



Illinois State Board of Education

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FACT SHEET

ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS

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The **Illinois Learning Standards** in English language arts and math were adopted in 2010 and have since transformed the way teachers engage and challenge their students by emphasizing critical thinking and real-world application. The higher expectations of these new learning benchmarks paved the way for a complete review and update of all learning standards.

In **January 2014**, the State Board of Education adopted [new science benchmarks](#), known as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which schools will fully implement during the 2016-17 school year. Three Illinois educators were among the 41 experts who wrote the NGSS, and Illinois was one of 26 state partners to guide the standards-writing process and review the learning benchmarks. The new Illinois Learning Standards in science emphasize a more engaged, hands-on science education that aims to give students a deeper understanding of the core concepts in science and engineering as well as practice applying those concepts – linking knowledge and real-world skills. Students will demonstrate their scientific proficiency by engaging in actual scientific practices that show the ability to apply concepts and ideas in any context.

The [revised Illinois Learning Standards for physical development and health](#) are also now in place, with full implementation slated for the upcoming school year (2015-16). The updated standards are based on the recommendations of the Enhance Physical Education Task Force, which was created in 2012 to increase physical education's return on investment for learning and health. The task force called together more than 30 school, physical education, and health experts from all over Illinois to promote and recommend enhanced physical education programs that can be integrated with a broader wellness strategy and health curriculum in elementary and secondary schools in the state. Their findings noted the latest research in neuroscience linking physical activity with improved academic performance.

ELA and mathematics standards survey

An outside evaluation on implementation of the updated English language arts and math standards was conducted with more than 4,000 Illinois educators in May.

Preliminary results show one-third of respondents say their schools are “fully implemented” and 50 percent say they are “more than 50 percent implemented.” Those from elementary school districts (40 percent) are twice as likely as those from high school districts (19 percent) to say they are “fully implemented.”

At the classroom level, the vast majority of respondents agree that the Illinois Learning Standards are being used on a daily basis in “most or all” ELA (80 percent) and math (82 percent) units and classes.

A large majority of administrators (86 percent) and teachers (76 percent) say ELA or math standards are being used “daily” as opposed to “weekly.”

In August of 2014, ISBE began a [review of the state's arts and social studies education standards](#) to build on the State Board of Education's work to update the ELA, math, and science standards and better prepare students for success after graduation. Arts Alliance Illinois, a statewide advocate for arts education, is leading the review of the arts education standards and convened a committee of education partners to review the National Core Arts Standards, released in June 2014. The committee includes teachers representing all arts disciplines, administrators, and community partners. Members are reviewing existing Illinois standards, analyzing public input, and evaluating research and best practices in arts education. This work will culminate in a recommendation (expected in January 2016) to the State Board of Education for the adoption and implementation of new statewide arts standards.

Another group of education partners formed a task force, led by the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition, to develop new social studies standards. The task force consists of teachers representing various grades, as well as representatives from the disciplines of civics, economics, geography, history, and sociology. The panel reviewed the College, Career, and Civic (C3) Framework, which was published last fall by the National Council for the Social Studies, to guide its efforts. The group presented the proposed social studies standards in June. They were approved by the Board and now move to the rule-making process with public debate and feedback. The new social studies standards complement Illinois' other new learning standards in their focus on critical thinking and real-life experiences. These standards will increase expectations for our students to read complex texts, think more deeply, make connections, and provide supporting details and complete analyses in drawing conclusions.

ISBE's review and update of learning standards in all subject areas has helped us better address the needs of the whole child to help our students develop into well-rounded, civic-minded citizens who have the skills, knowledge, and emotional well-being to be successful, lifelong learners and critical, creative thinkers. Illinois is a national leader in social and emotional learning (SEL) and was among the first states to set standards for SEL. As a result of the children's Mental Health Act of 2003, ISBE adopted the Illinois SEL Standards, which describe the content and skills for students in grades K - 12 for social and emotional learning. Each standard includes five benchmark levels that describe what students should know and be able to do in early elementary (grades K-3), late elementary (grades 4-5), middle/junior high (grades 6-8), early high school (grades 9-10), and late high school (grades 11-12).

Attaining the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in social and emotional learning is essential to success in school and life overall. Illinois' SEL standards and grade-level performance descriptors explain the process through which children develop awareness and management of their emotions, set and achieve important personal and academic goals, use social-awareness and interpersonal skills, and demonstrate decision making and responsible behaviors. ISBE's [Comprehensive System of Learning Supports website](#) provides information for implementing the SEL standards as well as resources on school climate, bullying prevention, and new research-based resources on childhood trauma. ISBE encourages schools districts to utilize these tools to help build healthy school climates.

ISBE is also working on a new Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Network, which will combine the technical assistance and professional development of the [Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Collaborative \(ISTAC\)](#) and the [Illinois Response to Intervention \(I-Rtl\) Network](#) to support districts in meeting the individual needs of students.