

# SAU #39 Teaching Standards

## Introduction

“We each remember the great teachers who touched our lives, kindled our interest and pressed us to do our best. We hold powerful images of such teachers. They exhibited a deep caring and love for children. They conveyed a passion for the subjects they taught, captivating their students with that passion. They approached their work with creativity and imagination, striving constantly to improve” (NBPTS, 5 Core Propositions, Pg. 5). Serving as role models, these teachers modeled a spirit of inquiry, curiosity, and lifelong learning.

“But teaching is work of the most demanding sort, for teachers must make dozens of decisions daily, command a wide body of knowledge and skill, learn to react instantly, and be disposed to act wisely in difficult situations. And while there are principles and precepts, skills and techniques, to guide the work, teaching is also an activity with artistic aspects, a craft calling for reflection and judgment” (NBPTS, 5 Core Propositions, Pg. 5).

The following standards were developed by our Teacher Leader Effectiveness Program Review Committee. This committee studied a variety of resources and engaged in collaborative sessions to develop a set of localized standards using both InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards developed by CCSSO and the 5 Core Propositions created by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

On the following pages, SAU #39 presents their view of what teachers should know and be able to do. These standards embody our values and beliefs of what should be honored in teaching. This expression of ideals was developed to guide our work in creating a comprehensive evaluation system for our schools and community. These standards may evolve as we grow and deepen our learning.

These standards outline the common principles and foundations of teaching practice that cut across all subject areas and grade levels and outline what teachers should know and be able to do. “More importantly, these 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” (InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, Pg. 3).

The standards have been grouped into four general categories to help users organize their thinking around 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: The teacher understands how learners grow and develop.** *The teacher recognizes 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: The teacher ensures inclusive learning environments.** *The teacher uses his/her understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to enable each learner to meet high standards.*

**Standard #3: The teacher creates a safe and collaborative learning environment.** *The teacher works with learners, families, and colleagues to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and 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: The teacher knows the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline.** *The teacher creates learning experiences that make all aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners.*

**Standard #5: The teacher engages learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving.** *The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners.*

## Instructional Practice

Effective instructional practice requires that teachers understand and integrate assessment, planning, and instructional strategies in coordinated and engaging ways. Beginning with their end or goal, teachers first identify student learning objectives and content standards and align assessments to those objectives. Teachers understand how to design, implement and interpret results from a range of formative and summative assessments. This knowledge is integrated into instructional practice so that teachers have access to information that can be used to provide immediate feedback to reinforce student learning and to modify instruction. Planning focuses on using a variety of appropriate and targeted instructional strategies to address diverse ways of learning, to incorporate new technologies to maximize and individualize learning, and to allow learners to take charge of their own learning and do it in creative ways.

**Standard #6: The teacher uses assessment data to guide decision making.** *The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to monitor learner progress, engage learners in their own growth, and guide decision making.*

**Standard #7: The teacher plans instruction that supports students in meeting rigorous learning goals.** *The teacher draws upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context in planning for instruction.*

**Standard #8: The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies.** *The teacher encourages learners to develop a deep understanding of content areas and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.*

## Professional Responsibility

Creating and supporting safe, productive learning environments that result in learners achieving at the highest levels is a teacher's primary responsibility. To do this well, teachers must engage in meaningful and intensive professional learning and self-renewal by regularly examining practice through ongoing study, self-reflection, and collaboration. A cycle of continuous self-improvement is enhanced by leadership, collegial support, and collaboration. Active engagement in professional learning and collaboration results in the discovery and implementation of better practice for the purpose of improved teaching and learning. Teachers also contribute to improving instructional practices that meet learners' needs and accomplish their school's mission and goals. Teachers benefit from and participate in collaboration with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members. Teachers demonstrate leadership by modeling ethical behavior, contributing to positive changes in practice, and advancing their profession.

