ALABAMA QUALITY TEACHING STANDARDS

Pursuant to the mission of improving the academic achievement of all students in the public schools of Alabama, teachers will align their practice and professional learning with the following standards:

Standard 1—Content Knowledge: To improve the learning of all students, teachers master the disciplines related to their teaching fields including the central concepts, important facts and skills, and tools of inquiry; they anchor content in learning experiences that make the subject matter meaningful for all students.

Rationale. Researchers identify a strong relationship between teachers' content knowledge and the achievement of their students. Three dimensions of content knowledge contribute to effective teaching: (1) deep knowledge of the academic disciplines related to the subjects of instruction, (2) an understanding of pedagogical content knowledge that is required to make the subject understandable and meaningful for all learners, and (3) knowledge of the state standards and district curriculum for subjects taught at particular instructional levels.

Key Indicators

A. Academic Discipline(s)

1. Knowledge of the structure of the academic disciplines related to the subject-matter content areas of instruction and of the important facts and central concepts, principles, theories, and tools of inquiry associated with these disciplines.
2. Knowledge of ways to organize and present content so that it is meaningful and engaging to all learners whom they teach (pedagogical content knowledge).
3. Ability to use students' prior knowledge and experiences to introduce new subject-area related content.
4. Ability to identify student assumptions and preconceptions about the content of a subject area and to adjust instruction in consideration of these prior understandings.
5. Ability to help students make connections across the curriculum in order to promote retention and transfer of knowledge to real-life settings.

B. Curriculum

1. Knowledge of the content standards and of the scope and sequence of the subject areas of one's teaching fields as defined in the Alabama courses of study for those teaching fields.
2. Ability to provide accommodations, modifications, and/or adaptations to the general curriculum to meet the needs of each individual learner.
3. Ability to select content and appropriately design and develop instructional activities to address the scope and sequence of the curriculum.

> **Standard 2—Teaching and Learning:** To increase the achievement of every student, teachers draw upon a thorough understanding of learning and development; recognize the role of families in supporting learning; design a student centered learning environment; and use research-based instructional and assessment strategies that motivate, engage, and maximize the learning of all students.

Rationale. Instruction and assessment are the vehicles by which teachers design and deliver rigorous and relevant learning experiences for all learners. Research provides compelling evidence relating student achievement to teachers' use of appropriate instructional strategies selected from a rich repertoire based in research and best practice. Researchers have also found a strong classroom learning culture that is strategically organized and managed to be essential to effective use of these strategies.

Key Indicators

A. <u>Human Development</u>

1. Knowledge of the physical, emotional, and social development of young people and of the relationship of these to learning readiness and to cognitive development.
2. Knowledge of the role of language in learning.
3. Knowledge of the general characteristics of disabilities and of their impact on cognitive development and learning.
4. Knowledge of developmentally appropriate instructional and management strategies.
5. Ability to teach explicit cognitive, metacognitive, and other learning strategies to support students in becoming more successful learners.
6. Ability to use knowledge about human learning and development in the design of a learning environment and learning experiences that will optimize each student's achievement.
7. Ability to recognize individual variations in learning and development that exceed the typical range and use this information to provide appropriate learning experiences.

B. <u>Organization and Management</u>

1. Knowledge of the importance of developing learning objectives based on the Alabama courses of study and the needs, interests, and abilities of students.
2. Knowledge of the principles underpinning a sound age-appropriate classroom organization and management plan and of supportive behavior management strategies.
3. Knowledge of the components and characteristics of collaboratively designed and implemented individual behavioral support plans.
4. Knowledge of conflict resolution strategies, school emergency response procedures, and juvenile law.
5. Ability to plan and implement equitable and effective student access to available technology and other resources to enhance student learning.
6. Ability to plan teaching and learning experiences that are congruent with the Alabama courses of study and appropriate for diverse learners.
7. Ability to collect and use data to plan, monitor, and improve instruction.

8. Ability to organize, allocate, and manage the resources of time, space, and activities to support the learning of every student.
9. Ability to organize, use, and monitor a variety of flexible student groupings and instructional strategies to support differentiated instruction.

