

# InTASC

Model Core Teaching Standards:  
A Resource for State Dialogue



*Developed by*  
CCSSO's Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC)  
April 2011

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## InTASC Model Core Teaching

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Developed by CCSSO's Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) April  
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The Council of Chief State School Officers is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

For information about how to obtain copies of this document please visit  
<http://www.ccsso.org/intasc>.

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Finally, InTASC would like to acknowledge and thank the many national education organizations who worked with us by nominating committee members and helping us spread the word about these standards. These organizations include:

- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)
- Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
- National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
- National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
- National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
- National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)
- National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
- National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC)
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)
- National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF)
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
- National Education Association (NEA)
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## Introduction

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), through its Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), is pleased to offer this set of model core teaching standards that outline what teachers should know and be able to do to ensure every K-12 student reaches the goal of being ready to enter college or the workforce in today's world. These standards outline the common principles and foundations of teaching practice that cut across all subject areas and grade levels and that are necessary to improve student achievement.

More importantly, these Model Core Teaching 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 of 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.

### A New Vision of Teaching for Improved Student Achievement

The updating of the core teaching standards was driven not only by new understandings of learners and learning but also by the new imperative that every student can and must achieve to high standards. Educators are now being held to new levels of accountability for improved student outcomes. These standards embrace this new emphasis

**These standards ... describe what effective teaching that leads to improved student achievement looks like.**

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They are based on our best understanding of current research on teaching practice with the acknowledgement that how students learn and strategies for engaging learners are evolving more quickly than ever. These standards

promote a new paradigm for delivering education and call for a new infrastructure of support for professionals in that system. Below are the key themes that run through the updated teaching standards and how they will drive improved student learning.

### Personalized Learning for Diverse Learners

The explosion of learner diversity means teachers need knowledge and skills to customize learning for learners with a range of individual differences. These differences include students who have learning disabilities and students who perform above grade level and deserve opportunities to accelerate. Differences also include cultural and linguistic diversity and the specific needs of students for whom English is a new language. Teachers need to recognize that all learners bring to their learning varying experiences, abilities, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, and family and community values that are assets that can be used to promote their learning. To do this effectively, teachers must have a deeper understanding of their own frames of reference (e.g., culture, gender, language, abilities, ways of knowing), the potential biases in these frames, and their impact on expectations for and relationships with learners and their families.

Finally, teachers need to provide multiple approaches to learning for each student. One aspect of the power of technology is that it has made learners both more independent and more collaborative. The core teaching standards assign learners a more active role in determining what they learn, how they learn it, and how they can demonstrate

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Finally, teachers need to provide multiple approaches to learning for each student. One aspect of the power of technology is that it has made learners both more independent and more collaborative. The core teaching standards assign learners a more active role in determining what they learn, how they learn it, and how they can demonstrate

their learning. They also encourage learners to interact with peers to accomplish their learning goals. In these ways, the standards embody a vision of teaching that personalizes each learner's experiences while ensuring that every learner achieves to high levels.

### A Stronger Focus on Application of Knowledge and Skills

Today's learners need both the academic and global skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the world—attributes and dispositions such as problem solving, curiosity, creativity, innovation, communication, interpersonal skills, the ability to synthesize across disciplines, global awareness, ethics, and technological expertise. CCSSO and the National Governors Association are leading the work on articulating what learners need to know and be able to do. The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics are benchmarked to international standards and include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills. As states adopt these standards, educators throughout the nation will be reexamining what students should know and be able to do throughout their K–12 education experience.

**The standards stress that teachers build literacy and thinking skills across the curriculum [and] help learners address multiple perspectives in exploring ideas and solving problems.**

The core teaching standards describe what teachers should know and be able to do in today's learning context to ensure students reach these learning goals. For example, cross-disciplinary skills (e.g., communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and the use of technology) are woven throughout the teaching standards because of their importance for learners. Additionally, the core teaching standards

stress that teachers build literacy and thinking skills across the curriculum, as well as help learners address multiple perspectives in exploring ideas and solving problems. The core teaching standards also address interdisciplinary themes (e.g., financial literacy, civic literacy) and the teacher's ability to design learning experiences that draw upon multiple disciplines.

### Improved Assessment Literacy

The current education system treats assessment as a function largely separated from teaching. Yet, teachers are expected to use data to improve instruction and support learner success. The core teaching standards recognize that, to meet this expectation, teachers need to have greater knowledge and skill around how to develop a range of assessments, how to balance use of formative and summative assessment as appropriate, and how to use assessment data to understand each learner's progress, adjust instruction as needed, provide feedback to learners, and document learner progress against standards. In addition, teachers need to be prepared to make data-informed decisions at varied levels of assessment, from once-a-year state testing, to district benchmark tests several times a year, to ongoing formative and summative assessments at the classroom-level. This work occurs both independently and collaboratively and involves ongoing learning and reflection.

