



What are the Sunshine State Standards?

The *Sunshine State Standards* establish the core content of the curricula to be taught and specify the core content knowledge and skills that K-12 public school students are expected to acquire.¹ In 2008, the Legislature required the State Board of Education to review the *Sunshine State Standards* and replace them with the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*.² However, because the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards* adoption process is ongoing, for purposes of this fact sheet, general references to the *Sunshine State Standards* are intended to encompass the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*.

What subject areas are covered by the Sunshine State Standards?

The *Sunshine State Standards* establish the core curricular content for eight subject areas: language arts, science, mathematics, social studies, visual and performing arts, physical education, health, and foreign languages.³ The State Board of Education has adopted standards for each of these subject areas, as follows:

Subject Area	Date of Adoption
Reading and Language Arts	January 25, 2007 ⁴
Mathematics	September 18, 2007 ⁵
Science	February 19, 2008 ⁶
Social Studies	December 2, 2008 ⁷

¹ Section 1003.41(1), F.S.

² Section 1, ch. 2008-235, L.O.F.

³ Section 1003.41(1)(a) and (b), F.S.

⁴ Florida Department of Education, *Minutes of State Board of Education 4* (Jan. 25, 2007), available at http://www.fldoe.org/board/meetings/2007_02_20/MINUTES_January.pdf; see rule 6A-1.09401(1)(a), F.A.C.; Florida Department of Education, *2006 Sunshine State Standards: K-12 Reading & Language Arts* (2006), available at http://etc.usf.edu/flstandards/la/new-pdfs/la_sss.pdf [hereinafter *2006 Reading Standards*]; Florida Department of Education, *Florida Standards*, <http://www.floridastandards.org> (last visited May 6, 2010) [hereinafter *Florida Standards Website*].

⁵ Florida Department of Education, *Minutes of State Board of Education 2* (Sept. 18, 2007), available at http://www.fldoe.org/board/meetings/2007_12_11/minutes-September.pdf; see rule 6A-1.09401(1)(b), F.A.C.; Florida Department of Education, *Florida Sunshine State Standards: Mathematics* (2008), available at http://www.fldoestem.org/uploads/1/docs/2007_FL_Mathematics_Standards_9_13_07.pdf [hereinafter *Mathematics Standards*]; *Florida Standards Website*, *supra* note 4.

⁶ Florida Department of Education, *Amended Minutes of State Board of Education 1* (Feb. 19, 2008), available at http://www.fldoe.org/board/meetings/2008_04_15/February%2019%20Minutes.pdf; see rule 6A-1.09401(1)(c), F.A.C.; Florida Department of Education, *Florida Sunshine State Standards: Science* (2008), available at <http://www.fldoestem.org/Uploads/1/docs/Science%20Standards%20Both-FINAL%203-20-08.pdf>; *Florida Standards Website*, *supra* note 4.

⁷ Florida Department of Education, *Minutes of State Board of Education 1* (Dec. 2, 2008), available at http://www.fldoe.org/board/meetings/2009_01_21/december2minutes.pdf [hereinafter *SBE December 2 Minutes*]; see rule 6A-1.09401(1)(d), F.A.C.; *Florida Standards Website*, *supra* note 4.

Subject Area	Date of Adoption
Physical Education	December 2, 2008 ⁸
Health Education	December 2, 2008 ⁹
World Languages	1996 (previously adopted as Foreign Languages) ¹⁰
Fine Arts	1996 (previously adopted as the Arts: Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts) ¹¹

In four subject areas—language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies—the *Sunshine State Standards* must address at a minimum specific curricular content required by law, as follows:

Subject Area	Specific Curricular Content Covered by Standards
Language Arts	The reading process, literary analysis, the writing process, writing applications, communication, and information and media literacy (language arts standards must also identify significant literary genres and authors that encompass a comprehensive range of historical periods) ¹²
Science	The nature of science, earth and space science, physical science, and life science ¹³
Mathematics	Algebra, geometry, probability, statistics, calculus, discrete mathematics, financial literacy, and trigonometry ¹⁴
Social Studies	Geography, United States and world history, government, civics, economics, and humanities ¹⁵

The standards must also:

- ❖ Identify the core curricular content that a student is expected to learn for each subject at each individual grade level in order to acquire the broad background knowledge needed for reading comprehension;
- ❖ Be rigorous and relevant and provide for the logical, sequential progression of core curricular content that incrementally increases a student’s core content knowledge and skills over time;

⁸ SBE December 2 Minutes, *supra* note 7; see rule 6A-1.09401(1)(g), F.A.C.; *Florida Standards Website*, *supra* note 4.

⁹ SBE December 2 Minutes, *supra* note 7; see rule 6A-1.09401(1)(h), F.A.C.; *Florida Standards Website*, *supra* note 4.

¹⁰ See Florida Department of Education, *Sunshine State Standards*, <http://www.fldoe.org/bii/curriculum/sss> (last visited May 6, 2010) [hereinafter *1996 Standards Website*].

