

Amherst, Pelham, and Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools Professional Teaching Standards

The professional teaching standards for the Amherst, Pelham, and Amherst Regional school districts represent the level of excellence expected from all teachers. These standards guide teaching as well as professional and personal relationships with students, colleagues, and the community at large. They encompass a framework for teaching that takes into account the multicultural make-up of the student population and the districts' goal of high achievement by all. Meeting these standards ensures that students will be equipped to participate fully in a democratic society.

Based on the five core propositions identified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the Framework for Professional Practice developed by Charlotte Danielson (*Enhancing Professional Practice - A Framework for Teaching*), these standards reflect an educational paradigm whose focus is the purposeful nature of teaching and the creation of a community of learners.

The standards have been revised to ensure that students are the focus of our effort and that Student Achievement through the academic engagement and school membership of every student, every day is our goal. Furthermore, it is intended that the use of such standards and commensurate models and guides will allow teachers to utilize the breadth of their repertoire and continued learning in a constructivist, substantive manner and to engage in meaningful dialogue with colleagues of like strengths, beliefs, and skill.

(Note: These standards are rearranged from the original version to align with National Board standards).

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I. KNOWS AND RELATES TO STUDENTS FOR LEARNING

Teachers know their students and how they learn.

1a. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of students and how each learns

- learns about each student's background and culture and uses this information to create a supportive and caring classroom community
- knows and respects each individual student
- understands that students have different learning styles
- demonstrates an awareness of each student's emotional needs
- understands students' capabilities and has high expectations for all
- understands the cognitive and developmental characteristics of age group
- modifies and adapts materials to meet individual student's needs
- incorporates students' prior knowledge into planning each lesson

1b. The teacher builds relationships for learning

- utilizes strategies to build rapport with students
- encourages students in learning

1c. The teacher uses a learning profile to maximize student achievement

- knows each student and his/her profile
- understands critical elements of teaching students with disabilities
- understands critical elements of teaching students whose first language is not English

- understands and utilizes student Individual Educational Plans and 504 plans
- utilizes Student Success Plans for students not proficient on core academic standards
- utilizes techniques to enrich students and their achievement

II. PLANS AND TEACHES FOR LEARNING

Teachers know their subjects, what to teach, and how to plan for and engage students in learning. (Year, Units, and Lessons and Pedagogy)

2a. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of content and pedagogy

- shows deep understanding of subject matter
- teaches from a thorough understanding and knowledge of national professional, state and district curriculum standards
- links the curriculum to current events and real-life situations as appropriate
- helps students understand connections between content and other disciplines
- uses a variety of instructional strategies
- selects and utilizes appropriate resources, including technology, in planning units of study
- ensures that subject matter is historically and culturally accurate
- understands the relationship among language, thought, and learning
- understands the concepts of white privilege and institutional racism and utilizes anti-racist teaching practices

2b. The teacher designs and utilizes coherent instruction

- develops units of study based on the required curriculum
- knows and implements strategies to differentiate content, instruction, assessment, and the environment to maximize student learning
- sequences activities and curriculum appropriately
- infuses cultural relevance into teaching strategies, material selection, communication, and style
- designs instruction to address students' different learning styles and needs
- clearly establishes assessment criteria
- utilizes a variety of assessment strategies, including astute observation
- reflects instructional goals in assessment of learning
- plans lessons that promote the sharing of ideas

2c. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of resources

- utilizes technology as a tool for learning
- collaborates with colleagues in sharing resources and information
- utilizes town and school libraries, textbooks, internet and other resources as appropriate
- incorporates community resources

2d. The teacher communicates clearly and accurately

- listens to students
- uses appropriate written and oral vocabulary
- gives directions that are clear, concise, and reasonable, and checks for comprehension
- presents information logically and summarizes effectively
- uses a variety of verbal and non-verbal communication techniques
- elicits and responds to students' questions and requests for help
- accommodates varying language abilities and needs

- communicates learning objectives to students and effectively implements these objectives
- teaches the school's codes and customs so that students may participate fully in the social dynamic of the classroom
- communicates high goals and challenging scholastic expectations to all students and provides the necessary support to achieve them

2e. The teacher uses effective questioning and discussion techniques

- uses questions that stimulate and encourage creative and critical thinking
- allows sufficient time for students to reflect
- devises ways to promote equitable student participation
- provides opportunities for students to assume leadership roles in discussions
- encourages students to initiate topics and make connections within and across disciplines
- creates opportunities for students to interact with peers

2f. The teacher engages students in learning

- encourages involvement, questions, discussion and inquiry by all students
- demonstrates a positive attitude towards students, learning and subject matter (e.g. use of eye contact, voice inflection, body language, and gestures)
- articulates connection between new learning and prior student experiences
- uses knowledge of students' cultural heritage to develop engaging, culturally relevant learning activities
- uses knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds to make appropriate connections that support student learning
- makes appropriate adaptations and modifications as needed or required
- encourages student-generated curriculum-related activities

2g. The teacher differentiates to maximize achievement of all students

- differentiates content to maximize student achievement
- differentiates instruction and process of teaching to maximize student achievement
- differentiates student products and assessments to maximize student achievement
- differentiates the environment to maximize student achievement
- uses a variety of methods such as demonstrations, lecture, student-initiated work, group work, questioning, and independent practice

III. NURTURES A CULTURE AND AN ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

The teacher maintains and manages a culture and relationships for learning.

