

Standards of Effective Teaching Practice

The *Standards of Effective Teaching Practice* is Massachusetts' framework for effective teaching. Pursuant to [603 CMR 35.03](#) and grounded in [DESE's Educational Vision](#), it reflects input from educators, students, and families across Massachusetts on evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices that support *all students* to attain academic knowledge and skills, understand and value themselves and others, and engage with the world.

This framework guides the development of Massachusetts educators from preparation through employment, articulating the key knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential of all teachers in public schools in Massachusetts to disrupt patterns of inequity and well serve richly diverse student bodies with varied educational needs. The *Standards of Effective Teaching Practice* are complementary to the *Standards of Effective Administrative Leadership* for school-level administrators.

The *Standards of Effective Teaching Practice* describe effective teaching across four Standards:

- **Standard I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment**
- **Standard II: Teaching All Students**
- **Standard III: Family and Community Engagement**
- **Standard IV: Professional Culture**

Within each Standard are **Indicators** (e.g., I-A Curriculum and Planning) and, most specifically, **elements** (e.g., I-A-1 Subject Matter Knowledge). See the example below:

STANDARD I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment	
<i>The teacher promotes the learning and growth of all students by providing high-quality and coherent instruction, designing and administering authentic and meaningful student assessments, analyzing student performance and growth data, using this data to improve instruction, providing students with constructive feedback on an ongoing basis, and continuously refining learning objectives.</i>	
I-A: Curriculum & Planning	1. Subject Matter Knowledge: Demonstrates sound knowledge of the subject matter by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using evidence-based pedagogical practices that enable all students to develop and apply grade-level knowledge and skills in relevant and real-world contexts. • Supporting all students to make connections between the subject matter and real-world issues with impact on their communities and the world.
	2. Knowledge of Students: Builds on and draws from knowledge of their students' identities, skills, developmental levels, cultures, languages, and communities to provide relevant and differentiated learning experiences that enable all students to exercise social-emotional skills (e.g., self-management and making responsible decisions) and progress towards grade-level standards.
	3. Curriculum Literacy: Skillfully uses curricular materials by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining strengths and weaknesses of materials and adapting as necessary to plan evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally sustaining instruction, including identifying opportunities to create meaningful, relevant connections rooted in the local context. • Identifying necessary supplemental resources and/or tiered supports to provide all students access to grade-level instruction. • Utilizing a coherent instructional approach that builds student learning towards grade-level standards and individual learning goals over time through aligned lesson goals, scope, sequence, and tasks.

The *Standards of Effective Teaching Practice* correspond with the [Model Classroom Teacher Rubric](#) for educator evaluation and the [Professional Standards for Teachers](#) that guide educator preparation. This alignment promotes a coherent system of ongoing growth and development for all educators in the Commonwealth.

NOTE: In these Standards, "**all students**" represents *each and every student*, with particular focus on students who have been historically marginalized or underserved by our education systems, including but not limited to those who identify as Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and Multiracial students, students with disabilities, multilingual learners, LGBTQIA+ students, students experiencing homelessness and/or financial insecurity, and students who are undocumented.

Standards of Effective Teaching Practice – At-a-Glance

Standard I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment	Standard II: Teaching All Students	Standard III: Family and Community Engagement	Standard IV: Professional Culture
<p>A. Curriculum and Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Subject Matter Knowledge 2. Knowledge of Students 3. Curriculum Literacy <p>B. Assessment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purposeful Assessment 2. Accessible Assessment <p>C. Analysis</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis and Conclusions 2. Adjustments to Practice 3. Sharing Progress with Students and Families 4. Sharing Progress with Colleagues 	<p>A. Instruction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High Expectations and Support 2. Engaging Instruction 3. Inclusive Instruction <p>B. Learning Environment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive Relationships 2. Safe Learning Environment 3. Collaborative Learning Environment 4. Student Ownership of Learning 5. Critical Thinking <p>C. Student Learning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic Student Outcomes 2. Non-Academic Student Outcomes 	<p>A. Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication with Families <p>B. Engagement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family Engagement <p>C. Collaboration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-being 	<p>A. Reflective Practice and Professional Growth</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflective Practice 2. Goal-Setting 3. Professional Learning and Growth <p>B. Shared Responsibility, Collaboration, and Decision-Making</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shared Responsibility 2. Professional Collaboration 3. Decision-Making <p>C. Professional Responsibilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Judgment 2. Professional Responsibilities

