

**Guam Department of Education  
District Action Plan  
to Improve Reading, Math, and Language Arts**

**STANDARDS and ASSESSMENT**

The Guam school district began its efforts to institute standards based education in 1996 with the development of draft K-12 Content Standards and Performance Indicators that represented research-based practices and the collaborative efforts of many educators from the Guam Department of Education. In February 1999, the K-12 Content Standards and Performance Indicators were adopted by the Board of Education for: Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Visual and Performing Arts, World Languages, Health, Physical Education, Business/Marketing, and Computer Education. The Content Standards specify what students should know and the Performance Indicators identify the skills they should be able to demonstrate in relation to the Content Standards. The standards are designed to guide the development and implementation of a curriculum for each of the content areas at each of the grade levels.

**Staff Development**

Teachers have participated in a series of professional development sessions since the adoption of the K-12 Content Standards and Performance Indicators. In addition, a trainer of trainers series has been provided to approximately thirty educators in “Classroom Assessment” over the last two years. Professional development in assessing students in the classroom according to the district standards will begin school year 2002-2003.

**Teacher Survey**

Teachers were surveyed in May, 2000 about the standards. The purpose of the survey was to collect information about: (1) the extent to

which the adopted standards are being used, (2) staff development needs related to the standards, and (3) how the standards can be improved. Fifty-five percent (1,102) of 2,009 teachers completed the survey. Results indicated the following:

- K-12 Content Standards & Performance Indicators. Eighty-two percent of teachers possess a copy of the standards, while 14% do not.
- Professional Development. At least 44% of teachers have received some type of training on the adopted standards. The top three training needs indicated as being greatly needed to effectively implement the standards are: (1) connecting standards to the SAT 9 and criterion referenced tests, (2) review of successful classroom practices in which standards are being used, and (3) implementing standards in the grade or subject they teach.
- Professional Resources. Teachers use the following sources to guide their everyday teaching: (a) grade level expectations/course outlines, (b) reference books and materials, (c) teacher’s edition of textbook, (d) self-made curriculum and resources and (e) skills on report cards. The adopted standards ranked sixth in its use as a daily source of teaching.
- Implementation of Standards. Seventy- five percent strongly agreed that standards should come with curriculum guides, instructional models and assessment tools; 71% strongly agreed to aligning

standards, instruction and the SAT9 test; 52% strongly agreed that standards should be developed for every grade, not just grade levels; and 93% agreed to some extent that the standards are an important factor in the conduct of their teaching.

- Teacher Evaluation. Forty-seven percent of teachers indicated that the adopted standards were used as a criterion in evaluating their teaching, 26% were not sure and 14% were evaluated without the standards. Eighty-six percent agreed to some extent that the standards are an important factor in the conduct of their teaching.

### **Alignment Planning**

The results of the teachers' survey described above pointed to the need for the district to review whether the essential elements that comprise a standards-based education system are in place, of high quality, and fully aligned. Those aspects being reviewed and aligned are:

- Standards. These must be clear, specific, challenging, and up to date. Standards developed by professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics should guide the creation of high-quality standards.
- Curriculum. A curriculum that is aligned with the standards should:
  - Detail the learning sequence of knowledge and skills for each grade and subject, and from grade to grade in each subject;
  - List the instructional materials and other resources that teachers can use in designing their standards-based lessons;
  - Offer excellent models of instructional strategies or techniques;
  - Provide classroom assessment tools and rubric guides that will help teachers judge student performance against the expected standards.

- Contain examples of high quality standards-based lesson plans that depict expected student products and results;
- Provide diagnostic tools that will help teachers identify struggling students early.
- Professional Development. Teachers must be provided standards-based professional development that emphasizes mastery of content, instructional strategies, and assessment tools to measure the progress students are making toward achieving the standards. They also must be provided with adequate resources and tools to teach the standards.
- System-Wide Standards-Based Tests. This is a vital component that has not been addressed in the creation of standards-based education. Standards-based tests are specifically designed or selected to reflect the adopted standards that teachers are expected to teach via the curriculum guides. Student scores are compared to an expected level of performance as set by the district, and indicate the extent to which students are meeting defined content standards based on performance levels such as: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. To date, the SAT 9 norm referenced tests continue to be taken by students without having determined the extent of its alignment to the adopted standards, curricula, textbooks, and course requirements. Because of this, there is a high probability that the SAT 9 tests may not reflect what is actually being taught in the classroom. This disconnectedness, may cause students to fail items on the test that their teachers did not introduce or emphasize. Consequently, the student failures become magnified during the reporting of SAT 9 scores to the public, thereby frustrating students and teachers and disappointing the community in general. Efforts are currently underway to identify the specific standards being tested on the SAT 9 and the percentage of SAT 9 test items that are aligned to the standards. Schools are examining the SAT 9 item analysis reports to identify gaps in instruction and devise lessons to eliminate or reduce those

