



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Commissioner

July 6, 2009

TO: Chief School Administrators
Principals
Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Lucille E. Davy
Commissioner

**SUBJECT: Revised Core Curriculum Content Standards and
High School Graduation Requirements**

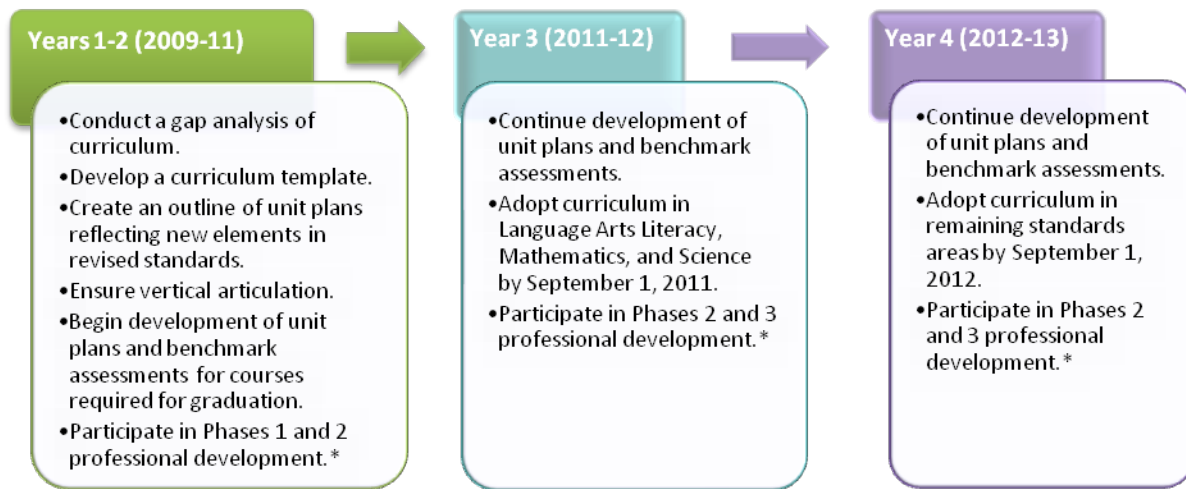
At its monthly public meeting on June 17, 2009, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted revised Core Curriculum Content Standards in six content areas and revised high school graduation requirements. Newly adopted standards include the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards of Quality, and standards for visual and performing arts, comprehensive health and physical education, science, technology, 21st century life and careers, and world languages. The adoption of the 2009 standards and graduation requirements is a critical step in the ongoing process of ensuring each graduate from New Jersey public schools is college, career and citizenship ready in the 21st century.

Revised Standards and Curriculum Development

It is important to note that the revised 2009 standards provide the foundation for the development of curriculum that promotes the use of innovative learning strategies by integrating supportive technologies, inquiry- and problem-based approaches and higher order thinking skills. Standards in all content areas contain new elements that, according to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.1, 8-2.1, and 8-3.1, are to be included in curriculum and instruction; specifically, the integration of **21st century skills and themes, global perspectives, technology and interdisciplinary connections**. As such, curriculum development is envisioned as a multi-year process accompanied by ongoing professional development to provide curriculum writers with the tools needed to effectively incorporate these new elements into curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Districts undergoing **NJQSAC** during the upcoming academic year should currently have all curricula aligned to the 2004 standards, and in addition, should be engaged in the development of new curriculum aligned to the revised standards in order to meet the 2011-12 curriculum adoption and implementation timelines. The flow chart below provides an outline of suggested curriculum development activities that may be used as evidence of “work in progress” for NJQSAC purposes. A table also follows with a detailed standards adoption and curriculum implementation schedule.

Suggested Multi-Year Curriculum Development Activities



* See attached *Creating 21st Century New Jersey Schools*.

Time Lines for Adoption of Revised Core Curriculum Content Standards and the Implementation of Revised Curricula

Revised Core Curriculum Content Standards (K-12)	Adoption of Revised Standards	Implementation of Revised Curricula
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language arts literacy • Mathematics 	2010*	September 1, 2011*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science 	June 17, 2009	September 1, 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual and performing arts • Comprehensive health and physical education • Technology • 21st century life and careers • World languages 	June 17, 2009	September 1, 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social studies 	Fall 2009	September 1, 2012

* Revisions to the NJ standards for **language arts** and **mathematics** are temporarily on hold pending the release of the Common Core Standards Project, a multistate-led initiative coordinated by CCSSO and the NGA, to develop common English-language arts and mathematics standards in the states.

Professional Development: *The New Jersey Statewide Systemic Model for Continuous Professional Learning and Growth*

In order to provide support to all districts with key aspects of the implementation of the 2009 revised standards (curriculum development, instruction and assessment), the department has created a blended model of professional learning for education stakeholders that includes online learning, 2.0 tools, virtual and face-to-face professional learning communities, and value-added on-site training. The primary goal of this initiative is to create 21st century learning environments that engage students, foster achievement, and cultivate the skills needed to compete, connect, and collaborate in a global society.

