

Overview of the Canton Implementation of the Massachusetts Frameworks Incorporating the Common Core

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1. What are standards and why do states have standards?

- Standards are statements that define expectations for each grade level in a content area. They define what is to be learned by the end of the school year. They are the “end mark” for what students should know and be able to do.
- Standards are in place to provide a “universal” expectation (across schools, districts, states) for what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade level.
- They provide opportunities for students moving from one school to another, one city to another to have the same end of year expectations in place.
- They provide a vertically aligned roadmap so that the same expectations do not occur year after year in terms of outcomes or what students should know and be able to do; they also are based on developmentally appropriate practice so an increased knowledge base is built in as the students advance through the grades.
- Decisions about standards are made at the state level. The state does NOT dictate how students reach the standards.
- A state assessment system (in our case the MCAS) is used once per year to determine progress students are making in achieving the outcomes.
- Right from our frameworks: “These standards do not dictate curriculum or teaching methods.”
- Standards are the end. Curriculum is the means.

2. What the standards are not.....

- **Determiners of how teacher should teach.**
- **The Mass Frameworks incorporating the Common Core (2011) focus on what is most essential but they do not describe all that can or should be taught. A great deal is left to the teachers and curriculum developers.**
- **The standards do not define the nature of advanced work for students who meet the standards prior to leaving high school. The standards establish a baseline.**
- **The standards do not define the full range of support for ELL and students with disabilities.**

3. What is a curriculum?

- **A curriculum is the plan for day to day teaching created by the local school district to teach students to learn. It can be comprised of materials, resources, lesson plans, unit maps, assessments and purchased materials such as textbooks or programs.**
- **It is the plan for day to day teaching.**
- **Instructional decisions are made in the classroom, at the school level or at the district level.**
- **The curriculum is the method of having the students move toward the expected outcomes (standards) at the end of the year.**
- **Examples in our district: Journeys is a program used to teach foundational language and reading skills at elementary. In middle and high school, curriculum maps center around novels, etc.**
- **Our curriculum is set up in a backwards design fashion.**
- **Educators must fashion the standards into engaging and effective curriculum. (McTighe and Wiggins)**

4. How did the Mass Frameworks evolve?

- Frameworks for ELA and Math have been in place since the 90's. (At that time, social studies and science were also available with social studies standards not updated for many years following that period). The Math and ELA standards have been updated on an ongoing basis and MCAS follows those updates.
- Both math and ELA were due for another review in 2008-09. At that time, multiple states were working on national standards so our DESE joined those efforts. In July 2010, the state voted to incorporate the Common Core standards as a part of our own standards. Two state panels then reviewed all of the incorporated standards and added some additional standards (preschool in collaboration with ECC and other standards marked by MA).
- The state is now looking at standards in science and social studies for updating.
- MCAS was developed in a backwards design fashion and is aligned to the state standards. Start with what students should know and be able to do (standards) and develop appropriate questions to assess that knowledge.

5. What are the key features of the 2011 standards? (Let's do a walk through)

- Guiding principles which focus on college and career and 21st century students. (see p. 7 in ELA and p. 9 in Math)
- Grade levels feed into each other in a developmentally appropriate fashion. (see p. 15 in ELA).
- Mass standards "outside the CC standards" are marked (and include preschool developed with the Early Education and Care – ECC). See p. 55
- Math expectations per grade level (see p. 39)
- Math Practices (see p. 39)

6. How did the Canton curriculum evolve as standards changed and how does it continue to evolve?

- Foundational skills in mathematics
- Literacy in the content areas in middle and high school (see p. 74)

- Literature remains a focus but greater emphasis is placed on informational texts (which we encounter on a day to day basis as adults)
- Preschool skills
- New standards in social studies and science directly linked to the 2011 frameworks

7. What are our continuing questions about assessment?

- No decisions made yet by state – Will make decision early fall
- Up to this point, the administration recommended to the School Committee that we stay with MCAS so Spring 2015 testing was on the MCAS.

Questions?