gaps. However, the district must proceed immediately to create or select high quality standards-based tests if we are to truly measure whether students have attained the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in the next grade, as stipulated in the standards.

### Teacher Involvement at the District Level

Teachers will have opportunities to become involved in the development and implementation of standards-based education by participating in the district LARM (Language Arts, Reading, and Math) cadre activities. The district LARM cadre is made up of teachers from the schools representing language arts, reading, and math who have been identified by the principals to participate in projects initiated by the district that are related to standards and assessment.

The number of representatives needed will depend on the nature of the district project. To encourage teachers to participate in district LARM cadre activities, compensation for their services will be offered as an incentive. The make-up of the district LARM cadre may differ from project to project, which may include:

- Alignment of standards, assessment, curriculum;
- Development or revisions of curriculum guides;
- Development of standard end-of-course assessments;
- Creation of classroom assessments and standard quarterly assessments;
- Training for and by district LARMs;
- Compiling standard lesson banks;
- Organizing LARM conferences/workshops, e.g. Lesson Fairs.

The first district LARM cadre, comprising fifty-one teachers, is currently involved in the district's alignment project. The expected products of their efforts are curriculum guides and standards toolkits that will be provided to all teachers who teach reading, math, or language arts. The cadre teachers are currently:

- Reviewing and updating reading, math, and language arts standards;
- Ascertaining the degree of alignment among the standards, textbooks, and the SAT 9 tests;
- Developing curriculum guides, sample lesson plans, and classroom assessment tools aligned to the standards.



**STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT**

**ACTION PLAN**

**Objectives:** 1) By the end of school year 2008-2009, using SAT 9 2002 scores as the baseline data, at least 50% of students in the grades tested will reach the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in a norm-referenced test that measures reading, math, and language arts skills; 2) The percentage of students in all grades achieving basic or proficient levels on standards-based tests in reading, math, and language arts will reach at least 75% over a ten year period, beginning with the first year the tests are administered.

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Documentation</b>
1. Conduct standards survey of teachers; compile and report results to schools.	Completed	Student Focus Committee	Existing	Completed Oct. 2000	Survey results disseminated to principals.
2. Identify SAT 9 priority skills by district and by school; distribute SAT 9 priority skills and item analysis reports to schools, provide technical assistance in interpretation and alignment.	Ongoing	Assoc. Supt., C&I; Administrator, RPE	Existing	Aug. 2002 to Mar. 2003	Priority skills and item analysis reports disseminated to schools;  List of schools provided technical assistance.
3. Facilitate the development of: a) standards-based tests for all grades in reading, math, language arts (first priority) and other core subject areas. b) English Language proficiency tests. c) Course specific tests, e.g. Algebra	Planned	Administrator, RPE, Assoc. Supt., C&I, Student Focus Comm.	Federal: cost to contract developer; pilot testing; teacher compensation; training; printing and other related expenses.	Aug. 2003 to June 2004	Standards-based tests developed in reading, math, language arts, and other core subjects.