Professional development will be delivered in phases over the coming three years, as described in the attached *Creating 21st Century New Jersey Schools*. A schedule for Phase 1 activities planned for July through November is included on page 3 of that attachment. For more information or to register online for any of the Phase 1 professional development sessions, teachers, IT staff, supervisors, principals, superintendents, board members, or representatives of institutions of higher education may go to: http://cie.kean.edu/CIE/21st_century_nj_schools.html.

Revised High School Graduation Requirements

The amendments to the high school graduation requirements at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1 are based on recommendations made by the New Jersey High School Redesign Steering Committee and are to be included in local district high school graduation requirements. The amendments specify what is required to prepare high school students for a variety of post-secondary opportunities that may include college, immediate entry into the workforce or engagement in public service. Taken together, they bring added value to the state-endorsed high school diploma by ensuring that as the world and its demands change, so will the preparation of New Jersey's students.

The amendments require participation in a local program of study of not fewer than **120 total credits**, effective with the 2009-2010 grade nine class, reflecting an increase from the former minimum of 110 credits. Content-specific requirements are delineated in the chart on the following page.

Option 2, at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1ii, allowing students to fulfill the 120-credit requirement set forth in whole or in part through program completion of a range of personalized learning opportunities, remains optional for students, but is no longer optional for school districts who must now establish a process to approve personalized student learning opportunities.

Additionally, new N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(b) provides that district boards of education shall encourage all students who have otherwise met the requirements for high school graduation to include in their programs of study **five credits in mathematics, laboratory science, social studies and world languages** during each year of enrollment, aimed at preparation for entrance into post-secondary programs and 21st century careers.

NJ State Minimum* Graduation Requirements by Content Area and Grade 9 Class

	Course and credit requirements for all students entering grade 9 in:					
	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY	20 credits	20 credits aligned to grade nine through 12 standards				
MATHEMATICS	15 credits including algebra I or the content equivalent**		15 credits including algebra I and geometry or the content equivalent**		15 credits including algebra I and geometry or the content equivalent* and a third year of math that builds on the concepts and skills of algebra and geometry and prepares students for college and 21st century careers	
SCIENCE	15 credits including at least five credits in laboratory biology/life science or the content equivalent**		15 credits including at least five credits in laboratory biology/life science or the content equivalent** and one additional laboratory/inquiry-based science course which shall include chemistry, environmental science, or physics		15 credits including at least five credits in laboratory biology/life science or the content equivalent**; an additional laboratory/inquiry-based science course including chemistry, environmental science, or physics; and a third laboratory/inquiry-based science course	
SOCIAL STUDIES	15 credits including satisfaction of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1 and 2	15 credits including satisfaction of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1 and 2; five credits in world history; and the integration of civics, economics, geography and global content in all course offerings				
FINANCIAL, ECONOMIC BUSINESS, AND ENTREPRENEURIAL LITERACY	No state requirement		2.5 credits			
HEALTH, SAFETY, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION	3 ¾ credits in health, safety, and physical education during each year of enrollment, distributed as 150 minutes per week, as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5, 7 and 8					
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS	5 credits					
WORLD LANGUAGES	5 credits or student demonstration of proficiency					
TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY	Consistent with the Core Curriculum Content Standards, integrated throughout the curriculum					
21ST CENTURY LIFE AND CAREERS, OR CAREER-TECHNICAL EDUCATION	5 credits					
TOTAL CREDITS (State Minimum)	110		120***			

* School districts may establish course and/or credit requirements which exceed the State minimums.

** "Content equivalent" means courses or activities that include the same or equivalent knowledge and skills as those found in traditionally titled courses which are required for high school graduation and which are aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards. This content must be taught by certified teachers, may be integrated in one or more courses, may be titled differently, or may present material in an interdisciplinary or spiral format.

*** The 120 credit total is greater than the sum of the individual requirements above, to allow for student electives.

Clearly this memo is intended to highlight some of the major changes and to convey the flavor of the revisions as a whole. Please review the revised Standards and Assessment Code at <http://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap8.pdf>. The final edited versions of the Core Curriculum Content Standards in the six content areas adopted in June will be posted by the end of July at www.state.nj.us/education/aps.

You may contact Janis Jensen, Director of the Office of Academic Standards, at (609) 984-5322 if you have further questions.

LD/WS/JJ/R²/S:\JJENSEN\CODE Standards and Assessment\Adoption Level June 2009\CommisMemoStdsHSgradReqJuly09_Rev6.doc

Attachment

- c: Members, State Board of Education
 - Senior Staff
 - Sandra Alberti
 - Marie Barry
 - Ken Figgs
 - Janis Jensen
 - Mary Jane Kurabinski
 - Timothy Peters
 - Executive County Superintendents
 - Garden State Coalition of Schools
 - NJ LEE Group