



## NJDOE News

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### **State Board of Education Approves [Revised Standards and Assessment Code](#) *Code Establishes Academic Standards as Foundation for NJ Public Education***

The State Board of Education today approved the administrative regulations that establish New Jersey's rigorous academic standards as the basis for the state's system of public education. The standards and assessment code provides for rigorous academic standards that will provide all of New Jersey's children with a high quality education.

This code was originally presented to the board two years ago. Commissioner David Hespe substantially revised it shortly after his arrival at the department a year ago. It was resubmitted to the board last May. Since then several statewide regional public hearings were held by the board, which resulted in more changes. These changes are reflected in the regulations approved by the board today.

"I believe that the regulations given final approval today by the board will guarantee a quality education to all of the school children in our state," said Hespe. "Our rigorous academic standards will provide our students with the preparation they need to succeed in college and in the workplace.

"The regulations that were approved today represent a significant difference from the original proposal that was made to the board two years ago. I found that many of the proposals in that original code were problematic. I traveled the state meeting with school district officials, children and parents. We have made several significant changes to the original proposal based upon the input we have received both from these visits and from our numerous public hearings."

In his proposal to the board last year Hespe changed the controversial school-to-work proposal that would have mandated student participation in a structured learning experience such as supervised student cocurricular or extracurricular activities, school-based enterprises, volunteer or paid employment, apprenticeship programs or community service within disciplines linked to the academic standards.

"I believe that making structured learning experiences voluntary is a reasonable compromise from the department's original position. When I assumed this position it became readily apparent to me that with students having to meet rigorous academic standards it would have been unwise to have them in school for only four days a week.

"The structured learning experience will afford students the choice to pursue career interests in depth, but with greater flexibility."

The revised code today establishes Carnegie Units and course requirements as one measurement of determining whether a student has met the graduation requirements. Carnegie Units are a specific number of credits required in specific subject areas.

In order to allow districts the flexibility to pursue multidisciplinary and cross disciplinary programs, local school districts have the option of determining and establishing a set number of curricular activities or programs aimed at achieving the academic standards for promotion and graduation purposes. This option would be in lieu of the more structured Carnegie Unit approach.

Commissioner Hespe also recommended that all New Jerseyans who pass the GED exam receive a state-endorsed high school diploma. Under the proposal made to the board in 1998, those who passed the GED would only have received certificates instead of a diploma.

The regulations being approved today would also establish more rigorous standards of school certification. All school districts will now be considered for state certification if 75% of their children pass all sections of the fourth grade ESPA test and the eighth grade GEPA test. In five years the standard would be 85% to be considered for certification. The certification standards for the eleventh grade HSPT test will be 85% as of July 1, 2000.

"This phase-in of tougher certification standards will give us added flexibility in dealing with school districts," said Hespe. "Our goal is to encourage districts to show continuing progress over the next five years so that they can

meet the new tougher certification standards."

The approved standards and assessment code will be posted on the Department of Education's website:  
[www.state.nj.us/education](http://www.state.nj.us/education).