



DRAFT PREFACE TO THE NEW YORK STATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS LEARNING STANDARDS (Revised 2017)

“The new learning standards are the result of a thoughtful and deliberate process to reimagine our educational framework for English language arts and mathematics,” Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa said. “The result is improved learning standards that place a greater emphasis on supporting teachers and educating English Language Learners (ELLs) /Multilingual Learners (MLLs), Students with Disabilities (SWD) and other special populations. These standards are rigorous and will help equip children to lead successful lives in the 21st century.”

“Thanks to the hard work and devotion of so many teachers, parents, educators and experts, we have developed new learning standards through a thorough and collaborative process that sought and valued input from all corners of the state,” Commissioner Elia said. “With substantive changes and increased guidance for educators, teachers will be able to develop curricula and lesson plans to meet the needs of students in their classrooms. These new standards recognize the importance of preparing New York’s children for success in life through a rigorous education and provide the foundation needed to get there.”

Two-Year Collaborative Process Results in Substantive Changes

The State Education Department released draft learning standards for public comment in September 2016 and received more than 4,100 public comments. The English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Learning Standards Advisory Committees met through a series of all-day, in-person meetings and web meetings from December 2016 through April 2017 and reviewed every learning standard, making any necessary modifications based on professional expertise as well as input gathered from public comment and child development experts. Educators who work with SWD and ELLs/MLLs were actively involved in the review process as well. The committees integrated necessary changes into the standards while ensuring that the standards continue to be rigorous and challenge New York’s students to do more.

In addition, the new standards meet the 2015 legislative requirement that the standards be reassessed with stakeholder input. Commissioner Elia participated in the Governor’s Task Force, which made a series of [recommendations](#) in December 2015, many of which are reflected in the revised standards including gathering input in new standards from local districts, educators and parents through an open and transparent process; ensuring the standards meet the needs of ELLs/MLLs and, and provide additional resources for professional development of teachers.

English Language Arts Standards Review & Changes

Five subcommittee groups (Prekindergarten-Grade 2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12 and Literacy 6-12) as well as the Early Learning Task Force, all of which included parents and educators, including teachers of ELLs/MLLs and SWDs reviewed the current ELA standards to determine whether each standard meets the criteria for what a student should know and be able to do at a grade level (or grade-band) in English language arts and literacy.

In addition, multiple ELA specialists and researchers reviewed the standards. Through all-day, in-person meetings as well as web meetings over the past several months, the committees considered and discussed the public comments on every standard and integrated changes into the standards based on the feedback.

The committees substantially revised the ELA standards across all grade levels to reduce repetition of standards and to ensure clarity, appropriateness and vertical alignment. Significant changes to the ELA standards include:

- **Add *Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers*** to ensure students become lifelong learners who can effectively communicate. BOCES staff and the Staff/Curriculum Development Network drafted the guide to help students exemplify and foster strong reading and writing habits from the early years through adulthood;
- **Merge the Reading for Information and Reading for Literature Standards** to reduce repetitive standards, streamline classroom instruction and curriculum development, and ensure a healthy balance of both types of reading across all grades. The standards also encourage the use of a variety of texts to balance literary and informational reading with clear guidance for teachers and to ensure students read both full-length texts and shorter pieces, as well as to encourage reading for pleasure. Specific reading selections remain local decisions to be chosen by local educators;
- **Convene the New York State Early Learning Task Force** to discuss concerns around the Prekindergarten-2 grades, including standards, program decisions, social emotional needs and how the content areas/domains work together in the early grades. Grade-specific changes and additions were made to provide a strong emphasis on the whole child and the importance of play as an instructional strategy. The Task Force reviewed and provided feedback on the standards. The Task Force continues to meet and now is working on recommendations to develop resources and guidance to implement the new standards for educators and parents including resources on professional development for teachers, P-12 school supports, child development and instructional practice;
- **Revise the Grade-Level Reading Expectations for Text Complexity** to provide expectations over multiple grades and add a section about text complexity for each grade.

The additional information provides further guidance for educators on text complexity expectations for grade-level bands;

- **Revise the Writing Standards** so they are more user-friendly for educators to use for curriculum and instruction. In addition to omitting some standards, there are grade-specific changes across the grades to clarify language and ensure writing expectations are clear;
- **Reduce the Number of Anchor Standards** from 34 to 28 based upon concerns from educators that the standards were too numerous and at times repetitive. Standards are merged, omitted or included in the *Lifelong Practices* guide;
- **Create a NY-Specific Introduction on How to Use the Standards** to help inform local curriculum and instruction. While all curriculum decisions are locally made, a set of learning standards cannot be properly used without the necessary guidance. The introduction provides information on how to use the new *Lifelong Practices for Readers and Writers*, strategies for using the new standards in the classroom, and strategies and supports for applying the standards to students with disabilities and ELLs/MLLs; and
- **Ensure Literacy is Included in the Content Areas.** For example, the committee recommended creating a new document for the Grades 6-12 Literacy in Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects Standards. The committees separated the literacy standards for these distinct content areas to better connect the standards directly with these content areas. In addition, guidance will be developed to show connections to literacy in other content areas.

