



# North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards

“For every student in North Carolina, a knowledgeable, skilled compassionate teacher...a star in every classroom.”

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**PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

**EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS DIVISION**  
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The North Carolina State Board of Education charged the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission to align the Core Standards for the Teaching Profession (1997) with the newly adopted mission. To this end, Commission members, 16 practicing educators from across the state, considered what teachers need to know and be able to do in 21st century schools. This document contains the aligned standards adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in June 2007 and July 2011.

Why are these standards important to you? The North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards are the basis for teacher preparation, teacher evaluation, and professional development. Each of these will include the skills and knowledge needed for the 21st century teaching and learning. The document is provided in this format so that it may be kept in a plan book to guide instruction as we move forward in the 21st century.

## A New Vision of Teaching

The different demands on 21st century education dictate new roles for teachers in their classrooms and schools. The following defines what teachers need to know and do to be able to teach students in the 21st century:

- Leadership among the staff and with the administration is shared in order to bring consensus and common,

shared ownership of the vision and purpose of work of the school. Teachers are valued for the contributions they make to their classroom and the school.

- Teachers make the content they teach engaging, relevant, and meaningful to students' lives.
- Teachers can no longer cover material; they, along with their students, uncover solutions. They teach existing core content that is revised to include skills like critical thinking, problem solving, and information and communications technology (ICT) literacy.
- In their classrooms, teachers facilitate instruction encouraging all students to use 21st century skills so they discover how to learn, innovate, collaborate, and communicate their ideas.
- The 21st century content (global awareness, civic literacy, financial literacy, and health awareness) is included in the core content areas.
- Subjects and related projects are integrated among disciplines and involve relationships with the home and community.
- Teachers are reflective about their practice and include assessments that are authentic and structured and demonstrate student understanding.
- Teachers demonstrate the value of lifelong learning and encourage their students to learn and grow.

## STANDARD 1

### Teachers Demonstrate Leadership

#### Teachers lead in their classrooms.

Teachers demonstrate leadership by taking responsibility for the progress of all students to ensure that they graduate from high school, are globally competitive for work and postsecondary education, and are prepared for life in the 21st century. Teachers communicate this vision to their students. Using a variety of data sources, they organize, plan, and set goals that meet the needs of the individual student and the class. Teachers use various types of assessment data during the school year to evaluate student progress and to make adjustments to the teaching and learning process. They establish a safe, orderly environment, and create a culture that empowers students to collaborate and become lifelong learners.

Teachers should:

- Take responsibility for all students' learning;
- Communicate vision to students;
- Use data to organize, plan, and set goals;
- Use a variety of assessment data throughout the year to evaluate progress;
- Establish a safe and orderly environment; and
- Empower students.

#### Teachers demonstrate leadership in the school.

Teachers work collaboratively with school personnel to create a professional learning community. They analyze and use local, state, and national data to develop goals and strategies in the school improvement plan that enhances student learning and teacher working conditions. Teachers provide input in determining the school budget and in the selection of professional development that meets the needs of students and their own professional growth. They participate in the hiring process and collaborate with their colleagues to mentor and support teachers to improve the effectiveness of their departments or grade levels.

Teachers should:

- Work collaboratively with all school personnel to create a professional learning community;
- Analyze data;
- Develop goals and strategies through the School Improvement Plan;
- Assist in determining school budget and professional development;
- Participate in hiring process; and
- Collaborate with colleagues to mentor and support teachers to improve effectiveness.

#### Teachers lead the teaching profession.

Teachers strive to improve the teaching profession. They contribute to the establishment of positive working conditions in their school. They actively participate in and advocate for decision-making structures in education and government that take advantage of the expertise of teachers. Teachers promote professional growth for all educators and collaborate with their colleagues to improve the profession.

Teachers should:

- Strive to improve the profession;
- Contribute to the establishment of positive working conditions;
- Participate in decision-making structures; and
- Promote professional growth.

#### Teachers advocate for schools and students.

Teachers advocate for positive change in policies and practices affecting student learning. They participate in the implementation of initiatives to improve the education of students.