Activities	Status	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline	Documentation
<p>4. Evaluate extent of alignment among standards, curriculum, instruction, materials, and testing.</p> <p>a) Establish teams to address the alignment evaluation process.</p> <p>b) Design alignment evaluation tool.</p> <p>c) Facilitate and conduct the evaluation process (compare local standards to national standards, SAT9 instructional objectives, textbooks).</p> <p>d) Identify skills to be taught on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>e) Summarize alignment evaluation.</p> <p>f) Submit alignment evaluation report with recommendations to Student Focus Committee.</p>	Ongoing	Assoc. Supt., C&I, School Program Consultants (SPCs), district LARM cadre, Test Developer	Federal: teacher compensation, supplies, materials, training costs	Dec. 2001- Dec 2002	Cadre formed;  Quarterly skills identified and listed;  Alignment tools developed; alignment process completed; alignment evaluation report submitted to Student Focus Committee.
<p>5. Review and update reading, math, and language arts standards.</p> <p>a) Establish cadre to review and upgrade local district reading, math and language arts standards.</p> <p>b) Evaluate the comprehensiveness of standards (clarity, alignment, challenging, meaningful, etc.).</p> <p>c) Prepare draft revisions and updates.</p> <p>d) Provide working draft of updated standards to schools for teachers' input; receive input and adjust where necessary.</p> <p>e) Prepare final draft of updated standards, submit to Student Focus Committee.</p> <p>f) Submit final draft to Education Policy Board for review.</p>	Ongoing	Superintendent, Associate Supt. C&I, Principals, SPCs; district LARM cadre, i.e, teacher representatives from grade levels and content areas in language arts, reading and math; Student Focus Committee	Federal: teacher compensation, supplies, materials, printing costs	Mar. 2003 - Dec. 2003	LARM cadre formed;  Draft revisions and updates of standards completed and submitted to Student Focus Committee;  Final draft submitted to Education Policy Board.

Activities	Status	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline	Documentation
<p>6. Develop curriculum guides, instructional models, and assessment tools and provide to teachers.</p> <p>a) Use the results of the standards alignment and the SAT 9 item analysis reports to determine district priority needs and quarterly skills to be taught.</p> <p>b) Develop standards-based units that address priority skills and assessments for each lesson.</p> <p>c) Include in curriculum guides a list of various instructional models that can be used in lessons.</p> <p>d) Send out working drafts to school for teachers' input.</p> <p>e) Send curriculum guides to Student Focus Committee for review.</p> <p>f) Contract a printing company to print copies of new curriculum guides.</p> <p>g) Disseminate copies of new curriculum guides to teachers.</p>	Ongoing	Assoc. Supt., C&I, School Program Consultants, LARM cadre.	Federal: teacher compensation, supplies, materials, printing costs.	Feb 2002 - Feb. 2003	<p>District priority need and quarterly skills identified;</p> <p>Standards-based units developed;</p> <p>Curriculum guides developed;</p> <p>Drafts sent to schools for review;</p> <p>Curriculum guides finalized;</p> <p>Curriculum guides printed and disseminated to teachers.</p>

Activities	Status	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline	Documentation
<p>7. Develop uniform assessments aligned to the standards for every grade.</p> <p>a) Work with school assessment teams to identify classroom assessments appropriate for lessons.</p> <p>b) Develop criteria to evaluate assessment tools.</p> <p>c) Conduct pilot of assessment tools in selected classrooms to test for practicality, appropriateness.</p> <p>d) Assemble assessment toolkit that provides information about appropriateness and application to lessons.</p> <p>e) Contract printing company to assemble and publish documents.</p> <p>f) Disseminate toolkit to teachers.</p>	Ongoing	SPCs, assessment teams, Assoc. Supt., C&I	Federal: teacher compensation, supplies, materials, training, printing costs.	January 2002 to April 2003	<p>Collection of various assessment tools;</p> <p>Criteria developed;</p> <p>Pilot completed and evaluation reports submitted;</p> <p>Toolkit completed and disseminated.</p>

Activities	Status	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline	Documentation
<p>8. Provide instructional resources to students in reading, math, and language arts that will enable them to master the standards.</p> <p>a) Conduct a survey to determine current available resources in schools.</p> <p>b) Establish list of current adopted texts/ resources that have not been procured.</p> <p>c) Establish a list of resource materials needed for standards-based instruction.</p> <p>d) Establish a well-defined budget for resources inclusive of shipping and handling costs, inflation, losses and other costs.</p>	Ongoing	Superintendent, Division heads, Principals	Local funding for textbooks and related materials; Federal funding for supplemental resources	Aug. 2002 to Aug. 2003	<p>Survey completed; list completed;</p> <p>Local and federal funding allocated.</p>
<p>9. Facilitate the creation of standards-based tests reflective of district standards; develop annual testing plan; conduct pilot test.</p>	Planned	Administrator, RPE, Student Focus Comm.	Federal: contract with test developer; training for teachers and principals, supplies, materials, printing costs.	Aug. 2003 to June 2004	<p>Standards-based test developed;</p> <p>Annual testing plan completed;</p> <p>Pilot test conducted; results reported, adjustments made.</p>