

# Academic Standards

In 1999, the Seattle School Board adopted standards, or learning targets, in four core areas—reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Standards are also being adopted for Science and Visual Arts. These standards, based on the Washington State Essential Learning Requirements (EALR's) are broken down into grade level benchmarks that identify what students should know as they progress through school. Standards benchmarks by grade level can be found by visiting the Academic Standards section on [www.seattleschools.org](http://www.seattleschools.org).

Students are evaluated each year on how well they perform in relation to the standards. Across the country, standardized test scores are becoming increasingly more important in measuring the efficacy of our public schools. Here is a listing of the primary ones to be aware of at the grades they test:  
The WASL—Washington Assessment of Student Learning—Given to 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup>  
The ITBS—Iowa Test of Basic Skills—Given to 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>  
The DWA-Direct Writing Assessment—Given in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>  
The DRA—Developmental Reading Assessment—Given to K, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

It's important for you to be aware of the importance of testing your school. Some teachers and students may feel increased pressure during testing time, so be sensitive to any anxiety that your student may feel.

Following the list of standards is a list of academic goals. The goals are based on the Seattle Public School Academic Standards, and are meant to be used as a general reference to give you an idea of what students are learning at the different grade levels. Remember, the student you work with may be one or two levels behind his/her grade. For more details on the Academic Standards, or to obtain grade-specific booklets please visit [www.seattleschools.org](http://www.seattleschools.org) or call 206-252-0170.



## **Seattle Public Schools Academic Standards**

### **READING STANDARDS**

- Standard 1: Understands and uses different skills and strategies to read.
- Standard 2: Understands the meaning of what is read.
- Standard 3: Reads different material for a variety of purposes.
- Standard 4: Sets goals and evaluates progress to improve reading.

### **WRITING STANDARDS**

- Standard 1: Writes clearly and effectively.
- Standard 2: Writes in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes.
- Standard 3: Understands and uses the steps of the writing process.
- Standard 4: Analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of written work.

### **COMMUNICATION STANDARDS**

- Standard 1: Uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.
- Standard 2: Communicates ideas clearly and effectively.
- Standard 3: Uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.
- Standard 4: Analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.

### **MATH STANDARDS**

- Standard 1: Understands and applies the concepts and procedures of mathematics.
- Standard 2: Defines and solves problems by investigating situations, formulating questions that define the problem, and constructing solutions.
- Standard 3: Uses reasoning to analyze information, make logical predictions, draw conclusions and check results.
- Standard 4: Gathers mathematical information by reading, listening and observing. Organizes the information in order to share mathematical ideas using language, charts and graphs.
- Standard 5: Understands the connection between mathematics and problem-solving skills used every day at work and at home.

## **Benefits of a Standards-based Learning System**

### ***Benefits for Students***

- ❖ Students have clearly articulated expectations for performance as they progress through school.
- ❖ Students understand what they are learning, which standard it relates to and why they are learning it.
- ❖ Students recognize how teachers expect them to show what they've learned.
- ❖ Students are given increased opportunities to evaluate their own work before the teacher does—using the same criteria as the teacher.
- ❖ Student performance is based on individual progress, not as it relates to other students.
- ❖ Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate achievement standards (using varying learning modalities).
- ❖ Students know that their performance is evaluated consistently from teacher to teacher and from school to school.

**Benefits for Teachers**

- ❖ Teachers understand how each lesson aligns with District and State academic standards.
- ❖ Teachers have a clearly articulated framework for their teaching; defined student performance expectations.
- ❖ Freedom to use varying teaching modalities to help get kids to standards; allows for greater creativity in curriculum and activities.
- ❖ Teachers see greater investment and motivation in their students.
- ❖ Increased clarity in the student assessment process.
- ❖ Teachers have greater opportunities to partner with other teachers as the framework for their teachings are better aligned.

**Benefits for Community Partners**

- ❖ Partners have a shared language in approaching partnerships with schools.
- ❖ Partners have a greater understanding of how and where their services can be aligned with schools; increased effectiveness and impact of program services.
- ❖ Partners have expanded freedom in program/project design if clearly linked with student achievement of standards.
- ❖ Partners have increased receptivity from schools as schools begin to recognize the need for community support in the standards effort.
- ❖ Individual partners (tutors/volunteers) have enhanced clarity as to the framework for their work with students.
- ❖ Partners experience increased continuity and consistency between schools

***The effects of our academic standards will be felt throughout the district, including in your work with the schools. It will be helpful for you to have a general understanding of the standards and their benefits. For more information about academic standards, please consult your school supervisor or the Seattle Public Schools homepage at: [www.seattleschools.org](http://www.seattleschools.org)***