Teachers should:

- Advocate for positive change in policies and practices affecting student learning; and
- Participate in the implementation of initiatives to improve education.

#### Teachers demonstrate high ethical standards.

Teachers demonstrate ethical principles including honesty, integrity, fair treatment, and respect for others. Teachers uphold the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators (effective June 1, 1997) and the Standards for Professional Conduct adopted April 1, 1998.

Teachers should:

- Demonstrate ethical principles
- Uphold the Code of Ethics and Standards for the Professional Conduct





**STANDARD 2****Teachers Establish a Respectful Environment for a Diverse Population of Students****Teachers provide an environment in which each child has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults.**

Teachers encourage an environment that is inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible.

Teachers should:

- Encourage an environment that is inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible.

**Teachers embrace diversity in the school community and in the world.**

Teachers demonstrate their knowledge of the history of diverse cultures and their role in shaping global issues. They actively select materials and develop lessons that counteract stereotypes and incorporate histories and contributions of all cultures.

Teachers recognize the influence of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and other aspects of culture on a student's development and personality.

Teachers strive to understand how a student's culture and background may influence his or her school performance. Teachers consider and incorporate different points of view in their instruction.

Teachers should:

- Demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultures;
- Select materials and develop lessons that counteract stereotypes and incorporate contributions;
- Recognize the influences on a child's development, personality, and performance; and
- Consider and incorporate different points of view.

**Teachers treat students as individuals.**

Teachers maintain high expectations, including graduation from high school, for students of all backgrounds. Teachers

appreciate the differences and value the contributions of each student in the learning environment by building positive, appropriate relationships.

Teachers should:

- Maintain high expectations for all students; and
- Appreciate differences and value contributions by building positive, appropriate relationships.

**Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of students with special needs.**

Teachers collaborate with the range of support specialists to help meet the special needs of all students. Through inclusion and other models of effective practice, teachers engage students to ensure that their needs are met.

Teachers should:

- Collaborate with specialists; and
- Engage students and ensure they meet the needs of their students through inclusion and other models of effective practice.

**Teachers work collaboratively with the families and significant adults in the lives of their students.**

Teachers recognize that educating children is a shared responsibility involving the school, parents or guardians, and the community. Teachers improve communication and collaboration between the school and the home and community in order to promote trust and understanding and build partnerships with all segments of the school community. Teachers seek solutions to overcome cultural and economic obstacles that may stand in the way of effective family and community involvement in the education of their students.

Teachers should:

- Improve communication and collaboration between the school and the home and community;
- Promote trust and understanding and build partnerships with school community; and
- Seek solutions to overcome obstacles that prevent family and community involvement.





### STANDARD 3 Teachers Know the Content They Teach

#### Teachers align their instruction with the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*.

In order to enhance the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*, teachers investigate the content standards developed by professional organizations in their specialty area. They develop and apply strategies to make the curriculum rigorous and relevant for all students and provide a balanced curriculum that enhances literacy skills.

Elementary teachers have explicit and thorough preparation in literacy instruction. Middle and high school teachers incorporate literacy instruction within the content area or discipline.

Teachers should:

- Teach the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*;
- Develop and apply strategies to make the curriculum rigorous and relevant; and
- Develop literacy skills appropriate to specialty area.

#### Teachers know the content appropriate to their teaching specialty.

Teachers bring a richness and depth of understanding to their classrooms by knowing their subjects beyond the content they are expected to teach and by directing students' natural curiosity into an interest in learning. Elementary teachers have broad knowledge across disciplines. Middle school and high school teachers have depth in one or more specific content areas or disciplines.

Teachers should:

- Know subject beyond the content they teach; and
- Direct students' curiosity into an interest in learning.

#### Teachers recognize the interconnectedness of content areas/disciplines.

Teachers know the links and vertical alignment of the grade or subject they teach and the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*. Teachers understand how the content they teach relates to other disciplines in order to deepen understanding and connect learning for students. Teachers promote global awareness and its relevance to the subjects they teach.

