

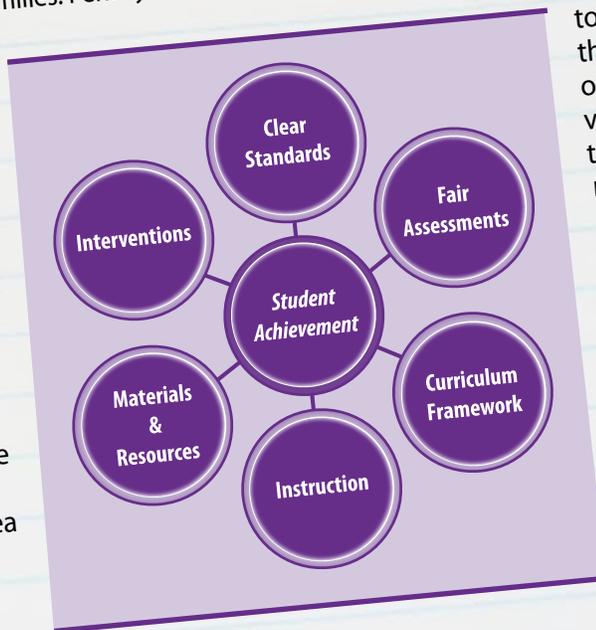
Teachers' Desk Reference: Practical Information for Pennsylvania's Teachers

Pennsylvania's Standards Aligned System

As a Pennsylvania teacher, every day you have the responsibility to provide explicit and effective instruction to all students. Effective instruction encompasses the deliberate arrangement of classroom space and efficient use of instructional time; careful selection of core content and supplemental materials; ongoing evaluation of student learning; and communication with students and their families. Pennsylvania's Standards Aligned System (SAS) is a comprehensive approach to effective instruction that supports student achievement across the commonwealth.

What is the Standards Aligned System?

Much research has been conducted as to what makes a great school. There are many intangible components; however, research supports the idea that great schools and school systems typically have six common elements that ensure student achievement: Clear Standards, Fair Assessments, Curriculum Framework, Instruction, Materials & Resources, and Interventions. These six distinct elements, if utilized together, provide a common framework for continuous school and district enhancement and improvement.



The Standards Aligned System (SAS) is a collaborative product of research and good practice. Designed as a web-based portal, and updated on an ongoing basis, the Standards Aligned System gathers materials for each of the six elements and centralizes them in one location. All materials are located at: www.pdesas.org. Located at the top of the webpage are six tabs – one for each element. By clicking on the element's tab, you gain access to resources that support that element. Create your own logon ID and use a variety of embedded tools to manage, save, and share materials.

How can teachers use the Standards Aligned System to support instruction?

1. Choose a Standard

As you are planning lessons, log into the SAS web portal to download the standards. Choose the standard you want to utilize for the content area you plan to teach. The SAS system gives you the standard for every content area, the assessment anchors, and the eligible content where appropriate. Each standard/eligible content describes what students should know and be able to do at every grade level.

2. Link to the Curriculum Framework

Once the standard is chosen, navigate through the SAS portal to view the Curriculum Framework. The Curriculum Framework specifies what is to be taught for each subject in the curriculum. The Curriculum Framework includes the "Big Ideas, Concepts, Competencies, and Essential Questions" that you need to consider when planning lessons. On the portal, select the subject area and the grade level. You are provided with the "Big Ideas, Concepts, Competencies, and Essential Questions" for the content area you choose. Links to related materials and resources that are available for the standard are provided.

Curriculum Framework Definitions:

- **Big Ideas:** Declarative statements that describe concepts that transcend grade levels. Big Ideas are essential to provide focus on specific content for all students.
- **Concepts:** Describe what students should know (key knowledge) as a result of this instruction specific to grade level.
- **Competencies:** Describe what students should be able to do (key skills) as a result of this instruction, specific to grade level.

Curriculum Framework: Example for Algebra

Big Idea (enduring understanding)

Relations and functions are mathematical relationships that can be represented and analyzed using words, tables, graphs, and equations.

Essential Question

How do you decide which functional representation to choose when modeling a real world situation, and how would you explain your solution to the problem?

