

**TENNESSEE STANDARDS FOR TEACHING:
A GUIDE FOR MENTORING
July 20, 2001**

INTRODUCTION

Background

Since 1988, Tennessee has sought to improve the preparation of new teacher candidates. Institutions of higher education, working in partnership with PreK-12 schools, have developed rigorous new preparation programs designed to enhance teachers' abilities to provide opportunities for all students to meet high standards. New teachers complete an academic major, focused professional studies, and a full semester of student teaching or a full year internship.

Tennessee has adopted the standards of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) as the model by which new teachers are prepared. At the same time that teacher education institutions were revising their programs to meet the INTASC standards, Tennessee was implementing a new *Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth*, also based on the standards. The framework is now in place in all school systems and school administrators have been provided training in using the framework to evaluate and encourage professional development in their teachers. The domains and indicators of the framework are provided in the Appendix. This document is closely linked to the framework and to the INTASC standards.

Purpose

What has been missing, however, has been support to teachers during their first years of teaching. Teachers need the support of a mentor and need intensive learning activities that build on their pre-service preparation and lead to lifelong professional development. The *Tennessee Standards for Teaching: A Guide for Mentoring* addresses these needs. The standards represent an extension of the framework. The standards are designed to be used by teachers to:

- Prompt reflection about student learning and teaching practice;
- Formulate professional goals to improve teaching practice;
- Guide, monitor and assess the progress of a teacher's practice toward professional goals and professionally-accepted benchmarks.

The *Tennessee Standards for Teaching: A Guide for Mentoring* recognizes that teaching and learning are complex processes that are interdependent and occur in a variety of contexts. A vision of teaching in Tennessee must

emphasize relationships between the various aspects of teaching and learning: knowledge of students, subject matter, curriculum, and instructional strategies are ultimately linked to how the teacher plans instruction and assesses student learning.

Teaching requires continuous growth in order to engage increasingly diverse students in a rapidly changing world. Teachers are never “finished” as professional learners, no matter how excellent their formal preparation. Schools must give particular attention to the early years of each teacher’s career. The standards are also appropriate for growth of professional educators throughout their careers. Mentors also benefit from the professional growth that occurs as part of the reflection done as they use the document.

The *Tennessee Standards for Teaching: A Guide for Mentoring* is designed to assist beginning teachers and their mentors in a beginning teacher support program and all teachers seeking to grow professionally in their careers. They are organized around the same six interrelated categories of teaching practice that comprise the *Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth*. The six standards are for:

- Planning and Designing Instruction for all Students
- Teaching and Engaging All Students in Learning
- Assessing Teaching and Learning
- Creating and Maintaining Effective Learning Environments
- Developing as a Professional Educator
- Communicating for Effective Understanding

In the following pages each standard is accompanied by questions that encourage teachers to explore aspects of teaching practice throughout their careers. In order to foster ongoing reflection and insights into teaching, the questions are introduced with the stem, “How do I....” The questions can also be phrased “Why do I....,” which encourages teachers to examine the rationale for key aspects of their teaching. Teachers using the standards will recognize that there are some overlaps among the six standards and questions. These overlaps underscore the interrelationships and complexities of teaching.

Implementation

The standards were approved by the Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Certification for use during the 2000-2001 school year with the

understanding that they would be reviewed following the first year's experience. The Advisory Council and the State Board of Education approved minor additions to the document in July 2001.

The State Department of Education will train school teams in the use of the standards for beginning teacher support programs under the auspices of a Title II Teacher Enhancement Project Grant. If the Education Reform Act of 2001 is funded, additional school teams will receive training and support.

Acknowledgement

In the development of the standards, Tennessee has learned a great deal from the experience of California's highly successful Beginning Teacher Support and Assistance program. In California, school systems which have fully implemented the program have seen an increase in teacher competence and growth and a dramatic reduction in attrition of new teachers. Staff members from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the California Department of Education have provided valuable suggestions and assistance. While the standards in this document are Tennessee standards (based upon the *Tennessee Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth*), many of the reflecting questions have been drawn from the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* (1997).

In addition, these standards incorporate suggestions made by Tennessee mentors and beginning teachers who developed mentoring programs and who used this document during the first year of the Title II grant (2000-01).