Teachers should:

- Know links between grade/subject and the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*;
- Relate content to other disciplines; and
- Promote global awareness and its relevance.

#### Teachers make instruction relevant to students.

Teachers incorporate 21st century life skills into their teaching deliberately, strategically, and broadly. These skills include leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility. Teachers help their students understand the relationship between the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* and 21st century content which includes global awareness; financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; and health awareness.

Teachers should:

- Incorporate life skills which include leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility; and
- Demonstrate the relationship between the core content and 21st century content that includes global awareness; financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; and health and wellness awareness.

**STANDARD 4****Teachers Facilitate Learning for Their Students****Teachers know the ways in which learning takes place, and they know the appropriate levels of intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of their students.**

Teachers know how students think and learn. Teachers understand the influences that affect individual student learning (development, culture, language proficiency, etc.) and differentiate their instruction accordingly. Teachers keep abreast of evolving research about student learning. They adapt resources to address the strengths and weaknesses of their students.

Teachers should:

- Know how students think and learn;
- Understand the influences on student learning and differentiate instruction;
- Keep abreast of evolving research; and
- Adapt resources to address the strengths and weaknesses of students.

**Teachers plan instruction appropriate for their students.**

Teachers collaborate with their colleagues and use a variety of data sources for short and long range planning based on the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*. These plans reflect an understanding of how students learn. Teachers engage students in the learning process. They understand that instructional plans must be constantly monitored and modified to enhance learning. Teachers make the curriculum responsive to cultural diversity and to individual learning needs.

Teachers should:

- Collaborate with colleagues;
- Use data for short and long range planning;
- Engage students in the learning process;
- Monitor and modify plans to enhance student learning; and
- Respond to cultural diversity and learning needs of students.

**Teachers use a variety of instructional methods.**

Teachers choose the methods and techniques that are most effective in meeting the needs of their students as they strive to eliminate achievement gaps. Teachers employ a wide range of techniques including information and communication technology, learning styles, and differentiated instruction.

Teachers should:

- Choose methods and materials as they strive to eliminate achievement gaps; and
- Employ a wide range of techniques using information and communication technology, learning styles, and differentiated instruction.

**Teachers integrate and utilize technology in their instruction.**

Teachers know when and how to use technology to maximize student learning. Teachers help students use technology to learn content, think critically, solve problems, discern reliability, use information, communicate, innovate, and collaborate.

Teachers should:

- Know appropriate use; and
- Help students use technology to learn content, think critically, solve problems, discern reliability, use information, communicate, innovate, and collaborate.

**Teachers help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.**

Teachers encourage students to ask questions, think creatively, develop and test innovative ideas, synthesize knowledge and draw conclusions. They help students exercise and communicate sound reasoning; understand connections; make complex choices; and frame, analyze, and solve problems.

Teachers should:

- Encourage students to ask questions, think creatively, develop and test innovative ideas, synthesize knowledge and draw conclusions; and
- Help students exercise and communicate sound reasoning; understand connections; make complex choices; and frame, analyze, and solve problems.

**Teachers help students work in teams and develop leadership qualities.**

Teachers teach the importance of cooperation and collaboration. They organize learning teams in order to help students define roles, strengthen social ties, improve communication and collaborative skills, interact with people from different cultures and backgrounds, and develop leadership qualities.

Teachers should:

- Teach the importance of cooperation and collaboration; and
- Organize learning teams in order to help students define roles, strengthen social ties, improve communication and collaborative skills, interact with people from different cultures and backgrounds, and develop leadership qualities.

**Teachers communicate effectively.**

Teachers communicate in ways that are clearly understood by their students. They are perceptive listeners and are able to communicate with students in a variety of ways, even when language is a barrier. Teachers help students articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively

Teachers should:

- Communicate clearly with students in a variety of ways; and



- Assist students in articulating thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively.