Mathematics Standards Review & Changes

Seven grade band/course subcommittees (Prekindergarten-Grade 2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and Plus Standards) comprised of New York State P-12 classroom teachers, special education teachers, English language learner teachers, parents, curriculum specialists, school administrators and college professors discussed and made recommendations for possible revisions or additions to the standards.

Through a series of all-day, in-person meetings as well as web meetings held over the past several months, review committees considered and discussed public comment as well as expert feedback from mathematical cognitive researchers, and made any necessary modifications to the draft standards.

In reviewing the standards, the committees sought to ensure that the mathematics learning standards continue to be rigorous and represent a level of achievement in mathematics that will enable students to successfully transition to post-secondary education and the workforce. Significant changes to the mathematics standards include:

- **Move Standards to Different Grade Levels** to improve the focus of major content and skills for each grade-level and course; providing more time for students to develop deep levels of understanding of grade-level appropriate content. Based on public and expert comments, major grade movements occurred in statistics and probability at the middle level and in Algebra at the high school level;
- **Provide for Students to Explore Standards** to ensure standards are grade-level appropriate. Exploring a standard allows students to be introduced to and learn a concept without the expectation of mastering the concept at that grade level. Exploring the topic recognizes the importance of building a foundation toward mastering the concept in subsequent grades;
- **Clarification of Standards** so that educators, students and parents more clearly understand the expectation, without limiting instructional flexibility. For example, modifications were made to better define the progression of skills and the transition of some of the 18 shared standards between Algebra I and Algebra II;
- **Add and Consolidate Standards** to improve coherence, focus and reduce redundancy among grade levels. For example, one additional standard at the Kindergarten level helps solidify pattern recognition and creation from Prekindergarten to Grade 2. In addition, standards regarding time and money were added and changed to smooth the transition of building these skills at the Prekindergarten -Grade 4 level;
- **Maintain the Rigor of the Standards** by balancing the need for conceptual understanding, procedural skill and application. For example, clearly identify the fluency standards at the high school level; and
- **Create a Glossary of Verbs** associated with the mathematics standards. This glossary contains a list of verbs that appear throughout the revised standards recommendations. For example, the term “explore” is now utilized in some standards to alleviate grade-level appropriateness concerns.

Special Populations

Rigorous ELA and mathematics standards requires the ongoing engagement of all stakeholders in work that promotes and expands academic opportunities for ELLs/MLLs and SWD. Districts and schools must ensure that classrooms and instruction are designed to advance students’ literacy and academic skills in ELA and mathematics. In order to effectively meet the needs of NYS’s diverse subpopulations and foster advanced literacy and academic skills among ELLs/MLLs and SWD, it is vital that administrative and instructional practices are mindful of policy and best practices and what is known with respect to the culture, literacy and academic development of these populations.

Parents, educators, administrators, and educational experts have been engaged in the NYS ELA and mathematics standards revision process in order to ensure that ELLs/MLLs and SWD have equitable access to a set of Standards that foster the literacy skills and academic language needed for college and career readiness. Researchers and notable experts have reviewed the new NYS Standards and how the Standards can be interpreted for instructional purposes and therefore adopted and adapted particularly for classrooms with ELLs/MLLs and/or SWD. The Standards are inclusive of the recommendation that all learners need to be exposed to the cognitively rigorous ideas and content found in complex, grade-level texts. In addition, the Standards emphasize the acquisition and use of academic English and content-specific vocabulary. The ELA Standards address the importance of reading diverse texts and considering cultural perspectives and the need to engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners. Researchers and experts will be providing New York State Education Department (NYSED) with concrete, actionable information and guidance regarding ELLs/MLLs and SWD and the new NYS Standards in ELA and mathematics.

Furthermore, to foster high quality curriculum development and instructional practices for all students, it is recommended that schools incorporate the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to promote equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides students with multiple means of engaging with, representing, and expressing curriculum content. A UDL framework incorporates flexibility in classroom design, instructional methodology and instructional materials to enhance student learning. UDL in the classroom supports all students by enhancing the design of classroom and instructional practices and accommodating and supporting a variety of learning styles. Incorporating a UDL framework for instruction that reduces barriers to learning and is adaptive to the needs of students ensures that equitable learning opportunities are available to all students. UDL guidelines for instruction may be found at the National Center on Universal Design for Learning <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines>.