STANDARD I: PLANNING AND DESIGNING INSTRUCTION FOR ALL STUDENTS

A. Teachers establish appropriate instructional goals and objectives.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Establish short-term and long-term goals that are developmentally appropriate for the specific students I am teaching?
- Develop short-term and long-term plans that build on and extend student understanding of subject matter?
- Incorporate students’ knowledge and experiences in my curriculum and instructional planning?
- Select goals and sequence curriculum to promote understanding, critical thinking, and problem solving?

B. Teachers plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curricular goals.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Incorporate relevant national, state, district, and grade level standards into the learning expectations I hold for each student?
- Use formal and informal assessment results to plan short-term and long-term goals and to address identified student needs?
- Ensure that each instructional activity is related to an identifiable learning expectation?
- Use my knowledge of development and subject matter to organize and sequence the curriculum to increase student understanding?
- Plan instructional strategies appropriate to the complexity of the lesson content and student learning needs?
- Organize curriculum to ensure that students develop a deep understanding of core concepts in the subject matter?
- Develop units and lessons that highlight themes within and across subject matter areas?
- Sequence instruction to help students see relationships and connections across subject areas?
- Identify and integrate key concepts, skills, and methods of inquiry across subject matter areas?
- Select and use subject matter resources, human resources, materials and technologies that best promote student understanding of the subject’s key concepts?
- Choose and adapt instructional resources and technologies to make subject matter relevant to students’ experiences and interests?

- Plan instruction that connects subject matter to real life and future careers?
- Make decisions about organizing curriculum to allow enough time for student learning, review and assessment?

B. Teachers plan instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse students.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Recognize differences in cognitive and linguistic development in my students?
- Ensure that the learning expectations are appropriate to students’ physical and emotional development, language acquisition, or other special needs?
- Establish learning goals that address the diverse languages, experiences and expectations impacting my classroom?
- Use my understanding of the cultures of my students’ communities to plan curriculum and instruction?
- Plan to ensure access to diverse academic content for all students?
- Select and use learning materials and resources that reflect the diversity in my classroom?
- Ensure that different cultural perspectives are included in the subject matter?

STANDARD II: TEACHING AND ENGAGING ALL STUDENTS IN LEARNING

A. Teachers demonstrate an understanding of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) taught and provide students access to this information through experiences that make the subject matter meaningful.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Understand the central concepts and underlying assumptions in the subject area(s) to be taught?
- Incorporate diverse subject matter perspectives in my planning?
- Continue to keep my subject matter knowledge current?
- Use multiple representations of subject content?
- Use a variety of instructional strategies and technologies well suited to teaching a particular subject matter?

- Use a variety of instructional strategies and technologies to illustrate a concept and its connections within and across subject areas?
- Use a variety of strategies to introduce, explain, and restate subject matter concepts and processes so that all students understand?
- Vary my instructional strategies to increase students' active participation in learning?
- Sequence subject matter concepts to support student learning?
- Use my knowledge of subject matter and my students to pace instructional activities over time?
- Provide opportunities for all students to learn at their own pace in my daily, weekly, and unit plans?
- Design instructional activities so that all students participate in setting and achieving learning goals?

B. Teachers demonstrate an understanding of and use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, "How do I..." or "Why do I..."

- Provide opportunities for all students to think, discuss, interact, reflect and evaluate content?
- Engage all students in problem solving activities and encourage multiple approaches and solutions?
- Provide opportunities for all students to learn and practice skills that support the achievement of the instructional goals?
- Help all students to analyze and draw valid conclusions about content being learned?
- Build on students' comments and questions during a lesson to extend their understanding?
- Help all students gain access to useful materials, resources, and technologies to support their learning of subject matter?
- Engage all students in a variety of learning experiences that accommodate the different ways they learn?
- Use technology to enhance learning?
- Ask questions or facilitate discussion to clarify or extend students' thinking?