### A Collaborative Professional Culture

Our current system of education tends to isolate teachers and treat teaching as a private act. This is counter to the way we think about teaching today. Just as collaboration among learners improves student learning, we know that collaboration among teachers improves practice. When teachers collectively engage in participatory decision-making,

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*InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards 4*



designing lessons, using data, and examining student work, they are able to deliver rigorous and relevant learning for all students and personalize learning for individual students. The core teaching standards require transparency of practice and ongoing, embedded professional learning where teachers engage in collective inquiry. This includes participating actively as a team member in decision-making processes that include building a shared vision and supportive culture, identifying common goals, and monitoring progress toward those goals. It further includes giving and receiving feedback on practice, examining student work, analyzing data from multiple sources, and taking responsibility for each student's learning.

### New Leadership Roles for Teachers and Administrators

These core teaching standards set forth new and high expectations for teachers, including around leadership. Integrated across the standards is the teacher's responsibility for the learning of all students, the expectation that they will see themselves as leaders from the beginning of their career and advocate for each student's needs, and the

**Integrated across the standards is the teacher's responsibility for the learning of all students [and] the expectation that they will see themselves as leaders from the beginning of their career.**

obligation to actively investigate and consider new ideas that will improve teaching and learning and advance the profession. Leadership responsibilities are also implicit as teachers participate in the new collaborative culture. Teachers are expected to work with and share responsibility with colleagues, administrators, and school leaders as they work together to improve student learning and teacher working conditions. This includes actively engaging in efforts to build

a shared vision and supportive culture within a school or learning environment, establish mutual expectations and ongoing communication with families, and involve the community in meeting common goals.

### Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to serve as a resource for states, districts, professional organizations, teacher education programs, teachers, and others as they develop policies and programs to prepare, license, support, evaluate, and reward today's teachers. As noted above, a systemic approach and supportive infrastructure are essential to successful implementation of these standards. In addition to this standards document, CCSSO has also released a complementary policy discussion document that outlines key considerations, recommendations, and cautions for using the standards to inform policy. This paper builds off of CCSSO's Education Workforce white paper ([www.ccsso.org/intasc](http://www.ccsso.org/intasc)), which outlines the chiefs' strategic goals in building an educator development and support system of which these standards are the first step.

In updating the InTASC model standards, efforts were made to ensure they align with other national and state standards documents that were recently revised or released. Specifically, this document has been reviewed to ensure compatibility with the recently-released Common Core State Standards for students in mathematics and English language arts, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) accomplished teaching core principles, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation standards, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) (now called Learning Forward) professional development standards, and the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008 educational leadership policy standards and CCSSO's companion document of performance expectations and indicators for education leaders.

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*InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards 5*

Consistency among all these documents ensures a coherent continuum of expectations for teachers from beginning through accomplished practice, and sets the conditions necessary to support professional growth along this continuum. It also increases the probability of building aligned systems of teacher development and support that begin with recruitment and preparation and run through induction, ongoing professional development, accomplished teaching, and other leadership roles. For a discussion of the implications of these updated standards for teacher policy and practice across the career continuum, please see the companion policy document ([www.ccsso.org/intasc](http://www.ccsso.org/intasc)).

## About These Standards

This document is an update to INTASC's *Model Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing and Development: A Resource for State Dialogue*, which were released in 1992. These standards differ from the original standards in one key respect: These standards are no longer intended only for "beginning" teachers but as professional

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practice standards, setting one standard for performance that will look different at different developmental stages of the teacher's career. What distinguishes the beginning from the accomplished teacher is the degree of sophistication in the application of the knowledge and skills. To

reflect this change in emphasis, INTASC removed "new" from its name and now is called the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC).

Another key point is that these standards maintain the delineation of knowledge, dispositions, and performances as a way to probe the complexity of the teacher's practice. The relationships among the three have been reframed, however, putting performance first—as the aspect that can be observed and assessed in teaching practice. The others were renamed. "Essential knowledge" signals the role of declarative and procedural knowledge as necessary for effective practice and "critical dispositions" indicates that habits of professional action and moral commitments that underlie the performances play a key role in how teachers do, in fact, act in practice.

Vocabulary choice in the document was deliberate to be consistent with the vision being presented. For example, wherever possible "student" was replaced with "learner" because learner implies an active role in learning whereas student could be seen as more passive. Learner also connotes a more informal and accessible role than that of student. Second, "classroom" was replaced with "learning environment" wherever possible to suggest that learning can occur in any number of contexts and outside of traditional brick and mortar buildings that classroom and school imply.

The reader of these standards should keep in mind that while each standard emphasizes a discrete aspect of teaching, teaching and learning are dynamic, integrated and reciprocal processes. Thus, of necessity, the standards overlap and must be taken as a whole in order to convey a complete picture of the acts of teaching and learning.

