

# Standards vs. Curriculum

## What is the difference between standards and curriculum?

**Standards** define the knowledge and skills students need in each grade level and course for success in college, other post-secondary training and/or careers. Standards are established at the state level and provide a foundation for school districts to develop curriculum.

**Curriculum**, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities and other school-approved educational experiences, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, its expectations for student learning and its instructional practices.

A district's curriculum will not contain everything a teacher will say and do in a classroom. The district curriculum should include those items all teachers are expected to implement, administrators will monitor and districts will evaluate. A district curriculum defines required elements of instruction.

## How are standards and curriculum used in Missouri?

The Show-Me Standards represent the foundation for skills and knowledge we, as Missourians, believe are essential to student success. The Missouri Learning Standards Expectations represent the specific knowledge and skills students are expected to know at each grade level.

Curriculum, which is aligned to statewide standards, is created, defined and evaluated by the local school district.

	Authority	Assessments
Show-Me Standards	State	Aligned to State Assessments
Missouri Learning Standards	State	Measured with State Assessments
Curriculum	District/Teacher	Local Formative/Interim Assessments (A quiz at the end of a chapter, a spelling test, etc.)

## How do we get from a Show-Me Standard at the state level to what my child does at the local level?

Standards in Missouri begin with the Show-Me Standards. Show-Me standards include performance goals and knowledge standards. Let's look at this Missouri Learning Standard from 3rd grade English language arts (ELA):

"Read to develop an understanding of media and its components by explaining how various design techniques used in media influence the message."

Next, we look at which performance goal and knowledge standard from the Show-Me Standards the 3rd grade ELA standard aligns to:

- Performance Goal: Students in Missouri public schools will acquire the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom. Students will demonstrate within and integrate across all content areas the ability to use technological tools to exchange information and ideas.

- Knowledge Standard: In English Language Arts, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation which includes knowledge of and proficiency in speaking and writing standard English (including grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, capitalization).

A district will take a Missouri Learning Standard and develop curriculum, lesson plans, local assessments and resources based on and aligned to the standard.

An example based on the chosen standard might look like this:

- District Curriculum: Students will compare and contrast advertising both in print and online for intended audience and message and design and language techniques used to reach the intended audience.
- Lesson Idea: Students will look at ads for toys – 3 from newspapers and magazines and 3 from websites. They will compare and contrast language used, illustrations and graphics in advertisements.
- Local Assessment: Students will design and create their own ad for a given audience.
- Test Question: Why do advertisers use bright colors in ads geared toward young audiences?

Everything from the District Curriculum down is created by or chosen by the local district. They make the decision on how best to teach the standard.

### **General Information:**

The Office of College and Career Readiness is a division within the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Their responsibility is to (1) provide assistance to local schools in the adoption and adaptation of the Missouri Learning Standards and (2) to develop and administer state-level assessments.

Our first responsibility relates to The Show-Me Standards (1996) and to the Missouri Learning Standards (2016). Both the Show-Me Standards and the Missouri Learning Standards were written and developed in Missouri by teams that included Missouri educators. These state-level standards are not a curriculum but serve as a blueprint from which local school districts develop challenging curriculums to help all students achieve.

### **Definitions:**

- Standards: Educational standards are the learning goals for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level.
- Show-Me Standards: The Show-Me Standards, which define what all Missouri high school graduates should know and be able to do.
- Missouri Learning Standards: The Missouri Learning Standards define the knowledge and skills students need in each grade level and course for success in college, other post-secondary training and careers.
- Curriculum: The term curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program.

<https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/curriculum/mls-for-parents>

## About The Missouri Learning Standards

The Missouri Learning Standards define the knowledge and skills students need in each grade level and course for success in college, other post-secondary training and careers. These expectations are aligned to the Show-Me Standards, which define what all Missouri high school graduates should know and be able to do.

In January 1996, Missouri adopted the Show-Me Standards, a demanding set of content and process standards that have proved to be an excellent frame of reference for student performance in Missouri. Grade-level expectations (GLEs) were then developed to provide grade by grade targets for instruction for teachers. Those expectations were revised regularly based on teacher feedback and new research. As End-of-Course (EOC) assessments were developed at the high school level, Course-level expectations (CLEs) were created to provide teachers with course-specific objectives.

The latest iteration of expectations aligned with the Show-Me Standards are called the Missouri Learning Standards. The Missouri Learning Standards help ensure students learn basic and higher-order skills, including problem solving and critical thinking. The standards are relevant to the real world and reflect the knowledge and skills students need to achieve their goals. Learning outcomes improve when students, parents and teachers work together toward shared goals. The Missouri Learning Standards give school administrators, teachers, parents and students a road map for learning expectations in each grade and course. They are key to Missouri becoming one of the top 10 states for education by 2020.

The Missouri Learning Standards do not dictate curriculum. Local districts and schools make their own decisions about curriculum, instructional strategies, materials and textbooks.

<https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/curriculum/missouri-learning-standards>