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Section 1003.41(1)(a)1., F.S. In 2010, the Legislature required, beginning with the 2011-2012 academic year, the reading portion of the language arts curriculum to include civics education content for all grade levels. Section 2, ch. 2010-48, L.O.F.

¹³ Section 1003.41(1)(a)2., F.S.

¹⁴ Section 1003.41(1)(a)3., F.S.

¹⁵ Section 1003.41(1)(a)4., F.S.

- ❖ Integrate critical-thinking and problem-solving skills; communication, reading, and writing skills; mathematics skills; collaboration skills; contextual and applied-learning skills; technology literacy skills; information and media-literacy skills; and civic-engagement skills; and
- ❖ Be aligned to expectations for success in postsecondary education and high-skill, high-wage employment.¹⁶

How are the Sunshine State Standards organized?

The *Sunshine State Standards* must be organized using a uniform structure and format that is consistent for each subject area. This structure must use the same alphanumeric coding system for each subject area and grade level.¹⁷

The *Sunshine State Standards* must provide for the logical, sequential progression of core curricular content that incrementally increases a student’s knowledge and skills over time.¹⁸ Accordingly, the standards must include distinct grade-level expectations, as follows:

Subject Areas	Organization of Grade-Level Expectations
Language Arts Science Mathematics Social Studies	Grade-by-grade expectations for each individual K-8 grade level (standards for grades 9-12 may be organized by grade clusters of more than one grade level) ¹⁹
Visual and Performing Arts Physical Education Health Education Foreign Languages	Grade-by-grade expectations for each individual K-5 grade level (standards for grades 6-12 may be organized by grade clusters of more than one grade level) ²⁰

What is the process for adoption and revision of the Sunshine State Standards?

State law specifies the process by which the *Sunshine State Standards* are adopted and revised:

- ❖ The Commissioner of Education develops and periodically submits proposed standards to the State Board of Education for adoption or revision;²¹
- ❖ The commissioner consults renowned experts on K-12 curricular standards and content in each of the eight required subject areas²² and considers the standards implemented by other states or nations which are regarded as exceptionally rigorous by curricular and content experts;²³
- ❖ The commissioner submits the proposed standards for review and comment by:

¹⁶ Section 1003.41(1)(c), (d), (e), and (g), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 1003.41(1)(f), F.S.

¹⁸ Section 1003.41(d), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 1003.41(1)(a)1.-4., F.S.

²⁰ Section 1003.41(1)(b), F.S.

²¹ Sections 1003.41(3)(a) and 1008.22(3)(a), F.S.

²² See *supra* text accompanying note 3. The commissioner may also consult with curricular and content experts in other subjects. Section 1003.41(3)(a), F.S.

²³ Section 1003.41(3)(a), F.S.

- ◆ Florida educators;
- ◆ School administrators;
- ◆ Representatives of community colleges and state universities who have expertise in the content knowledge and skills necessary to prepare a student for postsecondary education; and
- ◆ Leaders in business and industry.²⁴

The commissioner, after considering comments and making any revisions, submits the proposed standards for written evaluation by renowned experts on K-12 curricular standards and content.²⁵ The commissioner, upon finalizing the proposed standards, submits the standards and evaluations by the curricular and content experts to the Governor and presiding officers of the Legislature at least 21 days before the state board considers the proposed standards;²⁶ and The state board adopts or revises the *Sunshine State Standards*.²⁷

What is the schedule for adoption and revision of the Sunshine State Standards?

The State Board of Education first adopted the *Sunshine State Standards* in 1996.²⁸ In 2005, the Department of Education (DOE) initiated a review of the standards,²⁹ and in 2006, the state board adopted a six-year cycle for the regular review and revision of the standards.³⁰ The state board adopted revised standards for reading and language arts and mathematics in 2007³¹ and for science, social studies, physical education, and health education in 2008.³²

In 2008, the Legislature substantially amended the requirements for the *Sunshine State Standards*.³³ By December 31, 2011, the State Board of Education must adopt standards in compliance with the amended requirements, including the review and replacement of the 2007 language arts standards.³⁴ The state board was required to establish an expedited schedule for adoption of the standards by December 31, 2008.³⁵ On June 17, 2008, the state board adopted its

²⁴ Section 1003.41(3)(b), F.S.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ Section 1003.41(3)(c), F.S.

²⁷ Sections 1001.03(1) and 1003.41(1) and (2), F.S.

²⁸ See rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C.; *1996 Standards Website*, *supra* note 10.

²⁹ See *2006 Reading Standards*, *supra* note 4, at 8.

³⁰ Florida Department of Education, *Minutes of State Board of Education 3* (Jan. 17, 2006), available at

http://www.fldoe.org/board/meetings/2006_02_21/Minutes_2005_01_17.pdf.

³¹ See *supra* notes 4 and 5 and accompanying text.

³² See *supra* notes 6 - 9 and accompanying text.

³³ Sections 1 and 3, ch. 2008-235, L.O.F.

