

School District of Indian River County

“Educate and inspire every student to be successful”



FLORIDA STANDARDS

- **More Rigorous**
- **21st Century Skills**
- **Evidence-Based**

The Florida Department of Education has academic standards for K-12 education known as the Florida Standards. The goal is to better prepare Florida students for success in college and the workforce in a competitive global economy.



1990 25th Street • Vero Beach, FL 32960 • 772-564-3000

Website: indianriverschools.org

Florida Standards

What are they all about?

The State of Florida adopted new standards. As a result, Florida's teachers are transitioning from designing courses and lessons based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards to using the **Florida Standards**. These new standards, or learning statements, were developed through a joint effort by the National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Educational standards, or learning goals and targets, define the content knowledge and skills taught in each course or grade level. Standards provide increased knowledge and accountability to all interested parties, including taxpayers, parents, students and staff. They act as a road map to the successful of a completion of a student's high school education. Expert teachers, professors, business leaders and others were instrumental in creating both the English/Language Arts and Mathematics Standards for all students in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade.



Florida is phasing in the **Florida Standards**, they will be fully implemented in grades K-12 the 2014-15 academic year. Indian River County Schools, like school systems across the state, have been devoted to getting ready for the implementation of the **Florida Standards**. Preparation of school personnel began in 2011-12 and accelerated in 2012-13 with the full implementation of the **Florida Standards** in grades K-2 and partial implementation in all other grades. District level administrators, Principals, Assistant Principals, and other school personnel have received training from both the Florida Department of Education and our local professional development department. District and school level personnel are working together to develop lesson plans and share resources for applying the **Florida Standards** in all classrooms. Students currently take the rigorous FCAT 2.0 exam to demonstrate mastery of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards; however, with full implementation of the **Florida Standards** in 2014-15, our students will begin taking another state exam. It is expected that the exam will be even more rigorous than the FCAT 2.0.

In reading, the **Florida Standards** will include a greater use of informational and nonfiction texts and reduce the use of fictional texts. Additionally, the complexity of assigned reading passages will increase and the texts will include academic vocabulary appropriate for challenging students in each grade. In mathematics, there will be a greater focus on key topics that are crucial for a student to succeed at the next level of the mathematics curriculum. The mathematics curriculum is more challenging and more rigorous. Increased emphasis will be placed on conceptual understanding as opposed to just learning a formula and there will be more applications of the concepts to demonstrate in-depth comprehension of the material.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are educational standards?

The state updated the standards, standards are not new to the State of Florida. The state has been selecting and setting minimum student performance expectations by grade level since 1977. Educational standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning.



2. Why do we need educational standards?

We need standards to ensure that all students are prepared for success in post-secondary education and the workforce. The newly updated **Florida Standards** will help ensure that students are receiving a high quality education consistently from school to school.

The **Florida Standards** do not tell teachers how to teach, but they do help teachers figure out the knowledge and skills their students should have in order to build the best lessons and environments for their classrooms. Standards also help students and parents by setting clear and realistic goals for success. Standards are a first step – a key building block – in providing our young people with a high quality education that will prepare them for success in college and work. Of course, standards are not the only thing that is needed for our children’s success, but they do provide an accessible roadmap for our teachers, parents, and students.



3. Does the state adopt standards?

The process of state standards adoption depends on the laws of each state. Some states adopt the standards through their state boards of education, while others adopt them through their state legislatures.

4. Will the Florida Standards keep local teachers from deciding what or how to teach?

No. **Florida Standards** are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others will decide how the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms. Local teachers, principals, superintendents, and school boards will continue to make decisions about curriculum and how their school systems are operated.

5. Were teachers involved in the creation of the Florida standards?

Yes. Teachers have been a critical voice in the development of the **Florida Standards**. Teachers were able to view and provide feedback on the standards by posting comments. The National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), among other organizations have also been instrumental in bringing together teachers to provide specific, constructive feedback on the standards.

6. Does having standards lead to dumbing down across the board?

Not at all. The **Florida Standards** are evidence-based, aligned with college and work expectations, they also include rigorous content and skills. They were developed in consultation with teachers and parents so they are also realistic and practical for the classroom. Far from looking for the “lowest common denominator,” these standards are designed to ensure that all students are learning what they need to know to graduate from high school ready for college or a career.



7. Will more standards mean more tests?

No. The goal is not to have more tests, but to have smarter and better tests that help students, parents, and teachers make informed decisions about teaching and learning.

8. By what criteria were the standards developed?

The standards were developed by the following criteria:

- Aligned with expectations for college and career success;
- Clear, so that educators and parents know what they need to do to help students learn;
- Inclusive of both content and the application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Built upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Realistic, for effective use in the classroom;
- Developed so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society;
- Evidence and research-based.

Criteria was set by the FLDOE.

9. How will the standards impact teachers?

The standards will provide important goals for teachers to ensure they are preparing students for success in college and the workforce. They will help teachers develop and implement effective strategies for their students by providing benchmarks for skills and knowledge that their students should have by the end of the year. The standards will help colleges and professional development programs better prepare teachers; provide the opportunity for teachers to be involved in the development of assessments linked to these top quality standards; allow districts to develop and provide better assessments that more accurately measure whether or not students have learned what was taught; and guide educators toward curricula and teaching strategies that will give students a deep understanding of the subject and the skills they need to apply their knowledge.

10. What is the role of the federal government in standards implementation?

The federal government has had no role in the development of the **Florida Standards**.

