



The Washington State
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Executive Summary

Our vision is for all students to learn the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a changing world. This means helping them develop a strong foundation in core subjects; equipping them with practical, real-world skills that can be applied in various contexts; and nurturing their passions to facilitate both personal and academic growth. Our goal is to ensure that students are well prepared for what comes next, whether that's getting involved in their community, continuing their education, or starting their careers.

This vision is firmly grounded in our commitment to creating an equitable education system. We believe that by providing all students with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need to thrive, we are actively working towards a more just and inclusive society. Educational equity is the cornerstone of this vision, guiding our efforts to ensure that each and every student has access to the tools and resources they need to pursue their dreams and aspirations.

In line with our vision for all students to learn the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a changing world, the Washington State Board of Education is thrilled to adopt the Washington State Profile of a Graduate as an integral part of our 2024-2028 strategic plan. To support the development of the skills outlined in the Profile and meet the [Goals of Basic Education](#), the Board acts through four primary areas of responsibility. Within each of those areas, the Board has identified key questions and initiatives we will focus on over the next four years. These efforts are aimed at bringing about necessary improvements in our education system. The questions and initiatives for the 2024-2028 strategic plan include:

- Advocacy and strategic oversight of public education
 - Continue advocating for foundational priorities
 - Develop an annual legislative platform
- High school graduation and learning standards
 - Build a framework for the future
 - Create more opportunities for Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Mastery-based Learning
 - Improve the High School and Beyond Plan
- Supporting the goals of basic education
 - Create flexible options for educational delivery
- Educational system health, accountability, and recognition
 - Broaden the school and district accountability system to include the conditions for learning
 - Develop a more equitable school and district recognition system

The Board cannot do this work alone. We must actively involve students, families, and community members in shaping policies that directly affect their lives. In this way, we collectively make the education system truly responsive to the needs and aspirations of all our learners.

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Background

The Washington State Board of Education's draft strategic plan for 2024-2028 is based on our common beliefs, values, and goals for public education. This plan outlines the most important questions and projects we will focus on over the next four years, within the Board's areas of responsibility, to advance excellence and equity in Washington's education system. The plan provides a long-term vision by establishing initiatives that guide the Board's work, the issues addressed during public meetings, and the policies advocated for or adopted by the Board. The draft plan will be reviewed and finalized in the spring of 2024.

Our vision for education

Our vision is for all students to learn the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a changing world. This means helping them develop a strong foundation in core subjects; equipping them with practical, real-world skills that can be applied in various contexts; and nurturing their passions to facilitate both personal and academic growth. Our goal is to ensure that students are well prepared for what comes next, whether that's getting involved in their community, continuing their education, or starting their careers.

This vision is firmly grounded in our commitment to creating an equitable education system ([view the Board's equity statement](#)). We believe that by providing all students with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need to thrive, we are actively working towards a more just and inclusive society. Educational equity is the cornerstone of this vision, guiding our efforts to ensure that each and every student has access to the tools and resources they need to pursue their dreams and aspirations. Educational equity is about tailoring support to meet the unique needs of each student, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach. The Board is dedicated to improving policies, programs, and practices to make sure that differences in educational outcomes can no longer be predicted based on factors like race, ethnicity, and family income. In doing so, we aim to create a brighter future where every student can access the resources and opportunities needed to thrive.