C. Teachers use an understanding of both the students and the subject matter to create a learning environment that encourages active engagement in learning, positive intellectual interactions and student ownership of the learning.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Help students to see the connections between what they already know and the new material by relating subject matter concepts to previous lessons?
- Help students to connect classroom learning to their life experiences and cultural understandings?
- Motivate all students to initiate their own learning and to strive for challenging learning goals?
- Establish clear learning goals for each activity or lesson in order to make the learning meaningful for students?
- Help all students to develop and use strategies for accessing knowledge and information?
- Facilitate students’ development of employability skills?
- Help all students to apply learning from different curricular areas to solve problems?
- Enhance student ownership of learning by building on understanding of my students’ cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development?
- Use my knowledge of subject matter to help students construct their own knowledge?
- Build on students’ life experiences, prior knowledge, and interests to make the content relevant and meaningful to them?
- Help students develop enthusiasm for and a deep knowledge of the subject matter?
- Modify materials and resources and use appropriate adaptive equipment to support each student’s fullest participation?
- Make use of unexpected events to augment student learning?
- Help students to learn, practice, internalize and apply subject-specific learning strategies and procedures?
- Encourage all students to ask critical questions and consider diverse perspectives about subject matter?

STANDARD III: ASSESSING TEACHING AND LEARNING

A. Teachers use appropriate assessment strategies and instruments to obtain information about students and their ongoing progress and use this information to make instructional decisions.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Establish and communicate learning expectations for students?

- Use a variety of assessments to determine what my students know and are able to do?
- Select, design and uses assessment tools appropriate to what I am assessing?
- Interpret this information to make initial and ongoing instructional decisions?
- Gather and use information about students and their learning from a variety of sources including prior teachers, families, and guidance counselors.
- Use a range of assessment strategies to implement and monitor individualized student learning goals, such as IEP goals?
- Use multiple sources of information to report student progress and grades?

B. Teachers communicate student status and progress to students, their parents and appropriate others.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Organize and maintain records of student work and performance?
- Review and revise learning expectations with students and provide feedback to focus them on what needs to be done to move to the next level?
- Provide students with information about their progress as they engage in learning activities?
- Regularly communicate learning expectations and results of assessment to students, their families and appropriate others?

C. Teachers reflect on teaching practice by evaluating continually the effects of instruction.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Learn about my teaching as I observe and interact with my students?
- Reflect on my instructional successes and dilemmas to move my practice forward?
- Analyze my teaching to understand what contributes to student learning?
- Use a variety of assessment techniques to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented curriculum and instructional strategies?

- Use informal assessment information to recognize when a lesson is falling apart, what to do about it, or when and how to revisit content that has been taught?
- Use assessment data to plan more effective ways for my teaching of subject matter concepts and processes?
- Collect, select, and reflect upon evidence of student learning and use this evidence to guide my planning?
- Develop and use tools and guidelines that help my students assess their own work and use their findings to understand and monitor their own learning goals?
- Encourage students to describe their own learning processes and progress and learn from the work of their peers?

D. Teachers evaluate student performance and determine the amount of progress.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Evaluate student academic achievement and determine the amount of progress?
- Use standardized tests, diagnostic tools and developmental assessments to understand student progress?
- Assist students in monitoring their own progress toward meeting learning goals?

STANDARD IV: CREATING AND MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

A. Teachers create a learning environment that supports development of student abilities.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Create a classroom environment that promotes social development and student learning, and creates opportunities for independent and collaborative learning?
- Provide a variety of structures to promote student interaction and learning?
- Teach leadership skills and provide opportunities for students to use them?
- Use classroom rules to support students in assuming responsibility for themselves and one another?
- Create opportunities for students to become self-directed learners?

- Support and monitor student autonomy and choice during learning experiences?
- Facilitate the development of each student's self esteem?
- Encourage risk-taking and creativity in my classroom?
- Encourage, support and recognize the achievements and contributions of all students?
- Help students become respectful of differences and value diverse perspectives?
- Develop classroom procedures and routines that promote and maintain a climate of fairness, equity and respect?
- Establish and consistently maintain equitable standards for behavior that reflects students' developmental and personal needs?
- Facilitate student participation in classroom decision-making and conflict resolution?

B. Teachers manage classroom resources effectively.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, "How do I..." or "Why do I..."

- Arrange the room to facilitate individual and group learning opportunities?
- Make the classroom environment physically safe and accessible for all students?
- Structure time so that student learning is supported, ensuring enough time for movement from one learning activity to the next?
- Manage student and teacher access to materials, technology and resources to promote learning?
- Help students make decisions about managing time and materials during learning activities?

