

# WDE FAQ

## Standards *updated 8/15/2021*

### **What Are Content Standards?**

Content Standards, aka Standards define what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade level in every subject. They explain the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level. Standards do not define all that can or should be taught; they simply outline end-of-year expectations. For example: In science, a student should be able to develop a simple model that mimics the function of an animal dispersing seeds or pollinating plants by the end of 2nd grade.

### **What Are Performance Standards?**

Performance Standards are the standards all students are expected to learn and be assessed on through the district assessment system. They specify the specific degree of understanding or demonstration of the knowledge and/or skill for a particular content standard. As such, it employs clear action verbs and describes “how good is good enough.” Districts are expected to give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency on the Performance Standards and provide appropriate supports for student success.

### **What Are Extended Standards?**

The Wyoming Extended Standards (WYES) are extensions of the Wyoming Content Standards and provide an outline of academic content expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities. They are designed to help teachers provide meaningful access to state academic content standards for instruction, while allowing students to make progress in grade-level content by maintaining rigor and high expectations. The Extended Standards ensure all students with cognitive disabilities are provided with multiple ways to learn and demonstrate knowledge.

### **Which Subjects Are Tied to State Standards?**

In Wyoming, there are currently 10 content areas: science, mathematics, language arts, health, fine & performing arts, physical education, social studies, career & vocational education, foreign language, and computer science. Each content area has its own set of standards. The Wyoming Department of Education has a page dedicated to the [Current Wyoming Content and Performance Standards](#), wherein Standards are available as Microsoft Excel files.

### **What Do I Need to Know About the New Computer Science Standards?**

Computer science standards were recently added as a new content area, per Senate Enrolled Act 48 from the 2018 legislative session. The Computer Science Content and Performance Standards were adopted on April 7, 2021. State law requires computer science and computational thinking be taught in all Wyoming K-12 schools by January 2022. Also, Computer Science classes can count toward one year of science graduation requirements or the Hathaway Success Curriculum in math or science.

### **Who Has Authority Over Wyoming’s Standards?**

The State Board of Education (SBE) is charged with reviewing and approving the state standards.

## How Often Are the Content Standards Reviewed in Wyoming?

The state standards are reviewed every nine years at a minimum. The SBE-approved [Standards Review Timeline](#) and the [Standards Implementation Timeline](#) can be found on the aforementioned website.

## What is the Process to Change or Adopt New Standards in Wyoming?

When the standards in a content area are up for review, the SBE convenes a committee comprised of Wyoming teachers, leaders, post-secondary educators, parents, and business and community members. This committee reviews the standards and makes proposed changes to be presented to the Board. Following a 45-day public review, the SBE can ask for further review, decide to make changes based on public and educator input, or vote to move the standards forward, which triggers a 45-day public comment period. After considering all public comments, the SBE votes on whether to recommend the proposed standards to the Governor, who then has 75 days to review and sign them.

## Who Has Authority Over Implementation of State Standards in Wyoming?

The SBE determines the school year by which new standards are to be fully implemented, but local school boards, district and building administrators, and teachers determine how they will be implemented. This includes curriculum choices and instructional methods.

## What is Curriculum?

Curriculum refers to the methods and materials used to deliver instruction related to the standards. This includes locally approved textbooks, worksheets, lab kits, novels, software programs, and other materials used by teachers.

## Who Has Authority Over Curriculum And Instruction in Wyoming?

Local school boards, district and building administrators, and teachers make decisions related to curriculum and instruction. Neither the Wyoming Department of Education nor the United States Department of Education has the authority to make these decisions for school districts.