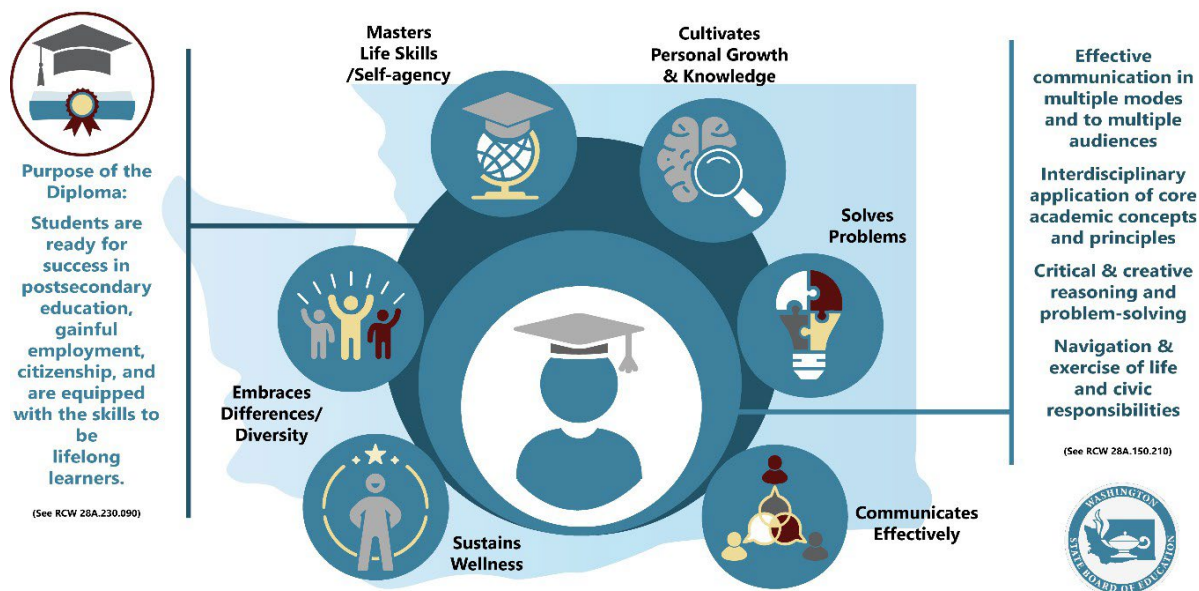
Profile of a Graduate

In line with our vision for all students to learn the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a changing world, the Washington State Board of Education is thrilled to adopt the [Washington State Profile of a Graduate](#) as an integral part of our 2024-2028 strategic plan. Developed by the Mastery-based Learning Work Group, with support from the Board and valuable input from community stakeholders, the Profile outlines the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities our students should develop over the course of their K-12 educational journey.

The Profile of a Graduate builds upon existing laws that define the purpose and [Goals of Basic Education](#) (see the left and right panels of the graphic below). In addition to students learning essential content knowledge in subjects like English, social studies, math, and science, the Profile expands on the broader goals of basic education, which go beyond what students should know in specific subjects. It does this by identifying the transferable skills that cut across various content areas - such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, problem-solving,

creativity, and empathy. In essence, the Profile of a Graduate takes the foundation of core subject-based knowledge and enhances it by emphasizing the development of these cross-cutting skills. As a guide and tool for improving the overall quality of education, the Profile helps ensure that our students develop not only the knowledge they need, but also the abilities to adapt, collaborate, and excel in a rapidly changing world.

Washington State | Profile of a Graduate



The State Board of Education recognizes the central role of the Profile of a Graduate in shaping the future of education in our state, serving as the guiding compass for our K-12 education system. This strategic plan solidifies our commitment to using the Profile in our efforts to improve the education system, alongside our vision and values. Our aim is to make sure that every part of our education system, from what students learn to how we measure their progress and engage with our communities, lines up with what we believe is crucial for students to thrive in the future.

Key questions and initiatives

The State Board of Education's purpose is established in state law (RCW 28A.305.130). To achieve this purpose, the Board acts through four primary areas of responsibility:

- Advocacy and strategic oversight of public education
- High school graduation and learning standards
- Supporting the goals of basic education
- Educational system health, accountability, and recognition

Within each of those areas, the Board has identified key questions and initiatives we will focus on over the next four years. These efforts are aimed at bringing about necessary improvements in our education system. We want to ensure each student has an equitable opportunity to achieve the goals of basic education and develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities described in the Profile of a Graduate.