STANDARD V: DEVELOPING AS A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR

A. Teachers collaborate with colleagues and appropriate others.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, "How do I..." or "Why do I..."

- Work with my colleagues and the school community to improve professional practice?
- Collaborate with teachers, administrators, education specialists, and paraprofessionals to ensure that all students' diverse learning needs are met?

- Engage in thoughtful dialogue and reflection with colleagues to enhance learning or to solve teacher-related problems?
- Exhibit productive leadership and team membership skills that facilitate the development of mutually beneficial goals?
- Respect the student's community and appreciate its role in student learning?

B. Teachers reflect on teaching practice and engage in professional development.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, "How do I..." or "Why do I..."

- Assess my growth as a teacher over time?
- Provide evidence of performance levels and articulate strengths and priorities for growth?
- Formulate professional development plans that are based on my reflection and analysis?
- Engage in relevant professional development activities and implement new leanings?
- Expand my knowledge of new instructional methods and technologies?
- Continue to seek out and refine approaches that make the curriculum accessible to every student?
- Use professional literature and professional development opportunities to increase my understanding of teaching and learning?
- Use observations and feedback of colleagues to improve my teaching?
- Utilize the resources of professional organizations to support my own professional growth?

C. Teachers perform professional responsibilities efficiently.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, "How do I..." or "Why do I..."

- Maintain appropriate student records that are accurate and up-to-date?
- Complete assigned tasks on schedule?
- Maintain a satisfactory record of punctuality and attendance?
- Adhere to applicable policies and procedures?
- Participate in making and implementing school-wide decisions?
- Respect the privacy of students and maintain confidentiality of information?

- Demonstrate knowledge of my legal and professional responsibilities and implement appropriate laws addressing student learning, safety and behavior?
- Promote appropriate personal and professional relationships with colleagues?

STANDARD VI: COMMUNICATING FOR EFFECTIVE UNDERSTANDING

A. Teachers use appropriate verbal and non-verbal techniques to communicate effectively with students, parents, and appropriate others.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Ensure that my communication is clear and concise?
- Recognize nonverbal cues and interpret the message they convey?
- Encourage a two-way flow of communication?
- Elicit others’ input into productive dialogues?
- Match communication strategies with the needs of a specific audience, purpose or situation?
- Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural dimensions of communication?
- Utilize diverse communication technologies?
- Recognize listening as communication skill?

B. Teachers write clearly and correctly.

Questions: As teachers develop, they may ask, “How do I...” or “Why do I...”

- Ensure grammatically correct written communications?
- Design written communications with a specific audience and purpose in mind?
- Produce legible communications that are clear and concise?
- Use a variety of technological tools to enrich written communications?

APPENDIX

Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth, 1997

GENERAL EDUCATION EVALUATION DOMAINS AND INDICATORS

The following areas will be used to assess teaching performance.

I. PLANNING

- A. Establishes appropriate instructional goals and objectives
- B. Plans instruction based upon a knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curricular goals
- C. Plans instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse students

II. TEACHING STRATEGIES

- A. Demonstrates an understanding of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) taught and provides students access to this information through experiences which make the subject matter meaningful
- B. Demonstrates an understanding of and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and performance skills
- C. Uses an understanding of both the students and the subject matter to create a learning environment that encourages active engagement in learning, positive intellectual interactions and student ownership of the learning

III. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- A. Uses appropriate assessment strategies and instruments to obtain information about students and their ongoing progress and uses this information to make instructional decisions
- B. Communicates student status and progress to students, their parents, and appropriate others
- C. Reflects on teaching practice by evaluating continually the effects of instruction
- D. Evaluates student performance and determines the amount of progress

IV. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- A. Creates a learning climate that supports the development of

- student abilities
- B. Manages classroom resources effectively

V. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

- A. Collaborates with colleagues and appropriate others
- B. Engages in professional development
- C. Performs professional responsibilities efficiently

VI. COMMUNICATION

- A. Uses appropriate verbal and non-verbal techniques to communicate effectively with students, parents, and appropriate others
- B. Writes clearly and correctly