**Standard #9: The teacher engages in professional practice and on-going learning.** *The teacher continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.*

**Standard #10: The teacher advances the profession through leadership and collaboration.** *The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues in local, national, and global communities.*

## **Standard #1: The teacher understands how learners grow and develop.**

*The teacher recognizes 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.*

### **Core Values**

The teacher values ...

- learners' differing strengths and needs.
- using learners' strengths and needs as a basis for growth and viewing their misconceptions as opportunities for learning.
- promoting learners' growth and development.
- the contributions of families, colleagues, and other professionals in understanding and supporting each learner's development.

#### **What teachers should know.**

The teacher...

- understands how learners construct knowledge, acquire skills, and develop disciplined thinking.
- knows the relationship between instructional strategies and student learning.
- understands how each learner's cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development influences learning.
- understands how development in any one area may affect performance in others.
- understands the roles of language and culture in learning.

#### **What teachers should be able to do.**

The teacher...

- recognizes cognitive, social, and emotional readiness for learning.
- regularly assesses student performance to design instruction to meet learners' needs while scaffolding the next level of development.
- uses developmentally appropriate instruction to enable learners to advance and accelerate their learning.
- collaborates with families, communities, colleagues, and other professionals.
- modifies instruction to make language comprehensible and learning relevant, accessible and challenging.

## Standard #2: The teacher ensures inclusive learning environments.

*The teacher uses his/her understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to enable each learner to meet high standards.*

### Core Values

The teacher values...

- high level achievement for all learners and persistence in helping each learner reach his/her potential.
- learners as individuals with differing personal and family backgrounds and various skills, abilities, perspectives, talents, and interests.

#### What teachers should know.

The teacher...

- understands and identifies different approaches to learning and performance.
- understands students' needs, including those associated with disabilities giftedness, and English language learners.
- understands that learners bring assets for learning based on their individual experiences, culture, and values.

#### What teachers should be able to do.

The teacher...

- designs, adapts, and delivers instruction to address each student's diverse learning strengths and needs.
- creates opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in different ways.
- makes appropriate and timely provisions (e.g., pacing for individual rates of growth, task demands, communication, assessment, and response modes) for individual students with particular learning differences or needs.
- designs instruction to build on learners' prior knowledge and experiences, allowing learners to accelerate as they demonstrate their understandings.

Fosters diverse perspectives among students.

- accesses resources and incorporates tools to meet particular learning difference or needs (e.g. disabilities, giftedness, ELL).

## Standard #3: The teacher creates a safe and collaborative learning environment.

*The teacher works with learners, families, and colleagues to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.*

### Core Values

The teacher values...

- positive, supportive, safe and collaborative learning environments that encourage learning from both failure and success.
- peer relationships as an essential component of a learning climate.
- a commitment to supporting learners as they participate in decision making, engage in exploration and invention, work collaboratively and independently, and engage in purposeful learning.
- thoughtful and responsive listening within the learning community.

#### What teachers should know.

The teacher...

- understands the relationship between motivation and engagement that builds learner self-direction and ownership of learning.
- knows collaborative learning strategies to establish and monitor a safe and productive learning environment (e.g., norms, expectations, routines, and organizational structures).
- understands how learner diversity can affect communication.
- knows the appropriate, safe, and effective uses of technologies for guiding learners.

#### What teachers should be able to do.

The teacher...

- collaborates with stakeholders to build a safe, positive learning climate (e.g., open, respectful, supportive, and inquiry-minded).
- fosters learning experiences that engage learners in collaborative and self-directed learning.
- Collaboratively develops shared values and expectations for respectful interactions, rigorous academic discussions, and quality work.
- manages the learning environment to actively and equitably engage learners by organizing, allocating, and coordinating resources (e.g. time, space, and learners' attention).
- communicates verbally and nonverbally in ways that demonstrate respect .
- promotes responsible use of interactive technologies among learners, extending the possibilities for learning locally and globally.
- builds learner capacity to collaborate in face-to-face and virtual environments, applying effective interpersonal communication skills.
- fosters risk-taking and learning from both failure and success.