What do the Florida Standards look like in the classroom?

What can I expect for students in the classroom?

As Florida's schools incorporate the **Florida Standards**, classroom instruction will look increasingly different. Expect to see children learning in more collaborative groups. Expect subject areas to overlap and intertwine. Expect more in-depth reading assignments. We can get students off to an early start by focusing now on the new expectations, some of which are listed below:

More Non-fiction*

- Students will be reading more informational text as they move through school (Grades K-5 will be expected to read about 50% literature and 50% non-fiction, and by grade 9 70% of what students read will be informational)
- Teachers in all subject areas will increase focus on reading and comprehension.

More Evidence

- Students will be expected to write more and write better, using facts, details, and examples to inform, describe, and explain.
- In reading, students will be required to make *evidence-based* claims about what they read.
- In writing, students will be asked to cite evidence to justify their statements rather than rely on opinions or personal feelings.

*Non Fiction - writing dealing with facts and events rather than imagination, such as journals, articles, memoir, diaries, documentaries, scientific papers, biographies, etc.

More Complexity

- Students will be expected to read and comprehend increasingly complex texts. Research shows that the complexity of texts used in schools has declined over the past 40 years.

More Speaking /More Listening

- Students will be expected to demonstrate that they can speak and listen effectively.
- Students will be assessed for both speaking *and* listening skills. In the classroom, this means more small-group and whole-class discussions.
- Expect teachers to teach and evaluate students on how well they understand the speaker's points.

More Reading and Writing—Lots More!

In other words, teaching reading and writing will be the responsibility of every teacher. Reading and writing skills must improve if students in the United States expect to compete globally. **Florida Standards** are embracing this challenge by bringing literacy (the ability to read and write with competency) to the forefront. Literacy standards for history/social science, science, and technical subjects are now embedded in the new course descriptions; beginning this school year, these standards are taught by teachers, mastered by students, and assessed on tests.

Why do we need literacy standards for subjects like history/social science, science, and technology? Simple. To understand and converse in a subject, students must be able to read, write, speak, and listen in the language of that field. Research shows that the more fluent a student is in any particular field, the more capable he/she is of understanding the complexities of that field. Literacy standards will actually serve to enhance the *content* standards for subjects like history/social science, science, and technology.



Florida Standards include technology-based standards as well, interwoven into the literacy standards. These will help prepare students for life in our technological society. They ask that students understand and use sound methods for researching, producing, and consuming media.

Below are samples of what a middle-school student enrolled in a science class will be taught and expected to learn now that **Florida Standards** in Literacy are in place:

Reading Standard for Science, grades 6-8:

- Analyze the author’s purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure, or discussing an experiment in a text.

Writing Standard for Science, grades 6-8:

- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

Florida Standards....What about math?

The way mathematics is being taught is changing in Florida.

With the adoption of the new **Florida Standards** for mathematics, students will be focusing more in a number of areas, including the following:

- Building foundational skills, like addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals
- Understanding the concepts of mathematics more deeply. (We want to move our children beyond procedural skill and into conceptual understanding.)
- Building skills and problem-solving abilities, and applying mathematics to the real world. (By thinking and reasoning “mathematically,” our students can practice applying mathematics to the real world.)

Accompanying the **Florida Standards** for mathematics are the standards for mathematical practice. These practices rest on “processes and proficiencies” considered critical to mathematics education. There are eight of them. Three are listed below:

- Students make sense of a problem and do not give up trying to solve it even if it means working the problem many times.
- Students think about the math problem in their head and are able to solve the problem.
- In the classroom students openly discuss different ways they solve the problem so they understand that there are different approaches they could take.



How is science instruction affected by Florida Standards?

Science instruction in Florida's schools continues to be shaped by the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. Science courses now include a new component—science literacy instruction—to help students read and write using the language of science. The standards that guide this instruction are called the **Florida Standards** for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

Like any subject, science has its own conventions. Students learn science primarily through a process called scientific inquiry: asking questions, conducting investigations, collecting evidence to answer questions, and drawing evidence-based conclusions.

Scientific inquiry requires that students read, understand, and learn from challenging scientific and technical texts. Elaborate diagrams, data charts, and graphs are often part of science-based texts. To truly grasp scientific concepts, students must be familiar with the language and principles in these texts and science practices.



Below are some examples of skills children will be expected to master in science class now that the standards incorporate the new literacy standards:

- Identify the kinds of evidence used in science
- Understand scientific words and phrases
- Pay attention to precise details (a crucial aspect to scientific investigation)
- Evaluate intricate scientific arguments
- Process complex information
- Follow detailed descriptions of scientific events and concepts

Florida's Science Course Descriptions (and other content areas) now include the literacy standards being implemented.

CPALMS is the State of Florida's official source for information on the standards and course descriptions. You can visit the site at <http://www.cpalms.org>

Additional Facts

- The **Florida Standards** do not dictate the curriculum. Local districts are still free to choose the curriculum used in their schools.

- The **Florida Standards** do not require the collection of additional student data.

- Literary classics will still be a part of our district's reading plan. Primary sources of non-fictional texts (historical speeches, journals, etc.) will also be included to all grade levels K-12.

- The **Florida Standards** are designed to be relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in both college and work.

- When American students have the skills and knowledge needed in today's jobs, our communities will be positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

- And the best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who are in them. That's why the **Florida Standards** establish what students need to learn, but they do not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers decide how best to help students reach the standards.