C. Learning Environment

1. Knowledge of norms and structures that contribute to a safe and stimulating learning environment.
2. Knowledge of factors and situations that promote or diminish intrinsic motivation.
3. Ability to develop a positive relationship with every student and to take action to promote positive social relationships among students, including students from different backgrounds and abilities.
4. Ability to communicate with parents and/or families to support students' understanding of appropriate behavior.
5. Ability to create learning environments that increase intrinsic motivation and optimize student engagement and learning.
6. Ability to use individual behavioral support plans to proactively respond to the needs of all students.
7. Ability to create a print-/language-rich environment that develops/extends students' desire and ability to read, write, speak, and listen.
8. Ability to encourage students to assume increasing responsibility for themselves and to support one another's learning.

D. Instructional Strategies

1. Knowledge of research and theory underpinning effective teaching and learning.
2. Knowledge of a wide range of research-based instructional strategies and the advantages and disadvantages associated with each.
3. Knowledge of strategies that promote retention as well as transfer of learning and the relationship between these two learning outcomes.
4. Knowledge of the importance of parents and/or families as active partners in planning and supporting student learning.
5. Ability to select and support the use of instructional and assistive technologies and to integrate these into a coherent instructional design.
6. Ability to make developmentally appropriate choices in selecting teaching strategies to assist diverse learners in meeting instructional objectives.
7. Ability to evaluate, select, and integrate a variety of strategies such as cooperative learning, discussion, discovery, problem-based learning, and direct instruction into a coherent lesson design.
8. Ability to adjust instruction in response to information gathered from ongoing monitoring of performance via formative assessment.
9. Ability to use questions and questioning to assist all students in developing skills and strategies in critical and high order thinking and problem solving.
10. Ability to use strategies that promote the independence, self-control, personal responsibility, and self-advocacy of all students.

E. Assessment

1. Knowledge of the purposes, strengths, and limitations of formative and summative assessment and of formal and informal assessment strategies.

2. Knowledge of the relationship between assessment and learning and of how to integrate appropriate assessments into all stages of the learning process.
3. Knowledge of measurement-related issues such as validity, reliability, norms, bias, scoring concerns, and ethical uses of tests and test results.
4. Knowledge of current Alabama assessment requirements and procedures.
5. Ability to design and use a variety of approaches to formal and informal assessment to plan instruction, monitor student understanding and progress toward learning, modify teaching and learning strategies, and measure and report student progress related to learning objectives.
6. Ability to collaborate with others to design and score common assessments and to use results to share and compare instructional practice and plan new instruction.
7. Ability to collaborate with others to incorporate accommodations into all assessments as appropriate.
8. Ability to provide a variety of ways for students with diverse needs, including students with disabilities, to demonstrate their learning.
9. Ability to develop rubrics and to teach students how to use them to assess their own performances.
10. Ability to develop and select appropriate performance assessments.
11. Ability to engage all students in assessing and understanding their own learning and behavior.
12. Ability to interpret and use reports from state assessments and results of other assessments to design both group and individual learning experiences.

Standard 3—Literacy: To improve student learning and achievement, teachers use knowledge of effective oral and written communications, reading, mathematics, and technology to facilitate and support direct instruction, active inquiry, collaboration, and positive interaction.

Rationale. Research clearly indicates that one of the strongest correlates to effective teaching is a high level of literacy. Not only do effective teachers demonstrate effective use of the spoken and written language, reading, mathematics, and technology, they also model and actively teach their students the fundamentals of reading, writing, and oral communications across all content areas. Additionally, in this culture where technology is ubiquitous, teachers demonstrate mastery of appropriate instructional technology and integrate technology into instruction of their subject areas.

A.   Oral and Written Communications

1. Knowledge of standard oral and written communications.
2. Knowledge of the impact of native language and linguistic background on language acquisition.
3. Knowledge of media communication technologies that enrich learning opportunities.
4. Ability to model appropriate oral and written communications.
5. Ability to demonstrate appropriate communication strategies that include questioning and active and reflective listening.
6. Ability to foster effective verbal and nonverbal communications during ongoing instruction using assistive technologies as appropriate.
7. Ability to integrate skill development in oral and written communications into all content areas that one teaches.
8. Ability to use effective nonverbal communication and respond appropriately to nonverbal cues from students.

B. **Reading**

1. Knowledge of strategies associated with accelerated, highly specialized, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension that significantly expands and increases students' pace of learning and competence in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
2. Knowledge of assessment tools to monitor the acquisition of reading strategies, to improve reading instruction, and to identify students who require additional instruction.
3. Ability to integrate reading instruction into all content areas that one teaches.
4. Ability to stimulate interest in and foster appreciation for the written word, promote reading growth, and increase the motivation of students to read widely and independently for information and pleasure.