**Standard #4: The teacher knows the central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of the discipline(s).**

*The teacher creates learning experiences that make all aspects of the discipline(s) accessible and meaningful for learners.*

**Core Values**

The teacher values...

- knowledge as dynamic, complex, and influenced by culture.
- multiple perspectives within the discipline(s) and facilitates learners' critical analysis of these perspectives.
- awareness of bias in the discipline(s) and his/her representation of it.
- each learner's mastery of relevant content standards.

**What teachers should know.**

The teacher...

- knows relevant content standards and learning progressions in the discipline(s) s/he teaches.
- understands concepts, assumptions, debates, processes of inquiry, academic language and ways of knowing central to the discipline(s) s/he teaches.
- understands common misconceptions in learning the discipline(s).
- knows content that is culturally relevant to all learners in order to build on their background knowledge.

**What teachers should be able to do.**

The teacher...

- uses multiple representations and explanations to teach key ideas in the discipline(s).
- guides learners through learning progressions and achievement of relevant content standards.
- engages students in learning experiences in the discipline(s) that encourage learners to understand, question, and analyze ideas from diverse perspectives.
- engages learners in applying methods of inquiry and standards of evidence used in the discipline(s).
- stimulates learner reflection on prior content knowledge, links new concepts to familiar concepts, and makes connections to learners' experiences and cultural background.
- creates experiences to build accurate conceptual understanding.
- evaluates and modifies instructional resources and curriculum materials for their comprehensiveness, accuracy for representing particular concepts in the discipline(s), and appropriateness for his/ her learners.
- uses supplementary resources and technologies effectively to ensure accessibility and relevance for all learners.
- uses and creates opportunities for students to learn, practice, and master academic language of the discipline(s).

**Standard #5: The teacher engages learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving.**

*The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners.*

**Core Values**

The teacher values...

- ideas outside his/her own content area to broaden student learning.
- flexible learning environments that encourage learner exploration, discovery, and expression across content areas.
- continual exploration of disciplinary knowledge to address local and global issues.

**What teachers should know.**

The teacher...

- understands the ways of knowing in his/her discipline, how it relates to other disciplinary approaches to inquiry, and the strengths and limitations of each approach in addressing problems, issues, and concerns.
- understands how current interdisciplinary themes (e.g., civic literacy, health literacy, global awareness) connect to the core subjects.
- understands the demands of research (i.e., accessing, managing and evaluating information).
- knows digital and interactive technologies.
- understands critical thinking processes and knows how questioning skills promote independent learning.
- understands how various communication modes and skills work as vehicles for learning.
- understands creative thinking processes.
- knows where to access resources to build global awareness and understanding.

**What teachers should be able to do.**

The teacher...

- develops and implements supports for learner literacy development across content areas.
- develops and implements projects that guide learners in analyzing the complexities of an issue or question (e.g., by using perspectives from varied disciplines and cross-disciplinary skills).
- engages learners in applying content knowledge to real world problems through the lens of interdisciplinary themes (e.g., financial literacy, environmental literacy).
- facilitates learners' use of current tools and resources (e.g., digital and interactive technologies) to maximize content learning in varied contexts.
- engages learners in questioning and challenging assumptions in order to foster innovation and problem solving in local and global contexts.
- creates meaningful opportunities to employ a variety of communication forms that address varied audiences and purposes.
- engages learners in generating and evaluating new ideas and novel approaches, seeking inventive solutions to problems, and producing original work.
- Fosters diverse perspectives and an understanding of local and global issues.



## Standard #6: The teacher uses assessment data to guide decision making.

*The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to monitor learner progress, engage learners in their own growth, and guide decision making.*

### Core Values

The teacher values ...