**Teachers use a variety of methods to assess what each student has learned.**

Teachers use multiple indicators, including formative and summative assessments, to evaluate student progress and growth as they strive to eliminate achievement gaps. Teachers provide opportunities, methods, feedback, and tools for students to assess themselves and each other. Teachers use 21st century assessment systems to inform instruction and demonstrate evidence of students' 21st century knowledge, skills, performance, and dispositions.

Teachers should:

- Use multiple indicators, both formative and summative, to evaluate student progress;
- Provide opportunities for self-assessment; and
- Use assessment systems to inform instruction and demonstrate evidence of students' 21st century knowledge, skills, performance, and dispositions.



**STANDARD 5**  
**Teachers Reflect on Their Practice**

**Teachers analyze student learning.**

Teachers think systematically and critically about student learning in their classrooms and schools: why learning happens and what can be done to improve achievement. Teachers collect and analyze student performance data to improve school and classroom effectiveness. They adapt their practice based on research and data to best meet the needs of students.

- Think systematically and critically about learning in their classroom: why learning happens and what can be done to improve student achievement; and
- Collect and analyze student performance data to improve effectiveness.

**Teachers link professional growth to their professional goals.**

Teachers participate in continued, high quality professional development that reflects a global view of educational practices; includes 21st century skills and knowledge; aligns with the State Board of Education priorities; and meets the needs of students and their own professional growth.

- Participate in continued, high quality professional development.

**Teachers function effectively in a complex, dynamic environment.**

Understanding that change is constant, teachers actively investigate and consider new ideas that improve teaching and learning. They adapt their practice based on research and data to best meet the needs of their students.

- Actively investigate and consider new ideas that improve teaching and learning; and
- Adapt practice based on data.



**STANDARD 6****Teachers Contribute to the Academic Success of Students**

**The work of the teacher results in acceptable, measurable progress for students based on established performance expectations using appropriate data to demonstrate growth.**

A teacher's rating on the sixth standard is determined by a student growth value as calculated by the statewide growth model for educator effectiveness. The End-of-Course assessments, End-of-Grade assessments, Career and Technical Education Post-Assessments, and the Measures of Student Learning provide the student data used to calculate the growth value.

The student growth value places a teacher into one of three rating categories:

- Does not meet expected growth: the student growth value for the teacher is lower than what was expected per the statewide growth model.
- Meets expected growth: the student growth value for the teacher is what was expected per the statewide growth model.
- Exceeds expected growth: the student growth value for the teacher exceeds what was expected per the statewide growth model.

For the 2012-13 school year, a teacher's student growth value is based only on the student growth values for the individual students taught by that teacher (i.e., this comprises 100% of the sixth standard rating for the teacher).

For the 2012-13 school year, if an educator does not have a growth value for his or her individual students, the growth value will be based on the data for the entire school.

Note: Teachers whose student growth value is based on data for the entire school will not have that data count toward a three-year rolling average for determination of effectiveness status (see Effectiveness of Teachers section below).

All local school boards shall use student growth values generated through a method approved by the State Board of Education.

**Effectiveness of Teachers**

**Per federal requirements, the State must adopt definitions of effective and highly effective teachers.**

A highly effective teacher is one who receives a rating of at least "accomplished" on each of the Teacher Evaluation Standards 1 – 5 and receives a rating of "exceeds expected growth" on Standard 6 of the Teacher Evaluation Instrument. The End-of-Course assessments, End-of-Grade assessments, Career and Technical Education Post-Assessments, and the Measures of Student Learning provide the student data used to calculate the growth value.

An effective teacher is one who receives a rating of at least "proficient" on each of the Teacher Evaluation Standards 1-5 and receives a rating of at least "meets expected growth" on Standard 6 of the Teacher Evaluation Instrument.

A teacher in need of improvement is one who fails to receive a rating of at least "proficient" on each of the Teacher Evaluation Standards 1-5 or receives a rating of "does not meet expected growth" on Standard 6 of the Teacher Evaluation Instrument.

A three-year rolling average of student growth values generates the sixth standard rating used to determine teacher effectiveness. Only student growth values based on the individual students taught by a teacher will be used to determine the three-year rolling average for that teacher.



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