

The Next Generation Standards

The New York State Board of Regents released revisions to the state learning standards for English Language Arts and mathematics at their May meeting. Regents Chancellor Betty Rosa characterized the new standards as, “the result of a thoughtful and deliberative process to reimagine our educational framework.”

The process to revise the standards has been ongoing for two years, during which time the State Education Department received more than 4,100 public comments. Commissioner MaryEllen Elia said that the state “developed new learning standards while keeping the rigor,” and that the standards represent “substantive changes with increased guidance for educators.” The State Department of Education created Learning Standards Advisory Committees and subcommittees, who reviewed every learning standard and considered feedback from the public comments and experts. The committees sought out specific advice from educators who work directly with students with disabilities and English language learners, and integrated changes requested from those two groups in the revised documents.

The revised standards, now called the Next Generation Learning Standards, replace the Common Core standards adopted by New York in 2010. Part of the impetus to revise the standards came from the new Every Student Succeeds Act, which replaces the No Child Left Behind Act that guided federal education law since 2002.

The English Language Arts committees made changes to the words and phrases used in the standards, merging language, omitting words, or rewriting entire grade-level standards to ensure clarity, appropriateness, and alignment. The committee also revised the writing standards to make them easier to use. The biggest change was the merger of the “reading for literature” and “reading for information” standards, which streamlined reading expectations and encouraged a balance of literary and informational text experiences for students. Reading expectations for text complexity were also clarified across grade levels, underscoring the importance of reading different types of text with varying levels of difficulty.

The mathematics committees started their work by moving particular standards to different grade levels, improving the focus of major content and skills for each elementary and middle school grade level and high school course. The largest change in content standards occurred within the topic of statistics and probability at the middle level and Algebra at the high school level. The mathematics committee also created a glossary of verbs that appear throughout the revised standards recommendations to help comprehension.

Clarence curriculum committees have already begun the process of unpacking the revised standards to design grade level curriculum. Committees for newly revised social studies and science standards will also start their work this summer.