3a. The teacher organizes the physical space

- maintains an inviting and organized classroom
- assesses and changes the learning environment as necessary
- showcases work representing all students
- promotes community ownership and respect for space and materials
- organizes materials and media and makes them available for student use
- ensures that all students have access to all facets of the learning environment

3b. The teacher creates an environment of respect

- creates a respectful environment with a sense of community
- upholds the dignity of all students
- sets appropriate norms for social interaction among students and between students and teachers
- respects each student's culture, language, and experiences
- reacts calmly, objectively, and professionally in all situations
- demonstrates an awareness of each student's emotional needs
- values students' written and oral contributions
- models expected behaviors

3c. The teacher establishes a culture for learning

- demonstrates enthusiasm for learning
- demonstrates cultural sensitivity in interactions with students
- promotes students' self-control and student responsibility for learning
- demonstrates a respect for all disciplines
- models intellectual curiosity

3d. The teacher manages classroom procedures

- minimizes distractions and interruptions
- identifies hazards, assesses risks, and takes appropriate action
- arranges routine activities and instructional transitions so they occur with little loss of instructional time
- demonstrates resourcefulness in creating learning opportunities

3e. The teacher manages student behavior

- establishes, has a plan for, and clearly communicates high expectations for appropriate student behavior
- reinforces appropriate behavior and anticipates and diffuses disruptive situations
- uses appropriate resources to develop units of study that keep students' attention
- uses a range of management techniques to create a climate for learning
- finds and eliminates causes of undesirable behavior
- manages discipline problems in accordance with school district policies and legal requirements

3f. The teacher fulfills a commitment to Social Justice

- communicates in a culturally sensitive manner
- knows and models anti-racist, anti-bias strategies and behaviors
- integrates social justice concepts and vocabulary as throughlines in the curriculum
- establishes high academic expectations for all students

IV. MONITORS AND MANAGES PROGRESS FOR LEARNING

The teacher manages and monitors student progress (PRISM).

4a. The teacher assesses student learning

- uses multiple means of assessing desired outcomes
- uses information gained from ongoing assessment to revise planning and instruction
- probes for high levels of understanding
- maintains fairness and consistency in assessing students' progress and work

- explains assessment criteria to students
- involves students in authentic self-assessment

4b. The teacher provides feedback to students

- praises when appropriate and makes suggestions for improvement when necessary
- provides specific and focused feedback to students in a timely manner
- provides opportunities for one-to-one conferences with students
- communicates regularly with students and families about student progress
- provides a mechanism for students to reflect on their own progress

4c. The teacher demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness

- makes adjustments to lessons as needed, based on assessment/astute observations
- builds upon spontaneous occurrences to enhance learning
- utilizes alternative approaches for helping students who are struggling
- is open to student/parent suggestions
- responds to the emotional needs of students

4d. The teacher maintains accurate records

- documents student attendance and performance clearly and accurately
- provides students opportunities to compile their work and showcase their progress over time
- responds to requests for student performance data in a timely manner
- complies with individualized student programs such as IEP and 504 plans

4e. The teacher communicates with families and colleagues about student progress

- shares curriculum goals and expectations with families and with colleagues directly involved in students' programs
- provides timely reports of student performance
- confers with families and colleagues when he/she has concerns about a student's progress
- provides feedback to families in a culturally sensitive manner

V. GROWS PROFESSIONALLY FOR LEARNING

The teacher grows and develops professionally.

5a. The teacher reflects on his or her own teaching

- reflects on his/her practices in teaching logs and/or in conversations with colleagues
- examines student work to assess the effectiveness of his/her instruction
- seeks the advice of other teachers when evaluating student work
- reflects on his or her own development, growth and perspective on anti-bias teaching and practices

5b. The teacher contributes to the school and district

- shares knowledge, curriculum materials, and best practices with colleagues
- participates actively in school and district efforts to improve curriculum, instruction, and climate for learning
- works cooperatively with department or team

5c. The teacher grows and develops professionally

- improves his/her knowledge of content and pedagogy by participating in multifaceted professional development which may include conferences, independent reading and/or graduate study
- develops and demonstrates leadership skills in student activities, school and district committees, and/or professional organizations
- mentors new teachers and helps school become a community of learners
- learns how to incorporate multicultural models of academic excellence into his/her teaching and assessment practices

5d. The teacher models professionalism

- maintains high standards of personal integrity
- abides by the code of ethics of the teaching profession
- knows and abides by “boundaries” for staff

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