STANDARD I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment

The teacher promotes the learning and growth of all students by providing high-quality and coherent instruction, designing and administering authentic and meaningful student assessments, analyzing student performance and growth data, using this data to improve instruction, providing students with constructive feedback on an ongoing basis, and continuously refining learning objectives.

I-A: Curriculum & Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Subject Matter Knowledge: Demonstrates sound knowledge of the subject matter by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using evidence-based pedagogical practices that enable all students to develop and apply grade-level knowledge and skills in relevant and real-world contexts. Supporting all students to make connections between the subject matter and real-world issues with impact on their communities and the world. Knowledge of Students: Builds on and draws from knowledge of their students' identities, skills, developmental levels, cultures, languages, and communities to provide relevant and differentiated learning experiences that enable all students to exercise social-emotional skills (e.g., self-management and making responsible decisions) and progress towards grade-level standards. Curriculum Literacy: Skillfully uses curricular materials by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining strengths and weaknesses of materials and adapting as necessary to plan evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally sustaining instruction, including identifying opportunities to create meaningful, relevant connections rooted in the local context. Identifying necessary supplemental resources and/or tiered supports to provide all students access to grade-level instruction. Utilizing a coherent instructional approach that builds student learning towards grade-level standards and individual learning goals over time through aligned lesson goals, scope, sequence, and tasks.
I-B: Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Purposeful Assessment: Uses a variety of formal and informal assessments for specific instructional purposes, including to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand each student's strengths and areas for growth. Measure and monitor students' understanding throughout instruction and their progress toward grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals. Actively inform instructional decisions. Accessible Assessment: Implements assessments that are accessible to all students by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing multiple ways and opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning. Creating opportunities for students to be able to draw from their cultural and linguistic knowledge and personal experiences. Ensuring that assessment tasks, methods and instruments maintain the rigor and high expectations outlined in the grade-level standards and do not perpetuate racial, cultural, or linguistic bias.
I-C: Analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis and Conclusions: Analyzes disaggregated data from a wide range of assessments to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain information about students' progress towards grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals, including trends across students or student groups. Reflect on instruction and identify actions to reduce disparate outcomes and improve learning for all students. Adjustments to Practice: Uses analysis and conclusions from a wide range of assessment data and feedback from colleagues, students, and families to adjust practice and implement differentiated and scaffolded supports for improved and more equitable student learning outcomes. Sharing Progress with Students and Families: Collaborates with students and their families, in an accessible format and language, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate specific, timely, and asset-based feedback on student progress towards grade-level or proficiency standards. Identify ways to build on students' strengths and support further growth. Sharing Progress with Colleagues: Collaborates with appropriate colleagues (e.g., special education teachers, English learner education teachers, paraeducators, general education teachers, and specialists) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share conclusions about student progress towards grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals to identify ways to build on students' strengths and support further growth. Seek feedback about instructional or assessment practices that will support student learning.

STANDARD II: Teaching All Students

The teacher promotes the learning and growth of all students through instructional practices that establish high expectations, create a safe and effective classroom environment, and demonstrate cultural proficiency.

