

Colorado Professional Teaching Standards

Standard I: Teachers demonstrate knowledge of the content they teach

	a. Teachers provide instruction that is aligned-with the Colorado Academic Standards and their district’s scope and sequence; and is aligned with the individual needs of their students. Teachers use state and district content standards to organize instruction. Where appropriate, teachers investigate the content standards developed by professional organizations in their specialty area. They develop and apply strategies to make the curriculum rigorous and relevant for all students, and to provide a balanced curriculum which incorporates language development, literacy and numeracy across all content areas as appropriate.
	b. Teachers demonstrate knowledge of the content, central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures appropriate to their teaching specialty. Teachers know subjects beyond the content they are expected to teach and direct students’ natural curiosity into an interest in learning. All teachers are able to assist students in the development of critical thinking and reasoning skills, and in the discernment and evaluation of information.
	c. Teachers develop lessons that reflect the interconnectedness of content areas/disciplines. Teachers know the links and vertical alignment of the grade or subject they teach and the state standards. Teachers understand how the content they teach relates to other disciplines in order to deepen understanding and enable students to see the interrelationships between content areas and disciplines. Teachers promote global and cultural awareness and its relevance to subjects they teach.
	d. Teachers make instruction and content relevant to students. Teachers incorporate postsecondary and workforce readiness and 21st century skills* into their teaching deliberately, strategically and broadly. These skills include creativity and innovation, collaboration, strong work ethic, critical thinking and problem-solving, civic responsibility, communication, personal responsibility, global and cultural awareness, IT skills, and the ability to discern, evaluate and use information.

*N.B: Colorado's description of 21st century skills is a synthesis of the essential abilities students must apply in our fast changing world. These essentials skills are: critical thinking and reasoning; information literacy; collaboration; self-direction and invention.

Colorado’s description of postsecondary and workforce readiness is a student’s capacity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and competencies required for success in a global, interdependent society. Students must demonstrate: application of reading, writing, and computing skills; logical reasoning and argumentation abilities; identification and solving of problems; information management skills; human relation skills; and analysis and interpretation skills

Standard II: Teachers establish a respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students

	a. Teachers are consistent in fostering a learning environment in the classroom in which each student has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults and peers. Teachers create an inviting environment that promotes mutual respect, inclusion and flexibility. They ensure that the classroom environment maximizes learning opportunities for students, and empower students to become lifelong learners by taking responsibility for their own learning.
	b. Teachers demonstrate a commitment to and respect for diversity in the school community and in the world. Teachers draw on diverse cultural competencies to design and implement lessons that counteract stereotypes, incorporate the histories and contributions of all cultures, and provide access and equity in the school. Teachers recognize the influence of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion and other aspects of culture, family and identity on a student's development and personality and respond to the relevant backgrounds of individual students and families.
	c. Teachers value students as individuals. Teachers maintain high expectations for students of all backgrounds. Teachers communicate this vision to their students and find ways to engage students in a mutually-supportive teaching and learning process. Teachers appreciate the differences and value the contributions of each student by building positive relationships, creating opportunities for student voice, and fostering an environment that promotes mutual respect.
	d. Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of all students, including those with special needs across a range of ability levels. Teachers understand the diversity of student ability levels and strive to meet the needs of each student. Teachers collaborate with a range of support specialists to develop and use appropriate strategies and resources to adapt to the learning needs of various groups of students including those with special needs, English language learners, and gifted and talented learners. Through inclusion and other models of effective practice, teachers engage all students to ensure that their needs are met. Teachers adequately implement student IFSPs, IEPs, IAPs and other legal requirements for the delivery of instruction.
	e. Teachers work collaboratively with the families and significant adults in the lives of their students. Teachers recognize that educating students is a shared responsibility involving the school, parents or guardians, and the community. Teachers communicate in a regular and timely manner to support and empower parents or guardians to play a meaningful role in the academic and developmental growth of their students.

