



USING THE STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

While national, state, and local curriculum standards and frameworks are developed for schools, they can also be very useful for out-of-school time (OST) programs as well. The purpose of this document is to provide information on how the standards and frameworks can be applied in an OST context.

WHY ARE STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS IMPORTANT FOR OST?

The Frameworks and Standards are not only for school personnel, but they can guide anyone who wants to intentionally support youth academically. Put simply, the Frameworks contain expert information on what and how children should learn. The language that the Frameworks are written in is general enough to fit the work that most OST programs do. They can provide OST professionals with a view into what students are learning, allowing programs to structure activities that address the academic demands placed on youth. In addition, OST programs are increasingly being asked by funders and other constituents to explain how they support children academically. Aligning one's program to the Frameworks is one way to remain programmatically and financially viable.

WHAT ARE STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS?

The information in this section is from the Massachusetts Department of Education.

The **Curriculum Frameworks** represent guidelines for learning, teaching, and assessment of all elementary and secondary students in the state and are created to advance curriculum and instruction. The Frameworks are developed in collaboration with K-12 school teachers and administrators, university professors, community members, and staff from the Department of Education. Presently in Massachusetts, there are seven Curriculum Frameworks: Arts, English Language Arts, Foreign Languages, Comprehensive Health, Mathematics, History and Social Science, and Science and Technology/Engineering. State Curriculum Frameworks are aligned to the National Standards, therefore, Frameworks are similar from state to state. In addition, local district Curriculum Frameworks are aligned to the State Frameworks, so instruction is fairly standardized statewide. All Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks are organized into 4 major sections: the Core Concept, Guiding Principles, Strands, and Standards.

The **Core Concept** presents the essential purpose of the Framework. For example, the Core Concept of the English Language Arts Framework is: "The goal of an English language arts curriculum is to teach learners how to reason and use language purposefully as they comprehend, construct, and convey meaning."

Guiding Principles are the underlying tenets of learning, teaching, and assessment in the discipline. One of the ten Guiding Principles of the English Language Arts Framework is: "An effective English language arts curriculum develops thinking and language together through interactive learning."

The **Strands** describe the overall content and skills of learning, teaching, and assessment. In the English Language Arts Framework, there are 3 Strands: The Importance of Oral Language; Language and Vocabulary Development; and History of the English Language.

The **Standards** define what students should know and be able to do by the end of various stages of their development. One of the Standards in the Oral Language Strand is: "Students will use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups." In each Framework, examples are given to illustrate how this Standard would "look" at each grade level. For example, for the aforementioned English Language Arts Standard, the example given for grades PreK-2 is: "The teacher and students develop rules for whole class discussion and the reasons for each rule." For grades 9-10, the example given is: "In preparation for a student council meeting, students plan an agenda for discussion, including how long they will allow each speaker to present a point of view. They build into their agenda time for making decisions and taking votes on key issues."

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HOW ARE THE STANDARDS USEFUL TO OST PROGRAMS?

The Curriculum Standards can assist OST programs with the following:

Improvement of program quality

The Standards can be used to improve the quality of learning activities offered by an OST program in 3 basic ways:

- *By aligning activities to what students are learning in school*
Often, OST programs have a desire to support students academically, however, they may not be aware of what youth are being exposed to in the classroom. By becoming familiar with the Standards, OST professionals can ensure that their learning opportunities are age-appropriate and will support the work of the school. By using the same terminology and content as the classroom teacher, OST programs will increase their students' exposure to the subject matter, thereby increasing the probability for academic gains by their youth.
- *By aiding in individual student support*
Occasionally, an OST provider will encounter a student that is experiencing difficulty in school because they are having a hard time grasping a certain concept. This situation is often caused by the child not understanding a foundational piece of knowledge that was introduced to them earlier. By consulting the Standards, an OST professional can look back and see the concepts the child should have mastered in previous grades, and custom tailor their assistance. Conversely, for a child that may be "bored" with their schoolwork because they have already mastered certain concepts, the professional can look ahead and expose the child to content that will be taught in the future.
- *By aiding in program design*
As mentioned earlier, the Frameworks contain expert information on what and how children should learn. When designing a program or activity, OST professionals should consider reviewing the Framework in that content area. This will provide the professional with potential outcomes and strategies. The ultimate goal of using the Frameworks to aid in program design should be to intentionally create program activities that are aligned to the Standards and based on the academic and social needs of the students. Programs should utilize reliable data to identify needs and use the standards to help develop a project-based program to address those needs.

Providing a framework for evaluation

Many programs know intuitively that their activities support children academically, however, demonstrating how this takes place is often difficult. As previously stated, the Frameworks can be an excellent resource for evaluation of learning activities. Programs can easily convert a Framework into an evaluation model.

Example:

GOAL	LONG-TERM OUTCOME	INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME	SHORT-TERM OUTCOME/ ACTIVITY
To improve the English Language Arts skills of students	To improve the oral language skills of students (Learning Strand)	Students will use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups (Standard)	The teacher and students develop rules for whole class discussion and the reasons for each rule (Standard Example)

Articulating how the program supports learning

More and more, OST professionals are viewed through an educational lens. The Standards can help a program communicate its academic value. How?

1. OST professionals should start by making a list of the current activities being offered by their program (e.g. Homework Help, Gym activities, Arts and Crafts, Theater, etc.)
2. Next, the activities should be grouped by the Framework content areas (e.g. Math – homework help, English Language Arts – homework help, Health – gym activities, The Arts – arts and crafts and theater)
3. OST professionals should then scan the Standards and pull out the ones that are supported by the program’s activities
4. This information should then be organized in a table to be disseminated to staff, school personnel, funders, parents, and other constituents
5. To ensure that the Standards are intentionally supported, OST professionals should include other staff in discussions regarding the standards and provide training

Example for a program serving elementary-aged youth:

CONTENT AREA	ACTIVITIES	LEARNING STANDARD(S)
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework help – we provide one-on-one assistance.• Academic Enrichment – we incorporate project-based learning to get students to improve ELA skills and solve math problems.• Cooking Club – the cooking class highlights math, especially fractions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate an understanding of fractions as parts of unit wholes, as parts of a collection, and as locations on the number line.• Use concrete objects and visual models to add and subtract common fractions.• Select and use appropriate operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) to solve problems, including those involving money.
English Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework help – we provide one-on-one assistance.• Academic Enrichment – we incorporate project-based learning to get students to improve ELA skills and solve math problems.• Acme Soccer Fun – partner agency that combines soccer with creative writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the basic facts and ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed, drawing on such strategies as recalling prior knowledge, previewing illustrations and heading to make predictions, listening to others’ ideas, and comparing information from several sources.• Write well-organized compositions with a beginning, middle, and end, drawing on a variety of strategies as needed to generate and organize ideas.
Comprehensive Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dance• Karate• Basketball	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perform rhythm routines, including dancing, to demonstrate fundamental movement skills• Demonstrate responsible personal and social conduct used in physical activity settings.

WHERE CAN I GET THE FRAMEWORKS?

The best place to access the Frameworks and Standards is online at the following web addresses:

- National Standards: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/saaguidance03.doc>
- Massachusetts Frameworks: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>
- Boston Curriculum Guides: <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/teach/curriculum.asp#english>

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