



**Commission on Public Schools
Committee On
Public Elementary and Middle Schools**

**2014
Standards
for
Accreditation**

Elementary and Middle Schools

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TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

CORE VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT

1

Core Values and Expectations

Effective schools identify their mission, core values, and beliefs about learning that function as explicit foundational commitments to students and the community.

Mission, core values and beliefs manifest themselves in age appropriate, researched-based, school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Every component of the school is driven by the mission, core values, and beliefs and supports all students' achievement of the school's learning expectations.

1. The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its mission, core values, and beliefs about learning.
2. The school has challenging and measurable learning expectations for all students which address academic, social, physical, and civic competencies and are defined by school-wide age and developmentally appropriate assessments that identify targeted high levels of achievement.
3. The school's mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.
4. The school regularly reviews and revises its mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations based on current research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

2**Curriculum**

The written and taught curriculum is designed to result in all students achieving the school's 21st century expectations for student learning. The written curriculum is the framework within which a school aligns and personalizes its learning expectations. The curriculum links expectations for student learning to instructional and assessment practices. It includes a purposefully designed set of learning opportunities that reflect the school's mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The curriculum is collaboratively developed, implemented, reviewed, and revised based on analysis of student performance and current research.

1. The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's learning expectations.
2. The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
 - units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
 - the school's learning expectations
 - developmentally appropriate instructional strategies
 - a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment practices.
3. The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge at the appropriate developmental levels through:
 - inquiry and problem-solving
 - exploration and creativity
 - higher order thinking
 - collaboration and communication
 - cross-disciplinary learning
 - authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
 - informed use of technology.
4. There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.
5. Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all areas within the school as well as with receiving and sending schools in the district.
6. Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and resources of the library media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, co-curricular programs, and other developmentally appropriate learning opportunities.
7. The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

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Instruction

The quality of instruction is the single most important factor in students' achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Instruction is responsive to student needs, deliberate in its design and delivery, and grounded in the school's mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Instruction is supported by research in best practices. Teachers are reflective and collaborative about their instructional strategies and collaborative with their colleagues to improve student learning.

1. Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
2. Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's learning expectations by:
 - personalizing and differentiating instruction
 - engaging students in cross-disciplinary learning
 - engaging students as active and self-directed learners
 - emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking
 - applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
 - emphasizing communications skills
 - engaging students in cooperative learning
 - providing feedback
 - engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
 - integrating technology.
3. Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
 - using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
 - strategically differentiating
 - purposefully organizing group learning activities
 - providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.
4. Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
 - using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
 - examining student work
 - performing and analyzing student observations
 - using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents/guardians
 - examining current research
 - engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.
5. Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

Teaching and Learning Standard

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Assessment

Assessment informs students and stakeholders of progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations. Assessment results are shared and discussed on a regular basis to improve student learning. Assessment results inform teachers about student achievement in order to adjust curriculum and instruction.

1. The professional staff continuously employ a formal process to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's learning expectations.
2. The school's professional staff communicate:
 - individual student progress in achieving the school's learning expectations to students and their families
 - the school's progress in achieving the school's learning expectations to the school community and stakeholders.
3. Professional staff collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.
4. Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.
5. Teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.
6. Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
7. Teachers provide specific and timely feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.
8. Teachers use their knowledge of individual students and content to pose problems and ask questions during assessment activities to determine student understanding and learning.
9. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.
10. Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:
 - student work
 - common grade-level assessments

- individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's learning expectations
- standardized assessments
- data from sending and receiving schools
- parent/guardian input
- other survey data.

11. Grading and/or reporting practices are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure alignment with the school's core values and beliefs about learning.

SUPPORT STANDARDS

CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

STUDENT SERVICES AND SUPPORT

**SCHOOL FINANCE AND COMMUNITY
RELATIONS**

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Culture and Leadership

The school culture is equitable and inclusive, and it embodies the school's foundational mission, core values, beliefs, and expectations about student learning. The culture is characterized by reflective, collaborative, and constructive dialogue about researched-based practices that support high expectations for teaching and learning. The leadership of the school fosters mutual respect and a safe, positive culture by promoting citizenship, learning, and shared leadership by engaging all members of the school community in efforts to improve teaching and learning.

1. The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.
2. The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity by using student grouping practices that reflect an understanding of the unique learning and social needs of all students and demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of the population of the school.
3. In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:
 - engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
 - use resources outside of the school to maintain current with best practices
 - dedicate formal time to implement professional development
 - have a planned orientation program for certified and support staff
 - apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
4. School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.
5. The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.
6. The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's mission, core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.
7. All members of the school community feel welcome at the school and are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

8. Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.
9. The work, contributions, and achievements of all students and school personnel are regularly acknowledged and celebrated and appropriately displayed throughout the school.
10. The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's learning expectations.
11. The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

6 Student Services and Support

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon appropriate sufficient support. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of coordinated programs and services. These resources enhance and improve student learning and well-being and support the school's mission, core values, and beliefs. Student services and support enable each student to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

1. The school staff, in collaboration with families and community agencies, provide a coordinated and directive intervention strategies of support for all students. This includes academic, social, emotional and physical needs to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's learning expectations.
2. The physical areas provided for student support services are appropriate for the particular service and ensure privacy and confidentiality
3. The school maintains all student, administrative, and personnel records in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal, state, and local laws or regulations.
4. Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.
5. School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - deliver a written, developmental program
 - engage in individual and group meetings with students
 - deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's learning expectations.
6. The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
 - provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
 - use an appropriate referral process
 - conduct ongoing student health assessments
 - use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's learning expectations.
7. Library media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of personnel and support staff who:

- are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum
 - provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
 - are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
 - conduct ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's learning expectations.
8. Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:
- collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's learning expectations
 - provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
 - perform ongoing assessment using relevant data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's learning expectations.



School Finance and Community Relations

The achievement of the school's mission, core values, beliefs about 21st century learning expectations requires active community, governing board, and parent/guardian advocacy. Through dependable and adequate funding, the community provides the personnel, resources, and facilities to support the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs, and services.

1. The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:
 - a wide range of school programs and services
 - sufficient professional and support staff
 - ongoing professional development and curriculum revision
 - a full range of technology support
 - sufficient equipment
 - sufficient instructional materials and supplies.
2. The community, through the district school board, sets and implements district and school policy to ensure a learning environment that supports high levels of learning for all.
3. The school community develops, plans, and funds programs to:
 - ensure the maintenance and repair of the building and school plant
 - properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
 - keep the school clean on a daily basis.
4. The community funds and the school implements a long-range plan that addresses:
 - programs and services
 - enrollment changes and staffing needs
 - facility needs
 - technology
 - capital improvements.
5. Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget.
6. The school site and plant support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.
7. The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal, state, and local laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

8. The area, menus, and equipment for food services ensure that the well-being of the students is a priority and is in compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
9. Appropriate school transportation procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the students and in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
10. The professional staff actively engage parents/guardians and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.
11. The school develops productive parent/guardian, community, business, and higher education partnerships that encourage mutual cooperation and good citizenship and support student learning.