**II-A:
Instruction**

1. **High Expectations and Support:** Supports all students to meet or exceed high expectations for grade-appropriate, standards-aligned learning, produce high-quality work, and develop self-awareness and skills for independent learning by:
 - Using evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining instructional practices to provide equitable opportunities for grade-level learning.
 - Providing flexible and responsive supports, scaffolds, and tools to meet students' needs.
 - Communicating clear criteria for success (e.g., models, rubrics, exemplars).
 - Reinforcing perseverance and effort with challenging content and tasks.
2. **Engaging Instruction:** Engages all students as active participants in learning experiences that are relevant, real-world, and interactive by:
 - Providing opportunities for students to make choices, explore topics and apply learning in culturally and linguistically sustaining ways, and through real-world, interactive contexts.
 - Building on students' strengths, interests, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and prior knowledge to support and motivate learning.
 - Facilitating purposeful student-to-student academic discourse with equitable student participation in discussion.
 - Integrating digital tools and educational technology that enhance learning experiences and promote the development of digital literacy skills.
3. **Inclusive Instruction:** Accommodates and supports individual differences in all students' learning needs, abilities, interests, and levels of readiness, including those of students with disabilities (in accordance with relevant IEPs or 504 plans), English learners and former English learners, academically advanced students, and students who have been historically marginalized, by:
 - Using appropriate inclusive practices, such as tiered supports, educational and assistive technologies, scaffolded instruction, and leveraging of students' native language and linguistic resources, to make grade-level content accessible and affirming for all students.
 - Providing students with multiple ways to learn content and demonstrate understanding, as appropriate.

**II-B:
Learning
Environment**

1. **Positive Relationships:** Builds positive, caring relationships to ensure all students feel valued, respected, equitably supported, and a sense of belonging in the classroom community.
2. **Safe Learning Environment:** Creates and maintains a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment by:
 - Establishing, with student input, classroom routines and systems to support student learning.
 - Modeling and reinforcing respect for and affirmation of differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges (self- and social awareness).
 - Supporting student accountability for the impact of their actions.
 - Enabling students to take academic risks and share ideas freely.
 - Seeking feedback from students on their experience of the classroom learning environment and making aligned adjustments to practice.
3. **Collaborative Learning Environment:** Develops students' relationship and communication skills by:
 - Providing students with frequent opportunities to interact with peers, make sense of complex ideas together, and develop language.
 - Supporting students to engage with differences and diverse perspectives, respectfully challenge each other's thinking, and address interpersonal conflicts as they arise.
4. **Student Ownership of Learning:** Guides students to self-assess, problem-solve, ask for support, access resources when needed, and demonstrate leadership and/or positively contribute to the classroom and school community.
5. **Critical Thinking:** Develops students' abilities to think critically, ask questions, and analyze sources, perspectives, and biases in order to deepen learning and make connections between the content and real-world problems and events (e.g., issues of identity, equity, power, and justice).

II-C:
Student
Learning

1. **Academic Student Outcomes:** Demonstrates expected impact on academic student outcomes based on multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement, including student progress on common assessments and statewide student growth measures where available.
 2. **Non-Academic Student Outcomes:** Demonstrates expected impact on non-academic student outcomes, such as student engagement and sense of belonging, based on student feedback and local measures of engagement where available.
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STANDARD III: Family and Community Engagement

The teacher promotes the learning and growth of all students through effective partnerships with families, caregivers, community members, and organizations.

III-A: Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication With Families: Establishes regular, two-way communication with families that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is culturally and linguistically sustaining and aligned with family preferences, in language(s) that families understand, and in approachable language and formats. • Shares timely information about student learning and performance.
III-B: Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family Engagement: Engages with families in a way that is equitable and collaborative by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building positive relationships with families characterized by mutual trust and respect. • Providing a variety of frequent, inclusive, and culturally and linguistically responsive opportunities for all families to engage as partners in the classroom community. • Clearly and accessibly communicating information about family engagement opportunities.
III-C: Collaboration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-Being: Partners with families to support students' learning and well-being by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveraging families' cultural and linguistic knowledge and expertise as assets • Engaging with families about what students are learning in the classroom and expectations for student success. • Collaboratively identifying, and seeking family input on, strategies and resources for supporting student learning and growth in and out of school.

