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## standards-based environment?

Before planning and implementing a professional development system related to the state curriculum and standards-based education, the district engages in a self-assessment to determine the needs of professional development. This self-assessment will be based on data from the following sources:

- Analysis of student performance on the statewide assessment measures of the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment (NMSBA Grades 3-8, & 11) and district assessments.
- Analysis of teacher understanding of standards and review of standard-based instruction and implementation through the District's Standards Support Review (DSSR) site visit for each school.
- A rubric to self-assess the teachers' and schools' wants and needs for professional development through the District's Standards-Based Education Implementation Plan (SBEIP).

The **results** of the district standards review visits (**DSSR**) and state and district assessments guide the

district's comprehensive professional development system. The system is planned based on the needs of teachers and students and provides ongoing support and development opportunities to teachers.

**Every school** in the district will have a scheduled standards support review visit.

These review visits are **not to evaluate individual classrooms or teachers**, but to inform and identify areas of needed support district-wide.

The District's **Research, Development & Accountability (RDA)** and the **Teaching and Learning Systems (TLS)** departments are working together to train observers, organize visits, collect data and provide feedback to all schools and clusters.

We have designed the site review process to use set groups of highly trained educators consisting of all instructional coaches, cluster service team members and district support staff.

All observers attend training sessions to ensure agreement on the rubric used during the review site visit. Each observer will be highly trained in the components in a standards-based system.

Each site visit will include a classroom observation and teacher

and student interviews. Students should be able to answer: What are you learning? Why is it important? How do you know how you are doing in class? How do you know you are making progress towards meeting grade level standards?

RDA is responsible for random teacher selection for observations. **All teachers** in the school should be ready for the standards support review visit.

TLS will work with each cluster to analyze data and plan support. District departments are working together for the success of all students in a standards-based system.

**One Voice,  
One Message,  
One District.**

Parents,

Are you interested in learning more? Please ask your school administrator about available standards based workshops and about how standards are being implemented at your school. If you do not want your child interviewed during a district site visit please call your school principal and inform him of this request.

If you would like more information about Standards-Based Education, or the District Standards Support Review, please contact the following district staff:

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