C. **Mathematics**

1. Knowledge of the role that mathematics plays in everyday life.
2. Knowledge of the concepts and relationships in number systems.
3. Knowledge of the appropriate use of various types of reasoning, including inductive, deductive, spatial and proportional, and understanding of valid and invalid forms of reasoning.
4. Knowledge of both metric and customary measurement and fundamental geometric concepts, including shapes and their properties and relationships.
5. Ability to solve problems using different strategies, to verify and interpret results, and to draw conclusions.
6. Ability to communicate with others about mathematical concepts, processes, and symbols.

D. **Technology**

1. Knowledge of available and emerging technologies that support the learning of all students.
2. Knowledge of the wide range of technologies that support and enhance instruction, including classroom and school resources as well as distance learning and online learning opportunities.
3. Ability to integrate technology into the teaching of all content areas.
4. Ability to facilitate students' individual and collaborative use of technology, including classroom resources as well as distance and online learning opportunities when available and appropriate.
5. Ability to use technology to assess student progress and manage records.
6. Ability to evaluate students' technology proficiency and students' technology-based products within content areas.

Standard 4—Diversity: To improve the learning of all students, teachers differentiate instruction in ways that exhibit a deep understanding of how cultural, ethnic, and social background; second language learning; special needs; exceptionalities; and learning styles affect student motivation, cognitive processing, and academic performance.

Rationale. Teachers who respect and build upon diversity create a learning environment in which all students feel valued and supported in their learning. Respect for diversity grows out of knowledge of differences, including differences in students' cultural, ethnic, language, social, and experiential backgrounds; differences in their physical, emotional, and social development; differences in their readiness for a particular curricular goal; and differences in their learning styles and strengths. Teachers have a rich understanding of these and other important areas of diversity as well as knowledge of curricular and instructional modifications that improve the learning of the wide range of individual learners in their classrooms.

Key Indicators

A. Cultural, Ethnic and Social Diversity

1. Knowledge of the ways in which student learning is influenced by individual experiences and out-of-school learning, including language and family/community values and conditions.
2. Knowledge of cultural, ethnic, gender, linguistic, and socio-economic differences and of how these may affect individual learner needs, preferences, and styles.
3. Knowledge of the characteristics of one's own culture and use of language and of how they differ from other cultures.
4. Ability to develop culturally responsive curriculum and instruction, i.e., model, teach, and integrate multicultural awareness, acceptance, and appreciation into ongoing instruction.
5. Ability to communicate in ways that demonstrate sensitivity to diversity such as appropriate use of eye contact, interpretation of body language and verbal statements, and acknowledgement of and responsiveness to different modes of communication and participation.

B. Language Diversity

1. Knowledge of the process of second language acquisition and strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English.
2. Ability to differentiate between learner difficulties that are related to cognitive or skill development and those that relate to language learning.
3. Ability to collaborate with teachers of English language learners and to assist those students with full integration into the regular classroom.

C. Special Needs

1. Knowledge of the major areas of exceptionality in learning, including the range of physical and mental disabilities, social and emotional disorders, giftedness, dyslexia, and attention deficit disorder.
2. Knowledge of the indicators of the need for special education services.
3. Ability to identify and refer students for diagnosis for special services.
4. Ability to address learning differences and disabilities that are prevalent in an inclusive classroom.

D. Learning Styles

1. Knowledge of research and theory related to learning styles and multiple intelligences.
2. Knowledge of a range of curricular materials and technologies to support the cognitive development of diverse learners.

3.   Ability to help students assess their own learning styles and to build upon identified strengths.
4.   Ability to design learning experiences that engage all learning styles.

E.   <u>General</u>

1.   Knowledge of how personal/cultural biases can affect teaching and learning.
2.   Ability to involve families, community agencies and organizations, and colleagues in helping support academic achievement of diverse learners.
3.   Ability to create a learning community in which individual differences are respected.
4.   Ability to assess and diagnose individual student's contexts, strengths, and learning needs and to tailor curriculum and teaching to address these personal characteristics.

Standard 5—Professionalism: To increase the achievement of all students, teachers engage in continuous learning and self improvement; collaborate with colleagues to create and adopt research-based best practices to achieve ongoing classroom and school improvement; and adhere to the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics and federal, state, and local laws and policies.

