



A Parent's Guide to: The No Child Left Behind Act: **Content Standards**

Parents and schools
working together for
student achievement.

The SD Parent Resource Network is an affiliate of Black Hills Special Services Cooperative and is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement.

What are content standards?

Content Standards identify what students are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level in reading, language arts, science, mathematics, social studies and other academic content areas. The content standards represent an essential core of knowledge and abilities that all students must have to be successful in school and in their adult life.

How are standards used?

- ★ Standards help parents and schools determine what they can do to help students achieve.
- ★ Standards provide a way to measure student progress.
- ★ Schools use the standards to guide decisions on what and how to teach students.
- ★ Standards mean all students are expected to gain certain knowledge and skills.
- ★ Standards mean that schools will not expect less of some students and more of others.
- ★ Standards coordinate what is taught in different classrooms. All classes in a grade cover the same material, and each grade builds on the skills and knowledge learned the previous year.
- ★ Standards help teachers make decisions on how to use classroom time focusing on teaching a specific body of knowledge and skills.
- ★ Standards help the school select teaching materials such as textbooks so there is a match between what is taught and what students are expected to learn.





Why do we need content standards?

The South Dakota Content Standards provide common goals and expectations for student learning across the state. Consistent expectations for teaching and learning provide meaningful information about how students are achieving.

Content standards help ensure that a third grader in one school is learning the same important skills in reading, writing, math, and other academic areas as the third graders in any South Dakota school. You can see and read South Dakota Content Standards at the following website — <http://www.state.sd.us/deca/OCTA/contentstandards/index.htm>.

Why do parents need to know and understand standards?

With set standards for learning in each subject area and at each grade level, parents have better information about what their children are expected to know and be able to do. With this knowledge, parents are better able to talk with teachers about their child's abilities, support their children's learning at home, and understand the results of standardized testing. Parents can request the standards for their child's academic performance from their teacher(s).

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Additional parent guides on No Child Left Behind include:

- ★ No Child Left Behind: A Parent's Guide
- ★ Standardized Tests
- ★ School Improvement
- ★ School Choice
- ★ Content Standards
- ★ Accountability and Reporting
- ★ No Child Left Behind Glossary
- ★ Report Cards

For more information, please contact any of the following—

- ★ Your local school district
- ★ The South Dakota Parent Resource Network toll free at 1-800-219-6247
- ★ South Dakota Department of Education at 605-773-4716
- ★ The U.S. Department of Education toll free at 1-800-814-6252

South Dakota Resource Network

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