English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners and the Standards

Students in New York State (NYS) are multilingual and multicultural. According to 2015-2016 school year data, of the approximately 2.6 million public school students in NYS, 8.8% are English Language Learners (ELLs)/Multilingual Learners (MLLs) which is over 245,000 ELLs/MLLs in NYS. In NYS, the linguistic diversity of our families makes up over 200 languages. Multilingual Learners are a diverse group of students of different backgrounds, cultural context and academic experiences.

Our ELLs/MLLs enter the school system at all grade levels, with a range of proficiency in English and varying degrees of literacy and academic competencies in their home or primary language. Some students are at the entering level and some may be expanding in their language proficiencies. These factors must be taken into consideration when planning and providing instruction that will afford ELLs/MLLs the opportunity to develop academic language and English proficiency in order fully engage with grade-level ELA and mathematics standards. It is NYS's

mission is to ensure that ELLs/MLLs attain the highest level of academic success and language proficiency to meet the new NYS Learning Standards.

English as a New Language (ENL) and Bilingual Education (BE) teachers were an integral part of the NYS ELA and mathematics Learning Standards revision process in order to make certain that all students' individual educational paths and socio-emotional needs are met in multiple languages leading them to college and career readiness. In addition, researchers and notable experts in the areas of advancing the language and literacy skills of children from diverse cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds, are providing NYSED with further guidance which will include global suggestions for instruction for all students, including ELLs/MLLs who may require additional instructional support and scaffolding. This guidance and support will assist the Department in meeting the goal of releasing a set of standards that are sensitive to the linguistic and cultural diversity among NYS's student population and the individual needs of many readers, as well as the instrumental role that educator knowledge plays in supporting literacy and academic outcomes.

ELLs/MLLs are expected to meet the same grade level standards as all other students. ELLs/MLLs are entitled to all instructional supports, scaffolds and services that support him or her academically, socially, and culturally while learning English and his or her home language in order to meet the Standards. Educators should consider factors, such as age, English and home language proficiency, and culture while developing lifelong readers, writers, and speakers of English and other languages.

In order for ELLs/MLLs to have meaningful access to the Standards they must be afforded equitable access to:

- A safe and inclusive learning environment that recognizes and respects the languages and cultures of all students.
- Instruction that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for all diverse learners, including those with Individualized Education Programs (IEP).
- Integrated language and content instruction to support language development through language-focused scaffolds.
- Materials and instructional resources that are linguistically age/grade appropriate and aligned to the standards.
- Academic language and content-area supports to strategically move ELLs/MLLs along the language development continuum.
- Develop academic language and content knowledge both in English and a language other than English, including the student's home language.

- An environment where home languages are valued and used as instructional advantages in bridging prior knowledge to new knowledge and ensuring that content is meaningful and comprehensible.

To access the [Blueprint for English Language Learners Success](#), additional educator resources, and guidance on how to support ELLs/MLLs and their families please visit the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages website at: Languages website at <http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed>.

Students with Disabilities and the Standards

It is essential that we have high expectations for students with disabilities in New York State (NYS). According to 2015-16 school year data, students with disabilities account for 14.7% of the approximately 2.6 million public school students in NYS. Students with disabilities must have opportunities to benefit from high quality instruction and to reach the same learning standards as all students. Under federal and State law, it is a fundamental right of students with disabilities to receive the same general education curriculum and content as all other students and to be provided appropriate services and supports (including accommodations, modifications, and scaffolding). The intensity of services and supports must be based on the individual needs of students with disabilities so that they can gain knowledge and skills and demonstrate what they have learned.

Each student's individualized education program (IEP) must be developed in consideration of the State learning standards. The IEP should include information for teachers to effectively deliver the appropriate services and supports to address the individual learning needs of the student and promote meaningful access, participation and progress in the general education curriculum. Meaningful access to and participation in the general education curriculum occurs when students with disabilities are actively engaged in learning the content and skills that define the general education curriculum.

In addition to services and supports, special education programs must include specially designed instruction that adapts the content, methodology and/or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the student resulting from her/his disability. The effective implementation of specially designed instruction helps to ensure a student's access to the general education curriculum so that he/she can meet the learning standards that apply to all students.

The [Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities](#) focuses on seven core evidence-based principles for students with disabilities to ensure they have the opportunity to benefit from high quality instruction and to reach the same standards as all students:

- Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.

- Parents, and other family members, are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.
- Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.
- Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.
- Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.
- Schools provide high quality inclusive programs and activities.
- Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.

For additional information, please see

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/2015-memos/blueprint-for-improved-results-for-students-with-disabilities.html>.

The ELA and mathematics learning standards were revised with input from special education experts, teachers, and specialists that work with students with disabilities. To access resources and guidance on how the learning standards relate to curriculum instruction and students with disabilities, see the NYSED Office of Special Education at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/>. Additional resources and guidance to assist teachers and administrators in supporting students with disabilities is forthcoming.

NYSED thanks all the educators, parents, researchers, experts and specialists that reviewed and provided feedback on the new NYS ELA and mathematics learning standards.