Concept (What students will know)

Functions and multiple representations.

Anchor

A1.2.1: Functions

Competency (What students be able to do)

Use algebraic properties and processes in mathematical situations and apply them to solve real world problems.

Anchor Descriptor

A1.2.1.1: Analyze and/or use patterns or relations.

Standard

2.8.A1.C: Identify and represent patterns algebraically and/or graphically.

Eligible Content

A1.2.1.1.1: Analyze a set of data for the existence of a pattern and represent the pattern algebraically and/or graphically.

- Start with standard/anchor/big idea
- Keep the essential question in mind throughout instruction
- Focus instruction by targeting concepts
- Identify what students need to do to demonstrate competency
- Design classroom instruction that will result in student proficiency in the academic standard/eligible content

- **Essential Questions:** Questions connected to the SAS framework are specifically linked to the Big Ideas. They should frame student inquiry, promote critical thinking, and assist in learning transfer.

3. Explore Available Materials and Resources

Materials and resources are available for all content areas including the Voluntary Model Curriculum (VMC). SAS VMC provides you with learning progressions, unit plans, lesson plans, web-based content, activities, videos, and assessments aligned to the standards. You can link instantly to numerous content resources to create lessons, plan instruction, and assess students.

One content resource is Learning Progressions. A learning progression is a road or pathway that students travel as they progress toward mastery of the skills needed for career and college readiness. Each road follows a route composed of a collection of building blocks defined by the content standards for a subject. Along the road there are major mile-posts that are the building blocks of the content standards that students need to master as they progress toward the mastery of more sophisticated skills. The mile-posts show what comes before and after a particular point along the road. These mile-posts may not necessarily be linear, but they will articulate movement forward. Learning progressions provide you with the opportunity to determine whether students have navigated successfully through the mile-posts and are able to move forward along the road to career and college readiness.

4. Consider Instructional Strategies and Techniques

The Instruction tab lists numerous videos that you can view to gather ideas for effective instructional strategies to use in the classroom. Teachers have been videotaped demonstrating various instructional strategies across grades levels and content areas.

Instruction must be aligned to the standards. Aligned instruction comprises the following activities:

- Teaching topics that are aligned with the standards
- Ensuring the right level of challenge
- Focusing instruction targeted to the learning needs of each student
- Implementing instructional strategies to increase student achievement

Effective Instruction should provide students with:

- Multiple means of representation, to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge;
- Multiple means of action and expression, to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know; and
- Multiple means of engagement, to tap into learners' interests, offer appropriate challenges, and increase motivation.

5. Conduct Fair Assessments

Fair Assessment is a process used by teachers and students before, during, and after instruction to provide feedback and adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve student achievement. The four major ways that you can assess students are:

- **Summative** - Assess progress at the end of a defined period of instruction
- **Formative** - Classroom-based formal and informal assessment tools to shape teaching and learning

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- **Benchmark** - Designed to assess and provide feedback about how the student is progressing towards demonstrating proficiency on grade level standards
- **Diagnostic** - Assessments administered prior to instruction to determine each student's strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills

The Assessment Creator, one of the tools on the SAS portal, allows you to create printable tests to gain a better understanding of students' mastery of Pennsylvania concepts and academic standards. You can create assessments in both teacher and student versions. You are able to create and save your assessments in an ePortfolio within the SAS system.

The Classroom Diagnostic Tools are a set of online tests designed to provide diagnostic information in order to guide instruction and remediation. The Classroom Diagnostic Tools are based on content covered by the Keystone Exams and the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment and include an interactive and dynamic reporting suite.

The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in the subject areas of Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Literature, English Composition, Biology, Chemistry, U.S. History, World History, and Civics and Government.

The Keystone Exams are one component of Pennsylvania's system of high school graduation requirements. Keystone Exams will help school districts guide students toward meeting state standards—standards aligned with expectations for success in college and the workplace. In order to receive a diploma, students must also meet local district credit and attendance requirements and complete a culminating project, along with any additional district requirements.