Standard III: Teachers facilitate learning for their students

	a. Teachers demonstrate knowledge of current developmental science, the ways in which learning takes place, and the appropriate levels of intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of their students. Teachers understand how individuals learn, how development in all domains progresses, and how developmental changes can affect student learning. They design and implement developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences. Teachers keep abreast of evolving research about student learning and pedagogy. They adapt resources to address the strengths and weaknesses of their students.
	b. Teachers plan learning experiences appropriate for their students. Teachers collaborate with their colleagues and use a variety of data sources to guide short- and long-term planning. Teachers use appropriate resources and strategies to adapt to the learning needs of groups and individual students. Teachers engage students as partners in the learning process by utilizing parent and student feedback to make the curriculum responsive, relevant and accessible to students of different cultures or with individual learning needs. Teachers monitor and modify instructional plans in real time to enhance learning.
	c. Teachers use a variety of instructional methods to meet the academic needs of their students. Teachers employ a wide range of techniques including learning styles, and differentiated instruction to eliminate gaps in achievement and growth. Teachers utilize formative assessment practices to empower students to take ownership of their own learning and to monitor and adjust instruction as needed.
	d. Teachers thoughtfully integrate and utilize technology into their instruction to maximize student learning. Teachers know when and how to use technology to maximize student learning. Teachers help students use technology to learn content, think critically, solve problems, discern reliability, find and use information, communicate, innovate, and collaborate.
	e. Teachers plan instruction that helps students develop critical-thinking and problem solving skills. Teachers support the development of students' problem-solving and critical reasoning skills by encouraging them to ask questions, think creatively, develop and test innovative ideas, synthesize knowledge and draw conclusions. They help students exercise and communicate sound reasoning; understand connections; make complex choices; and frame, analyze, and solve problems.
	f. Teachers provide students with opportunities to work in teams and develop leadership qualities. Teachers work with students to create a collaborative learning environment where student voice is valued and students are actively engaged in learning. Teachers organize learning teams that help students strengthen social ties; improve communication, cooperation and collaboration skills; and develop leadership qualities.

	g. Teachers communicate effectively. Teachers communicate in ways that are clearly understood by their students. They are perceptive and responsive listeners who are able to communicate with students in a variety of ways even when language is a barrier. Teachers help students to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively, with appropriate attention to grammar, spelling and writing skills.
	h. Teachers use a variety of methods to assess what each student has learned. Teachers understand and use multiple methods of 21st century assessment and data sources, including summative and interim assessments, to document learner progress, evaluate students' academic growth, and gather evidence of students' postsecondary and workforce readiness skills, knowledge, and dispositions. They use formative assessment practices to monitor student learning in real time and adapt their instruction. Teachers provide opportunities, methods, feedback and tools for students to assess themselves and each other.

Standard IV: Teachers reflect on their practice

	a. Teachers demonstrate that they analyze student learning and apply what they learn to improve their practice. Teachers think systematically and critically about student learning in their classrooms and schools: why learning happens and what can be done to improve achievement. Teachers work collaboratively with colleagues to collect and analyze student performance data using multiple methods of assessment and data sources, in order to continually evaluate their practice, and to improve classroom and school effectiveness. Teachers know when to use consultation from colleagues and specialists to support the successful learning of all students.
	b. Teachers link professional growth to their professional goals. Teachers are professionals committed to reflection and growth, who participate in continuous, high-quality professional development that is culturally-responsive, reflects a global view of educational practices, includes 21st century skills and knowledge, and meets the needs of students and their own professional growth.
	c. Teachers function effectively in a complex, dynamic environment. Understanding that change is constant, teachers collaborate with colleagues to actively investigate and consider new ideas that improve teaching and learning. They adapt their practice based on research and data to best meet the needs of their students.

Standard V: Teachers demonstrate leadership

	a. Teachers demonstrate leadership in their schools. Teachers are professionals who work collaboratively with colleagues, and school personnel to create a professional learning community. They analyze and use data to develop goals and strategies that enhance student learning and teacher work conditions, and select professional development that enhance their professional growth. Teachers contribute to the development of positive working conditions in their school. Where appropriate and possible, teachers provide input in determining the school budget, participate in the hiring process and collaborate with their colleagues to mentor and support new teachers.
	b. Teachers lead the teaching profession. Teachers strive to improve the teaching profession by collaborating with colleagues and the school community to promote growth for all educators and enhance the teaching profession. They contribute to the establishment of positive working conditions in their schools. They actively participate in and advocate for decision-making structures in education and government that take advantage of the expertise of teachers.
	c. Teachers advocate for schools and students, partnering with students and families as appropriate. Teachers advocate for positive change in policies and practices affecting student learning. They participate in the implementation of initiatives to improve the education of students, and facilitate meaningful participation by students in improving school climate, culture and academic learning.
	d. Teachers demonstrate high ethical standards. Teachers are professionals, committed to ethical behavior and principles including honesty, integrity, fair treatment, and respect for others.

Standard VI: Teachers take responsibility for student growth

	a. Teachers pursue high levels of student growth in academic achievement. Teachers take responsibility for the progress of all students toward high school graduation, and work to ensure that students are globally competitive for work and postsecondary education.
	b. Teachers pursue high levels of student growth in the skills necessary for postsecondary life, including democratic and civic participation. Teachers take responsibility for ensuring that students are prepared with the skills, dispositions and attitudes necessary for postsecondary life including democratic and civic participation.
	c. Teachers use evidence to evaluate their practice and continually improve attainment of student growth.