- engaging learners actively in reflecting on their own learning.
- aligning instruction and assessment with learning goals.
- timely and effective descriptive feedback to learners on their progress.
- multiple types of assessment processes to support, verify, accommodate and document learning, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs.
- the responsible use of varied assessments and assessment data to identify learner strengths and needs.

### What teachers should know.

The teacher...

- understands the various types and purposes of assessment.
- understands the differences between formative and summative applications of assessment.
- understands the positive impact of specific feedback for learners and knows a variety of strategies for communicating this feedback.
- knows when to evaluate and report learner progress against standards.

### What teachers should be able to do.

The teacher...

- balances the use of formative and summative assessment as appropriate to support, verify, and document learning.
- designs assessments that match learning objectives with assessment methods, and minimizes sources of bias that can distort assessment results.
- works independently and collaboratively to examine assessment data to understand each learner's progress and guide planning.
- engages learners in understanding and identifying quality work, and provides them with specific feedback.
- engages learners in analyzing their own assessment results and in setting goals for their own learning.
- uses varied assessment data to guide planning and instruction, (e.g., identifies each student's learning needs, patterns and gaps in learning).
- helps learners understand the expectations of different assessments. Makes appropriate accommodations in assessments or testing conditions, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs.
- seeks appropriate ways to employ technology to support assessment practices both to engage learners more fully and to assess and address learner needs.

**Standard #7: The teacher plans instruction that supports students in meeting rigorous learning goals.**

*The teacher draws upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context in planning for instruction.*

**Core Values**

The teacher values ...

- learners’ diverse strengths and needs and using this information to plan for effective instruction.
- planning as a creative and collegial activity that takes into consideration the input of learners, colleagues, families, and the larger community.
- short and long-term planning as a means of assuring student learning.
- flexibility in adjusting and revising plans based on learner needs and changing circumstances.

**What teachers should know.**

The teacher...

- understands content and standards and how these are organized in the curriculum.
- understands how integrating cross-disciplinary skills in instruction engages learners.
- understands learning theory, human development, cultural diversity, and individual differences and how these impact ongoing planning.
- understands the strengths and needs of individual learners.
- knows a range of evidence-based instructional strategies, resources, and technological tools.

**What teachers should be able to do.**

The teacher...

- individually and collaboratively selects and creates learning experiences tied to curriculum goals and standards.
- chooses strategies and accommodations, resources, and materials to differentiate instruction for individuals and groups of learners.
- sequences learning experiences, providing multiple ways to demonstrate knowledge and skill.
- adjusts plans based on formative and summative assessment data, prior learner knowledge, and learner interest.
- collaborates with specialized experts (e.g., special educators, related service providers, language learning specialists, librarians, media specialists) to design and/or jointly deliver learning experiences to meet unique learning needs.
- evaluates plans in relation to short and long-range goals and adjusts plans to meet student needs.

## Standard #8: The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies.

*The teacher encourages learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.*

### Core Values

The teacher values...

- the strengths and needs of diverse learners when planning and adjusting instruction.
- the variety of ways people communicate and encourages learners to develop and use multiple forms of communication.
- the use of new and emerging technologies.
- flexibility and reciprocity in the teaching process as necessary for adapting instruction to learner responses, ideas, and needs.

### What teachers should know.

The teacher...

- understands cognitive processes associated with learning (e.g., critical and creative thinking, problem framing and problem solving, invention, memorization and recall).
- knows a range of instructional strategies (e.g. developmental, cultural, and linguistic).
- knows strategies to differentiate instruction to engage learners in complex thinking.
- understands how communication (i.e. oral, written, nonverbal, digital, visual) conveys ideas, fosters self-expression, and builds relationships.
- understands how content and skill development can be supported by media and technology.

### What teachers should be able to do.

The teacher...