STANDARD IV: Professional Culture

The teacher promotes the learning and growth of all students through ethical, culturally proficient, skilled, and collaborative practice.

**IV-A:
Reflection &
Professional
Growth**

1. **Reflective Practice:** Reflects on the effectiveness of instruction and how one’s identities, biases, and practices impact student learning and well-being; and works to improve practice and eliminate learning inequities across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability and ability, and other aspects of student identities, such that all students can meet or exceed grade-level standards.
2. **Goal-Setting:** Sets professional practice and student learning goals that:
 - Are challenging, standards-aligned and measurable.
 - Are based on thorough self-assessment, analysis of student learning data, and feedback from students and families.
 - Promote more inclusive and equitable learning experiences and outcomes for all students.
3. **Professional Learning and Growth:** Seeks out and engages in ongoing cycles of professional learning to strengthen equitable practice and improve student learning, applies new knowledge and skills into practice, and monitors impact on student outcomes.

**IV-B:
Shared
Responsibility,
Collaboration,
& Decision-
Making**

1. **Shared Responsibility:** Shares responsibility for schoolwide culture and learning expectations that promote an equitable and culturally and linguistically sustaining school community.
2. **Professional Collaboration:** Collaborates and communicates with colleagues, including special education, paraeducators, English learner education, general education, specialists, and support staff, on tasks in support of shared goals for student learning such as adapting and implementing instructional materials, examining student work, analyzing student performance, and planning appropriate scaffolds, interventions, and supports.
3. **Decision-Making:** Contributes ideas and expertise to planning and decision making at the school, department, and/or grade level to advance effective, equitable, inclusive and digitally appropriate instruction for all students.

**IV-C:
Professional
Responsibilities**

1. **Judgment:** Adheres to the school or district’s existing code of ethics and protects student confidentiality appropriately, including student data privacy related to digital tools.
2. **Professional Responsibilities:** Fulfills all routine professional responsibilities, including:
 - Performing duties of the role in accordance with school and district guidelines.
 - Connecting students to needed academic and social-emotional supports as available.
 - Engaging with all colleagues with respect and civility.
 - Adhering to district attendance policies.

Glossary of Terms

Academic Achievement: Attainment of academic skills and knowledge to meet or exceed grade-level standards in a comprehensive and diverse range of subjects with ability to apply competencies in relevant, real world contexts.

All Students: This rubric frequently references “all students,” which represents *each and every student*, with particular focus on students who have been historically marginalized or underserved by our education systems, including but not limited to, those who identify as Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and Multiracial students, students with disabilities, English learners, LGBTQIA+ students, students experiencing homelessness and/or financial insecurity, and students who are undocumented.

Anti-racist Teacher and Leader: Believes racial groups are equals in all their differences and continually engages in self-reflective work that leads to educational policies, practices, conditions, and cultures that resist and dismantle inequities due to individual and systemic racism to advance racial equity. ([Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders](#))

Asset-Based: Asset-based approaches intentionally build on the strengths and capacities that learners bring to school, including their languages, cultures and experiences versus deficit-based thinking that views differences as weaknesses.

Bias: A disproportionate weight that may be created intentionally or unintentionally in favor of or against an idea, thing, individual, or group. ([Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders](#))

Cultural Broker: Individuals who act as bridges between schools and diverse families and collaborate with families to support the school’s goals to improve student achievement ([Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals 2.0](#)).

Cultural Competence: Individuals’ affirmation in their own culture and identity and respect and understanding for different cultures and identities.