Rationale.   Current research relates teacher collaboration, shared responsibility for student learning, and job-embedded learning in professional community to higher levels of student achievement. This research challenges the independence and isolation that has historically characterized the teaching profession and calls for deprivatization of practice. An underlying premise of professional learning communities is the power of ongoing, continuous learning that takes place in a culture where risk and experimentation are rewarded. In schools where there is a strong professional community, teachers actively participate in creating and sustaining such a learning environment and in maintaining its focus upon improved student learning. Beyond collaboration, teachers exhibit professionalism by demonstrating a personal commitment to continuous learning and improvement; by adhering to high ethical standards; and by maintaining currency with regard to federal, state, and local laws and policies. Teachers assume increased leadership for schoolwide improvement initiatives and for mentoring of colleagues as they move along their professional pathways.

A.   <u>Collaboration</u>

1.   Knowledge of the purposes, processes, structures, and potential benefits associated with collaboration and teaming.
2.   Knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of members of different types of teams including, but not limited to, Building Based Student Support Teams.
3.   Knowledge of roles and responsibilities of para-educators and other paraprofessionals.
4.   Ability to involve parents and/or families as active partners in planning and supporting student learning.
5.   Ability to share instructional responsibility for students with diverse needs, including students with disabilities, and to develop collaborative teaching relationships and instructional strategies.
6.   Ability to share responsibility for all students' learning across the school and collaborate with colleagues to support every student's growth.

7. Ability to participate as reflective members of different types of teams including, but not limited to, Building Based Student Support Teams.
8. Ability to collaborate in the planning of instruction for an expanded curriculum in general education to include Individual Education Plans and other plans such as Section 504 goals for students with disabilities.
9. Ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with colleagues, students, parents, guardians, and significant agency personnel who are included and valued equally as partners.
10. Ability to exhibit the professional dispositions delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards while working with students, colleagues, families, and communities.

B. Continuous, Lifelong Professional Learning

1. Knowledge of a range of professional literature, particularly resources that relate to one's own teaching field(s).
2. Knowledge of a range of professional learning opportunities, including job-embedded learning, district- and state-sponsored workshops, university offerings, and online and distance learning.
3. Knowledge of the processes and skills associated with peer coaching and mentoring.
4. Ability to articulate and reflect on a personal philosophy and its relationship to teaching practice and professional learning choices and commitments.
5. Ability to use best practices, professional literature, and collegial assistance to improve as a teacher and a learner.
6. Ability and willingness to inquire into one's own practice by designing action research to determine the effectiveness of identified instructional strategies.
7. Ability to participate in the creation and nurturance of a learning environment that supports standards-based inquiry, reflective practice, and collaborative learning for teachers at all stages of their careers.

C. Alabama-Specific Improvement Initiatives

1. Knowledge of current and emerging state initiatives and programs including, but not limited to, the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI); the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI); Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX); and Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators and Students Statewide (ACCESS) and their relationship to student achievement.
2. Knowledge of Alabama's state assessment requirements and processes.
3. Ability to integrate statewide programs and initiatives into the curriculum and instructional processes.
4. Ability to communicate with students, parents, and the public about Alabama's assessment system and major state educational improvement initiatives.

D. School Improvement

1 Knowledge of research relating collective responsibility for student learning to increased achievement for all students.
2. Knowledge of the principles of individual and organizational change and a commitment to assume personal responsibility for leading and supporting others in results-oriented changes.
3. Ability to participate in school improvement planning by working collaboratively with teams focused on specific improvement initiatives.

4. Ability to assume increased leadership responsibility in school, district, and state improvement initiatives over the course of one's professional career.

E. **Ethics**

1. Knowledge of appropriate professional behavior and dispositions expected of professionals as outlined in the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics.
2. Knowledge of safe, responsible, legal, and ethical uses of technologies including fair-use and copyright guidelines and Internet-user protection policies.
3. Ability to use and maintain confidential student information in an ethical and professional manner.
4. Ability to practice safe, responsible, legal, and ethical use of technology and comply with school and district acceptable-use policies including fair-use and copyright guidelines and Internet-user protection policies.

F. **Local, State, Federal Laws and Policies**

1. Knowledge of laws related to students' and teachers' rights and responsibilities and the importance of complying with those laws, including major principles of federal disabilities legislation (IDEA, Section 504 and ADA), as well as Alabama statutes on child abuse and neglect, and the importance of complying with those laws.
2. Ability to access school, community, state, and other resources and referral services.
3. Ability to access resources to gain information about federal, state, district, and school policies and procedures.
4. Ability to keep accurate records including IEPs, especially records related to federal, state and district policies, and other records with legal implications.