

# Communication PRinciples for Principals

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## UPDATED CURRICULUM STANDARDS



### IDEA

At DoDEA, we believe that curriculum, instruction and assessment are the essential elements for obtaining the high student achievement that our CSP has designated as our number one goal.



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### Principals as Instructional Leaders

As instructional leaders, DoDEA principals must recognize that alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment is rooted in well-developed, purposeful and clear academic standards. Principals have a responsibility to ensure that teachers are familiar with, and use, the curriculum standards developed by DoDEA for each content area. This tip sheet will provide some key information on recent updates to the standards across DoDEA.

### Continuous Improvement

Curriculum, instruction and assessment are the important elements to obtaining high student achievement. Conducting comprehensive reviews of curricular programs and standards ensure system-wide alignment. Coherent academic standards are critical in guiding school level improvement plans, professional development and program evaluations. Well articulated standards serve as the basis for gathering data about how we assess student and school progress.

Content standards require ongoing review and periodic updates. Recently, curriculum specialists together with classroom teachers reviewed and made recommended updates for all DoDEA core curriculum standards. DoDEA contracted Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), to provide objective guidance and to rate the revised standards on breadth, depth, clarity and specificity.

The updated standards, for the most part, are the same in regards to breadth and depth; but the revisions reflect more clarity and specificity. The revised standards are therefore easier to read, include examples of what the standards should “look like” and give teachers a clearer picture of the grade level and content expectations.

### Core Academic Content Standards Now Updated

As of July 2009, all core academic content standards (i.e., Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, and ELA) have received a favorable rating from McREL.

The updated standards are published on the DoDEA website, with the exception of the high school mathematics standards, which are expected to be approved by McREL during the school year.

## Professional Development

Principals will assist teachers with using the updated standards and implementing the components of a standards-based classroom. Video modules have been developed to provide guidance and an explanation of the updated standards.

As we begin to implement the updated standards, these modules will be an important tool in helping educators to become familiar with the revisions to the standards. Since teachers have already been trained on how to use standards, the video modules provide only an “overview” of the changes. The module overviews can be used in variety of ways, such as at faculty meetings, grade level meetings, or during teacher-planning time or IRP time as part of the planning process.

As teachers and principals view the videos, they will recognize many of the standards to be more clear and concise. The modules contain examples of what a standard looks like for a particular grade level or course to further assist teachers with planning instruction. You can link to the video modules from the DoDEA home page at [www.dodea.edu](http://www.dodea.edu).

- Each principal will assist teachers with using the newly updated standards and implementing the components of a standards-based classroom. Video modules have been developed to give guidance and an explanation of the updated standards.



## Beyond the Videos-Planning Around the Standards

Reviewing and using these standards should be a daily occurrence as teachers plan, assess, use curriculum materials, and interact with parents and students. As a school system, DoDEA has spent several years training teachers on how to use standards so that all our teachers have the same expectations for rigor and excellence. Standards are the foundation of sound teaching and sustainable student achievement. They provide the basis for gathering data, assessing student progress and for a road map towards continuous improvement.

## The Standards-Based Classroom

There several things teachers can do to successfully integrate a standards-based approach to teaching. First, all DoDEA teachers should become familiar with the DoDEA content standards. Classroom teachers are to incorporate these standards into their instructional plan for the school year. Lessons, activities, and projects should be designed and selected as they relate to specific concepts or skills identified by the DoDEA content standards. A standards-based lesson requires students to think critically and apply their knowledge. Inquiry and problem solving should be a part of daily lessons presented in the classroom.

Informal, formal, and self-assessments are an integral and on-going process

used to show the knowledge, skills, and understandings our students have achieved. Information obtained from a variety of assessments can also be used to differentiate instruction and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.

Standards are not taught in isolation, but are connected to other content area concepts, procedures, and understandings, as well as to the world around us.

Communication should be a part of every standards-based classroom. Teachers can promote greater classroom discourse by expanding their use of questioning techniques, requiring students to explain their thinking both orally and in writing. Giving students ample time and opportunity to question, examine, conjecture, and experiment during lessons will improve their ability to reason.

Working collaboratively to implement standards-based instruction will not only enhance instructional practices, but will benefit our students' performance and increase their level of achievement.