**The indicators are not intended to be a checklist, but rather helpful ways to picture what the standard means.**

Also, it is important to keep in mind that indicators are examples of how a teacher might demonstrate each standard. In a performance assessment of teaching covering several days, one would not expect the teacher to demonstrate every indicator—and there may be other indicators that would provide excellent evidence

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## Next Steps

Standards can serve three different functions. First, they can serve as a “banner” and lay out a big picture vision of where we want to go. Second, they can define a specific “bar” or level of performance that must be met. Third,

**The purpose [of the standards] is to describe a new vision of teaching to which we aspire as we work to transform our education system to meet the needs of today’s learners.**

they can articulate the “opportunity to learn” supports that must be in place to ensure a teacher candidate has opportunity to meet the standards. All three are essential to success. These Model Core Teaching Standards are the banner in that their purpose is to describe a new vision of teaching to which we aspire as we work to transform our education system to meet the needs of today’s learners. It is a reform

document designed to help us see and come to consensus on where it is we want to go.

The next step of the work is to take these standards and translate them into a developmental continuum and performance rubrics that can be used to assess performance at key points along the teacher’s career. Simultaneously, we must build the infrastructure of accountability and support to match the new vision of teaching. Some of this work has already begun. We look forward to working with states and partners in developing consensus around this common core of teaching and moving these standards into practice.

## Resources and Research Behind the Standards

The committee drew upon a range of resources in revising the standards. This included key research literature, the work of states who had already updated their standards, and additional key resources such as books and documents related to 21st century learning.

In addition to the above, the committee members themselves—teachers, teacher educators, researchers, state policy leaders—were selected to assure expertise across a range of topics important to the update process. Their expertise was another key resource in the development of the revised standards.

On the issue of research, InTASC commissioned a review of the literature to capture the current evidence base during the standards-writing process. Periodic research updates were given to the committee as the standards work was under way and additional focus areas were added to the review as the committee identified the key ideas grounding its work. The literature review can be found at the InTASC website ([www.ccsso.org/intasc](http://www.ccsso.org/intasc)) including summary statements of what we know and where there are gaps in the research. CCSO considers the research base a work in progress and seeks feedback on the website.

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Some of this work has already begun. We look forward to working with states and partners in developing consensus around this common core of teaching and moving these standards into practice.

## Resources and Research Behind the Standards

The committee drew upon a range of resources in revising the standards. This included key research literature, the work of states who had already updated their standards, and additional key resources such as books and documents related to 21st century learning.

In addition to the above, the committee members themselves—teachers, teacher educators, researchers, state policy leaders—were selected to assure expertise across a range of topics important to the update process. Their expertise was another key resource in the development of the revised standards.

On the issue of research, InTASC commissioned a review of the literature to capture the current evidence base during the standards-writing process. Periodic research updates were given to the committee as the standards work was under way and additional focus areas were added to the review as the committee identified the key ideas grounding its work. The literature review can be found at the InTASC website ([www.ccsso.org/intasc](http://www.ccsso.org/intasc)) including summary statements of what we know and where there are gaps are in the research. CCSO considers the research base a work in progress and seeks feedback on the website.

*InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards 7*

## Summary of Updated InTASC Core Teaching Standards

The standards have been grouped into four general categories to help users organize their thinking about the standards:

### The Learner and Learning

Teaching begins with the learner. To ensure that each student learns new knowledge and skills, teachers must understand that learning and developmental patterns vary among individuals, that learners bring unique individual differences to the learning process, and that learners need supportive and safe learning environments to thrive. Effective teachers have high expectations for each and every learner and implement developmentally appropriate, challenging learning experiences within a variety of learning environments that help all learners meet high standards and reach their full potential. Teachers do this by combining a base of professional knowledge, including an understanding of how cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development occurs, with the recognition that learners are individuals who bring differing personal and family backgrounds, skills, abilities, perspectives, talents and interests. Teachers collaborate with learners, colleagues, school leaders, families, members of the learners' communities, and community organizations to better understand their students and maximize their learning. Teachers promote learners' acceptance of responsibility for their own learning and collaborate with them to ensure the effective design and implementation of both self-directed and collaborative learning.

Standard #1: Learner Development. The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Standard #2: Learning Differences. The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Standard #3: Learning Environments. The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

### Content

Teachers must have a deep and flexible understanding of their content areas and be able to draw upon content knowledge as they work with learners to access information, apply knowledge in real world settings, and address meaningful issues to assure learner mastery of the content. Today's teachers make content knowledge accessible to learners by using multiple means of communication, including digital media and information technology. They integrate cross-disciplinary skills (e.g., critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication) to help learners use content to propose solutions, forge new understandings, solve problems, and imagine possibilities. Finally, teachers make content knowledge relevant to learners by connecting it to local, state, national, and global issues.

Standard #4: Content Knowledge. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

Standard #5: Application of Content. The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

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