



For Immediate Release

Date: June 3, 2020

Contact: [Michael Yapple](#)

(609) 376-9072

State Board of Education Approves Revisions to New Jersey Student Learning Standards

New Standards Emphasize Climate Change, Computer Science and Career Readiness

Trenton, NJ – The New Jersey State Board of Education today adopted revisions to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) in seven subject areas. The NJSLS, which outline what must be taught in public schools, set the foundation from which school districts craft instruction to prepare students to be effective thinkers, problem-solvers and communicators in a global community.

Of particular note, climate change has been incorporated into all of the revised standards – an initiative championed by First Lady Tammy Murphy. The change makes New Jersey the first state to comprehensively address climate change across multiple content area standards.

“In New Jersey, we have already begun to experience the effects of climate change, from our disappearing shorelines, to harmful algal blooms in our lakes, super storms producing torrential rain, and summers that are blazing hot,” **said First Lady Murphy**. “The adoption of these standards is much more than an added educational requirement; it is a symbol of a partnership between generations. Decades of short-sighted decision-making has fueled this crisis and now we must do all we can to help our children solve it. This generation of students will feel the effects of climate change more than any other, and it is critical that every student is provided an opportunity to study and understand the climate crisis through a comprehensive, interdisciplinary lens.”

In Social Studies, students may research public policy related to climate change. In Computer Science and Design Thinking, students may analyze climate change computational models, and in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education, students may investigate how local, state, and global agencies are addressing health issues caused by climate change.

“I want to thank the dozens of stakeholders from schools, business, higher education, and others from the education community who helped shape these new standards,” **said Education Commissioner Lamont O. Repollet**. “Their efforts really position the next generation of students for success when they graduate high school, so they can better take advantage of high-skill, high-demand jobs in today’s workforce.”

The Department of Education performs a review of the standards every five years. The state sets the academic standards, which describe what students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate high school, while local school districts implement the curriculum that helps students meet the standards. The Department’s standards-review process was guided by 130 people representing K-12 schools in rural, urban and suburban districts, as well as higher education, private industry, military, healthcare, and nonprofit organizations, who provided feedback, studied the latest research, and reviewed the national and international standards in the content areas.

The revisions encompass the seven academic standards of Social Studies; Science; Visual and Performing Arts; Comprehensive Health and Physical Education; World Languages; Computer Science and Design Thinking; and Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills. English Language Arts and Mathematics were reviewed in 2016; appendices for these two content areas are being updated to contain resources for teaching climate change.

“The New Jersey Student Learning Standards are the foundation for academics in New Jersey’s public schools,” said **State Board of Education President Kathy Goldenberg**. “The revised standards will ensure that students have equitable and increased access to computer science and technology. Today’s adoption provides additional awareness regarding important health topics as well as protecting our environment.”

Some highlights of the standards revisions include:

- **Computer Science and Design Thinking** – The previous standard of Technology is now Computer Science and Design Thinking. Last year, New Jersey’s [Computer Science State Plan](#) called for standards that better sharpen the expectations for robust K-12 school programs to advance Governor Murphy’s Computer Science for All initiative.
- **Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills** – The decades-old standard of 21st Century Life and Careers has been updated to Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills to more accurately reflect the needs of today’s students. The Career Readiness aspect will help students better understand the job market and effectively focus on preparation and career skills. Literacies and Key Skills include skills related to critical thinking, problem-solving, digital citizenship, information and media literacy.
- **Focus on Citizenship** – One addition designed to augment Social Studies in the middle-school grades is the addition of Active Citizenship in the 21st Century. For instance, the standards call on students to evaluate and defend a position on the purpose government should serve, construct an argument on how to best protect human rights, or use historical case studies and current events to explain why due process is essential to the protection of individual rights.
- **Visual and Performing Arts** – In the arts standard, the State Board adapted a version of the National Core Arts Standards, which have been implemented by 27 states and the Department of Defense. New Jersey has traditionally been strong in providing arts instruction. In September 2019, Governor Murphy [announced](#) New Jersey reached the benchmark of offering universal arts education access in all New Jersey public schools.

The Department’s expectation is that districts will use the coming 2020-21 school year to become familiar with the new standards and then begin implementation of the standards over the following two years.

The full standards are available on the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards webpage](#).

