What Standards and Curriculum Look Like

We know that when we expect excellence from every student and provide them with the supports they need, they rise to the occasion. We also know that providing a rich and well-rounded curriculum is key to getting our students to the finish line.

A rich and well-rounded curriculum means every student has access to advanced courses in mathematics and science, classes in the fine arts, additional supports to those farther behind, and time to sharpen critical skills in self-monitoring and self-control during physical education.

A rich and well-rounded education enables each student to reach their full academic and social potential. Help us ensure all schools hold students to high standards and provide them the curriculum they need to meet expectations by taking the action steps listed in this brochure and reading up on the policies and practices that make up a great public school (GPS) at nea.org/GPSIndicators.

For tools and resources that can help you achieve a GPS, fill out the Opportunity Checklist at myschoolmyvoice.nea.org where you will be asked questions about your school and emailed resources related to your needs.
Great Public Schools Indicators Framework

The National Education Association's Great Public Schools (GPS) Indicators Framework elaborates on the seven criteria fundamental to a quality education and calls on all educators, families, community leaders, and policy makers to join the effort to ensure that every student has access to a great public school. Together, we can achieve greatness. Here we focus on one of the seven criteria required for student success—Standards and Curriculum.

Standards and Curriculum

A great public school ensures that all students have the opportunity to develop every facet of their talents and skills, harnessing their full potential and engaging in higher-order, multisensory tasks. Key to this are high expectations and a rich and well-rounded curriculum. Unfortunately, the current state of affairs could not be further away from this. The Civil Rights Data Collection snapshot on College and Career Readiness reports that only 50 percent of high schools offer calculus, only 60 percent offer physics, and 26 percent of high schools with the highest percentage of Black and Latino students do not offer Algebra II.

In short, opportunities have not been equitably distributed across the country, and we are forfeiting the chance to close the opportunity gap. Research shows that when expectations are raised and opportunities are provided to all students, even the most vulnerable can achieve and succeed. The new global economy needs our schools to produce students who are career-ready, possess 21st-century skills, and have had the benefits of a full and enriching curriculum.

How You Can Advocate for a Great Public School—Standards and Curriculum

A Great Education

As students progress during the school year, it is essential that they are provided all the resources and supports they need to succeed. A quality education begins with access to an exemplary early childhood education and continues to develop students socially, emotionally, and cognitively, preparing them for college and 21st-century careers. The bridge from early childhood education to graduation is only made possible with:

- High expectations and a well-rounded curriculum;
- Teaching and learning conditions, that lift all students no matter their zip code;
- Educators of the highest quality;
- Meaningful assessments;
- Engaged families and community; and,
- Sufficient funding for advanced courses, modern materials and facilities, and educator professional development.

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