

Our Standards, Our Teachers, Our Province

Nova Scotia's Teaching Standards were developed through an extensive consultation process that was hosted at venues across the province. The participation and input of teachers, school administrators and education partners formed the cornerstone of the process. Although the standards are founded on a solid base of research and best practices from around the world, they were developed and tailored to the Nova Scotia education system. They are 'Our Standards, for Our Teachers, in Our Province'.

What are the Teaching Standards?

The teaching standards are a supportive, common framework designed to assist teachers in providing high quality teaching for all students in all regions of our province. The six standards concisely state the main expectations of teachers and apply to all teachers, throughout all stages of their career. The indicators provide detailed information about the attributes, knowledge and skills that are associated with each standard. Overall, the standards provide teachers and the public with an overview of the complexity of teaching in today's classrooms and the influential role that teachers play in educating our children and youth.

Why were the standards developed?

When the Nova Scotia education system was reviewed in 2014, its highly competent and dedicated staff was identified as one of its greatest strengths. One main area that was flagged as requiring improvement was support for high-quality teaching and learning in all classrooms. By defining and promoting consistent, high-quality teaching, the standards support the achievement of the overarching goals of Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education: increased student achievement in math and literacy, and improved student career-readiness.

Who developed the Teaching Standards?

The standards were developed by teachers and education partners under the leadership of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Where were the standards developed?

The Teaching Standards were developed right here in Nova Scotia. Although they are based on educational research and various models of teaching standards from around the world, the standards were developed and tailored to the Nova Scotia context. For example, in order to mirror the format of the revised provincial curriculum, each standard is supported by indicators. Indicators are detailed, clear and consistent descriptions of the teaching standards that serve as signposts of professional growth.

When were the Teaching Standards developed and what is the timeline for implementation?

Work on the Teaching Standards began on May 1, 2015, and continued until the document was approved in late July, 2016. As the Teaching Standards were being developed, teachers and education partners repeatedly emphasized the importance of a gradual and supported implementation process. Therefore, the standards will be gradually introduced. Teachers will be oriented to the new standards starting in September, 2016, and will have opportunities to provide feedback on the document.

How will the Teaching Standards affect me as a teacher?

The Teaching Standards are not a report card, evaluation or test of teachers. Instead, the standards are a supportive framework designed to affirm teachers' work, assist teachers with self-reflection on their teaching, advance student access to high quality teaching, and inform the public of the vital role that teachers play in our society. The Standards provide teachers with a clear and consistent framework for identifying and addressing their professional learning needs. The standards are also designed to support teachers at all stages of their careers, as they enter new teaching assignments and take on new challenges.

For beginning and experienced teachers, the standards will underpin teacher education programs and professional learning opportunities. With the standards serving as a foundation, Bachelor of Education programs will be updated, graduate programs will be reviewed and revised, and new professional learning opportunities will be created. The standards will also frame a new accreditation process for the university schools of education in Nova Scotia. As the standards are gradually implemented, they will inform the development of a new, provincial template for teacher performance appraisal. Over time, the standards will serve as the basis for many new supports for teaching and learning.