Culturally Responsive Practice: Cultural responsiveness is an approach to viewing students’ culture and identity (including race, ethnicity, multilingualism, and other characteristics) as assets, and creating learning experiences and environments that value and empower them. ([Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](#))

Culturally Relevant: Aligned with and affirming to students’ cultures, backgrounds, and identities. Culturally relevant pedagogy promotes students’ academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness. ([Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](#))

Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining: Affirming and valuing of students’ cultures, prior experiences, and linguistic resources to make learning more relevant and effective, promote academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness; valuing multilingualism as an asset. ([Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](#))

Curricular materials are resources teachers use to facilitate sequences of learning experiences (e.g., lesson and unit plans, texts); also called adopted or written curriculum, or instructional materials. ([Curriculum Matters](#))

Curriculum: a sequence of student learning experiences teachers facilitate, may use curricular materials as a foundation; also called enacted or taught curriculum. ([Curriculum Matters](#))

Digital Literacy: The ability to use digital technology, communication tools or networks to locate, evaluate, use, and create information; the ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers; and the ability to perform tasks effectively in a digital environment. Literacy includes the ability to read and interpret media, reproduce data and images through digital manipulation, and evaluate and apply new knowledge gained from digital environments ([Digital Literacy and Computer Science Framework](#)).

Equity: Placing a heightened focus on groups, particularly racial groups, experiencing disproportionate impact through the development of systems to remediate disparities in their experiences and outcomes.

Evidence-based: Practices or programs that have evidence to show that they are effective at producing results and improving outcomes when implemented as supported by valid and reliable research. ([US Department of Education, Every Student Succeeds Act](#))

Historically Marginalized Groups: Groups and communities that systematically experience discrimination and exclusion (social, political, economic and financial) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. These groups include but are not limited to race, culture, language, LGBTQ+, gender, and ability. Significant disparities exist for marginalized people.

High-quality Instructional Materials: High-quality materials exhibit a coherent sequence of target skills and knowledge, empirical evidence of efficacy, and other characteristics such as engaging content and inclusive design. Some factors in quality are nonnegotiable, while others vary by context: for example, compatibility with a school's technology infrastructure or cultural relevance to its student population. ([Curriculum Matters](#))

Inclusive Practices: Pursuing deliberate actions to create welcoming environments and ensure differences are actively sought and heard, and that every individual feels a sense of belonging and a role in impacting decision-making, practices, and policies.

Linguistically Responsive: Aligned with and affirming to students' and families' linguistic backgrounds and skills. This includes use of high-quality translation and interpretation, as well as translanguaging (see below). ([The Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success](#))

Non-Academic Student Outcomes: Outcomes associated with students' capacity to understand and value self (know their own strengths, interests, and areas of growth, be self-aware, be a self-advocate, and make responsible decisions), understand and value others (understand differences and multiple perspectives, empathize with others, and build connections with peers and adults), and engage with the world (understand and think critically about local, national, and world events and societal systems; and create positive change through civic action).

Restorative Practice: A framework of processes that schools can use to prevent and address conflict and poor behavior, including, but not limited to, restorative circles, family group conferences, social and emotional learning, and informal practices such as affective questioning. Rather than implementing a program, restorative practices focus on building and maintaining healthy relationships among individuals and maintaining a sense of community. In the case of a disciplinary infraction, restorative practices allow individuals to take full responsibility for their behavior by addressing the individual(s) affected by the behavior. Through these practices, individuals come to understand how their behavior affected others, recognize that their behavior was harmful to others, move toward repairing the harm, and work on not repeating that behavior again. ([National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments](#))

Sociopolitical Awareness: The ability to identify, analyze, and work to solve real-world problems by thinking critically and drawing conclusions about complex issues related to equity, identity, power, or bias.

Translanguaging: The process whereby multilingual speakers utilize all of their languages as an integrated communication system to learn. ([The Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success](#))

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is intended to increase access and engagement in learning by reducing physical, cognitive, intellectual, and organizational barriers, and other obstacles. It includes providing learners with multiple means of engagement, representation, action and expression. ([Multi-Tiered System of Support](#))