

Academic Content Standards Frequently Asked Questions

Academic content standards are clearly defined statements and/or illustrations of what all students, teachers, schools and school districts are expected to know and be able to do.

What are content standards?

Content standards describe the knowledge and skills that students should attain, often called the "what" of "what students should know and be able to do." They indicate the ways of thinking, working, communicating, reasoning and investigating, and important and enduring ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas and knowledge essential to the discipline.

What are benchmarks?

Benchmarks are the specific components of the knowledge or skill identified by an academic content, performance or operational standard. It can be characterized as being declarative, procedural or contextual in the type of knowledge it describes. Attainment is communicated through through performance task (the construction of a response) and performance level (the defined score point on a formal assessment).

What are grade-level indicators?

Grade-level indicators are what students should know and be able to do. The indicators are the checkpoints that monitor progress toward the benchmarks.

How were the academic content standards developed in Ohio?

The process for developing academic content standards began in 1997 when the State Board of Education and the Ohio Board of Regents created a Joint Council to oversee the implementation of recommendations made by the Secondary and Higher Education Remediation Advisory Commission. Both boards began to build a common long-term agenda for pre-K through 16 education.

The Joint Council started its work by establishing a set of common expectations for what all students should know and be able to do upon completion of high school. This initial work established draft common expectations in six content areas: fine arts; English language arts; foreign languages; mathematics; science; and social studies. With the addition of technology as a content area, these drafts were transformed into Ohio's academic content standards.

Why develop academic content standards?

Academic content standards provide a set of clear and rigorous expectations for all students. Students need to learn more and do complex work at each grade level as they progress through school. The academic content standards provide clarity to Ohio teachers of what content and skills should be taught at each grade-level. How the material is taught is a local school and district decision.