³⁴ Section 1003.41(1)(a)1. and (2), F.S. Upon review and replacement of the *Sunshine State Standards* for a subject area in accordance with s. 1003.41(1), F.S., the standards become known as the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*. Section 1000.21(7), F.S.

³⁵ Section 1003.41(2), F.S.

expedited adoption schedule.³⁶ The state board most recently revised the adoption schedule on March 26, 2010, as follows:³⁷

Subject Area	State Board of Education Approval
Science	February 2008
Social Studies	December 2008
Physical Education	December 2008
Health Education	December 2008
World Languages	September 2010
Visual Arts	October 2010
Performing Arts	October 2010
Common Core Language Arts	Initial Adoption July 2010
Common Core Mathematics	Initial Adoption July 2010

The state board must also establish by rule a schedule for the periodic review and revision of the standards.³⁸ The state board adopted a 12-year review cycle for each set of standards, although the Commissioner of Education is authorized to initiate review of any set of standards before the end of the 12-year cycle, if the commissioner determines that developments in the subject area make existing standards inadequate.³⁹

What are Common Core Standards?

The Common Core State Standards Initiative (Common Core) involves governors and state education commissioners from 48 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia who have committed to developing a common set of state standards in English-language arts and mathematics for grades K-12. Common Core is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers.⁴⁰

The DOE announced its intention to join Common Core in July 2009, several months after K-16 Florida reading, media, and language arts educators originally convened to draft the *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards* in Language Arts. The DOE then worked to develop

³⁶ See Florida Department of Education, *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards* (June 4, 2008), available at http://www.fldoe.org/board/meetings/2008_06_17/Next%20Gen%20Stan.pdf (revised timeline for adoption of standards); Florida Department of Education, *Minutes of State Board of Education 2-3* (June 17, 2008), available at http://www.fldoe.org/board/meetings/2008_08_19/June17minutes.pdf.

³⁷ Florida Department of Education, *Common Core and Next Generation Sunshine State Standards* (Feb. 2010), available at http://www.fldoe.org/board/meetings/2010_03_26/coverccstan.pdf.

³⁸ Section 1003.41(2), F.S.

³⁹ Rule 6A-1.09401(2), F.A.C.

⁴⁰ National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, *Common Core State Standards Initiative*, <http://www.corestandards.org/> (last visited May 6, 2010) [hereinafter *Common Core Website*].

standards with Common Core, providing feedback and recommendations to the national standards writing committee.⁴¹ Common Core draft standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics were released in June 2010⁴² and the State Board of Education adopted those standards on July 27, 2010.⁴³

How is student achievement of the Sunshine State Standards measured?

The statewide assessment program, which consists of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and statewide, standardized end-of-course (EOC) assessments, measures student achievement of the *Sunshine State Standards* in reading, writing, mathematics, science,⁴⁴ and beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, civics education.⁴⁵ The statewide assessment program consists of criterion-referenced tests that measure how well students learn the skills and competencies in the *Sunshine State Standards*.⁴⁶ FCAT includes annual comprehensive assessments of reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 10; comprehensive assessments of writing in grades 4, 8, and 10; and comprehensive assessments of science in grades 5, 8, and 11.⁴⁷ In 2010, the Legislature required the phased-in replacement of grades 9 and 10 FCAT Mathematics with EOC assessments in Algebra I and Geometry and grade 11 FCAT Science with an EOC assessment in Biology I.⁴⁸

Where can I get additional information?

Florida Department of Education

Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction
(850) 245-0423
<http://www.fldoe.org/bii>

Florida Department of Education

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards
<http://www.floridastandards.org>

⁴¹ Florida Department of Education, *Florida Standards*, <http://etc.usf.edu/flstandards/index.html> (last visited May 6, 2010).

⁴² *Common Core Website*, *supra* note 40.

⁴³ Florida Department of Education, State Board of Education Agenda, *available at* http://www.fldoe.org/board/meetings/2010_07_26/agenda.asp; *see also* Common Core State Standards Initiative, *available at* <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-state>.

⁴⁴ Section 1008.22(3)(c), F.S.; *see also* Statewide Assessment Program Fact Sheet.

⁴⁵ In 2010, the Legislature required the DOE to develop and implement a statewide, standardized EOC assessment in Civics at the middle school level. Chapter 2010-48, L.O.F.

⁴⁶ Section 1008.22(3)(c)3. and 4., F.S. A criterion-referenced test is an assessment in which an individual's performance is compared to a specific learning objective or performance standard and not to the performance of other students. Criterion-referenced tests show how well students perform on specific goals or standards rather than just telling how their performance compares to a norm group of students nationally or locally. Florida Department of Education, *FCAT Handbook: A Resource for Educators* 90 (2005), *available at* <http://fcat.fldoe.org/handbk/complete.pdf> [hereinafter *FCAT Handbook*].

⁴⁷ *See* s. 1008.22(3)(c)1., F.S.; *FCAT Handbook*, *supra* note 46, at 5.

⁴⁸ Chapter 2010-22, L.O.F.; *see also* Statewide Assessment Program Fact Sheet.

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