- uses appropriate strategies and resources to adapt and differentiate instruction.
- monitors student learning, engages learners in assessing their progress, and adjusts instruction in response to student needs.
- collaborates with learners to identify their strengths, design and implement relevant learning experiences, and access family and community resources to develop areas of interest.
- varies instructional role (e.g., instructor, facilitator, coach, audience) in relation to the content and purposes of instruction and the needs of learners.
- provides multiple representations of concepts and allows learners to demonstrate their knowledge through a variety of products and performances.
- engages all learners in developing higher order questioning skills and metacognitive processes.
- evaluates media and technology resources for quality, accuracy and effectiveness.
- engages learners in using technology tools to access, interpret, evaluate, and apply information.
- asks questions that serve different purposes (e.g. probing for learner understanding, helping learners articulate their ideas and thinking processes, stimulating curiosity, and helping learners to question).

## Standard #9: The teacher engages in professional practice and on-going learning.

*The teacher continually evaluates his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.*

### Core Values

The teacher values...

- on-going analysis and reflection to improve planning and practice.
- awareness of his/her own frames of reference (e.g., culture, gender, language, abilities, ways of knowing), the potential biases in these frames, and their effects.
- current research as a source of analysis and reflection to improve practice.
- the expectations of the profession including codes of ethics, professional standards of practice, and relevant law and policy.

#### What teachers should know.

The teacher...

- knows a variety of self-assessment and problem-solving strategies to analyze and adapt his/her practice.
- understands how learner data informs practice.
- understands how personal identity, worldview, and prior experience affect perceptions and expectations, and recognizes how they may bias behaviors and interactions with others.
- understands laws related to learners' rights and teachers' professional responsibilities, both legal and ethical.

#### What teachers should be able to do.

The teacher...

- engages in on-going learning opportunities aligned with local, state, and national standards.
- engages in professional learning experiences aligned with his/her own needs and the priorities of the school, district, and SAU.
- uses a variety of data (e.g., systematic observation, information about learners, research) independently and in collaboration with colleagues, to evaluate the outcomes of teaching and learning and to adapt planning and practice.
- actively seeks professional, community, and technological resources, within and outside the school, as supports for analysis, reflection, and problem-solving.
- reflects on his/her personal biases and accesses resources to deepen his/her own understanding of cultural, ethnic, gender, and learning differences to create more relevant learning experiences.
- advocates, models, and teaches safe, legal, and ethical use of information and technology including appropriate documentation of sources and respect for others in the use of social media.
- builds and implements a plan for professional growth directly aligned with his/her needs as a growing professional using feedback from teacher evaluations and observations, data on learner performance, and school- and system-wide priorities.

**Standard #10: The teacher advances the profession through leadership and collaboration.**

The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues in local, national, and global communities.

**Core Values**

The teacher values...

- sharing responsibility for shaping and supporting the mission of his/her school.
- families' beliefs, norms, and expectations and collaboratively working with learners and families.
- interacting with colleagues to enhance the practice and advance the profession.
- the opportunity for continuous improvement.

**What teachers should know.**

The teacher...

- understands schools as organizations within a historical, cultural, political, and social context.
- understands that alignment of family, school, and community spheres of influence enhance student learning.
- knows the skills for interacting appropriately with other adults in face-to-face and other contexts.

**What teachers should be able to do.**

The teacher...

- is an active member of an instructional team, giving and receiving feedback on practice, examining learner work, analyzing data from multiple sources, and sharing responsibility for decision making and accountability for each student's learning.
- works with other professionals to plan and jointly facilitate professional learning on how to meet diverse needs of learners.
- collaborates in the school-wide effort to build a shared vision and a positive school culture.
- works collaboratively with learners and their families to establish mutual expectations and ongoing communication.
- builds ongoing connections with community resources.
- engages in professional learning, contributes to the knowledge and skill of others, and works collaboratively to advance professional practice.
- uses technological tools and communication strategies to engage learners, families, and colleagues.
- uses and/or generates educational research and stays abreast of current issues and policies.
- models effective practice for colleagues and leads professional learning activities.
- advocates for all learners and the teaching profession at the school, district, state, and/or national level.