For the graduating classes of 2015 and 2016, students must demonstrate successful completion of secondary-level course work in Algebra I, Biology, Literature, and English Composition, in which the Keystone Exam serves as the final course exam. Students' Keystone Exam scores shall count for at least one-third of the final course grade.

Pennsylvania Assessment and Accountability 2010-2011 System options include participation in the:

- Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)
- PSSA with accommodations
- PSSA-Modified (Math, Reading, and Science)
- PSSA-Modified (Math, Reading, and Science) with accommodations
- Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA)

6. Provide Appropriate Interventions

Research Based Interventions: As students progress through the standards at each grade level, many struggle in the content areas. A comprehensive system of interventions aligned to specific student needs is available to ensure that students are provided with the supports they need to meet/exceed grade level standards. In Pennsylvania, the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) Framework and the Resiliency Framework are supports provided for students who may experience such challenges.

The Interventions tab of the SAS portal provides you with an extensive selection of resources that give information, structure, and assistance in providing support to students who need help. To implement an effective and successful intervention program for students, components of the RtII framework should be incorporated into the instructional program consistently.

The Core Characteristics of RtII are:

- **Standards aligned instruction:** All students receive high-quality, research-based instruction in the general education standards aligned system.
- **Universal screening:** All students are screened to determine academic and behavior status against grade-level benchmarks.
- **Shared ownership:** All staff (general education teachers, special education teachers, Title I, ESL) assume an active role in students' assessment and instruction in the standards aligned system.
- **Data-Based Decision Making:** Student performance data is analyzed to guide school decisions on instructional changes, choices of interventions, and appropriate rates of progress.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Student performance is continuously monitored. The data is used to determine intervention effectiveness and drive instructional adjustments, and to identify/measure student progress toward instructional and grade-level goals.
- **Benchmark and Outcome Assessment:** Student progress is assessed periodically throughout the year, and at the end of the year against grade level benchmarks and standards.

Educating All Learners

Differentiated Instruction

- ▶ Community of learners
- ▶ Flexible grouping
- ▶ Teachers value student difference
- ▶ Instructional approaches reach all students
- ▶ Relevant, rigorous instruction to grade level academic standards
- ▶ Formative assessment with adjustments
- ▶ Learning process includes:
 - Information presented in multiple ways
 - Students express what they know in multiple ways
 - Active student engagement that stimulates interests and motivates learners

Accommodations

- ▶ Changes how the student is taught, but does not change what a student is expected to learn
- ▶ Students are taught grade level academic standards
- ▶ Curriculum demands remain the same
- ▶ Maintains depth of knowledge required of the standard
- ▶ Students are assessed by the PSSA or the PSSA-M, with or without accommodations

Modifications

- ▶ Changes what a student is expected to learn
- ▶ Students are taught grade level academic standards or the alternate academic standards
- ▶ Maintains depth of knowledge required of the standard, but may reduce complexity
- ▶ Students may be assessed by the PSSA-M or the PASA with or without accommodations

- **Tiered Intervention and Service**

Delivery System: Some students receive increasing intense levels of targeted scientifically, research-based interventions. Instruction is differentiated to meet learner needs and consists of:

- Research-based Interventions: Interventions with proven effectiveness are matched to students' level of need.
- Flexible grouping: Students move among flexible instructional groups

- **Fidelity of Implementation:** Teachers deliver curriculum and program content and use instructional strategies in the same way that they were designed to be used and delivered.

- **Parental Engagement:** Parents receive information regarding their child's needs, including:
 - A description of the specific intervention and who is delivering instruction,

- Clearly stated intervention goals and academic progress expected for their child,
- Regular progress or lack of progress reports, and
- The right to request a special education evaluation at any time.

An English Language Learner (ELL) overlay has been provided to work along with standard instruction. ELL educational programs are found within the instructional core and under the Instruction tab. The ELL overlay documents provide a framework for instruction.

7. Link to the Curriculum Framework

A complete set of online management tools have been created for teachers to help with organization and increase communication with students and parents. You can create:

- ePortfolio
- Website
- Professional Learning Community

Pennsylvania's Standards Aligned System site continues to grow based on feedback from educators. It is a live site where information is updated. Your feedback is welcome.

www.pdesas.org

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