Advocacy and strategic oversight of public education

The State Board of Education has a crucial role in overseeing and improving public education. When it comes to shaping education policies, the Board has two main approaches. First, the Board has the authority to create detailed rules and regulations (called “Washington Administrative Code” or “WAC”) that guide specific areas of education. For instance, state law directs the Board to establish rules for graduation requirements and for ensuring districts comply with the program of basic education. When issues fall outside the Board’s authority to create rules, then the Board turns to advocacy, seeking support from partners, the Governor’s Office, and the Legislature. Through this collaborative effort, the Board can influence broader changes in education policy that cannot be achieved through our administrative rules alone. The Board’s advocacy efforts take a variety of forms. The Board may request state funding for important initiatives or even draft and request new bills (called agency request legislation) for the Legislature to consider. In addition, we actively participate in the legislative process by sharing our position on bills and testifying before legislative committees. We also answer questions from lawmakers and provide suggestions for making legislation better.

To help guide our advocacy efforts, the Board dedicates the time between legislative sessions to crafting our legislative platform for the upcoming session. The platform is the Board’s tool for highlighting our most important priorities for the Legislature to consider, and it outlines the key topics we plan to engage on during the legislative session. The Board takes community input into consideration in developing the platform. We check in with our education partners and gather input from students, families, and community members, as we strive to align our advocacy efforts with their needs and concerns - especially for the individuals and groups most directly impacted who have not been served well by the education system.

Key questions and initiatives for 2024-2028:

Continue advocating for foundational priorities. The Board will continue to champion several key priorities that have been at the heart of our advocacy for years.

- Educational equity - Build an education system where each student receives the support they need. Break down barriers and improve policies, programs, and practices to make sure that differences in educational outcomes can no longer be predicted based on factors like race, ethnicity, and family income.
- Equitable funding - Allocate funding based on the diverse needs of students.
- Special education - Fully fund special education services and support inclusionary practices.
- Learning recovery - Invest in evidence-based strategies that accelerate learning and address missed learning opportunities and the long-term impacts of the pandemic.
- Learning conditions - Invest in creating the right conditions for learning. This includes nurturing student well-being and fostering a positive school climate and culture.
- Access to opportunities - Provide equitable access to relevant and engaging learning opportunities (e.g., advanced coursework, dual credit, dual language, graduation pathways, etc.)

Develop an annual legislative platform. Each year, the Board will adopt a legislative platform to elevate our top priorities for the Legislature’s consideration and to establish priorities for the Board to engage on during a given legislative session. The Board commits to strengthening our engagement with community partners in the development of our annual legislative platform.

High school graduation and learning standards

The Board establishes the minimum requirements for graduating from high school. Specifically, the Board writes rules for:

- Subject areas students should study to earn a high school diploma
- Earning high school credit
- The High School and Beyond Plan
- Graduation Pathway Options

In addition, the Board identifies the scores students must achieve on certain tests that help show their readiness for graduation. The Board may also propose new or revised state learning standards to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, influencing what students study throughout their K-12 education. In essence, the Board shapes what students learn and what students must accomplish to earn a high school diploma.

Key questions and initiatives for 2024-2028:

Build a framework for the future. As noted above, the Board has adopted the Profile of a Graduate, which outlines the important knowledge, skills, and abilities that we believe our students should develop over the course of their K-12 education. This adoption offers us an opportunity to assess whether our existing graduation requirements framework and learning standards adequately enable students to develop these essential skills. This assessment will help guide the development of a more effective framework for the future.

The Profile has already proven to be a helpful tool for identifying areas where our education system needs improvement. Many voices, including teachers, students, employers, and community partners, have pointed out that K-12 education doesn’t offer enough opportunities for students to develop all the skills mentioned in the Profile. Some specific areas that need more attention are technology and media literacy, computer science, financial literacy, fundamental life skills, and the study of diverse cultures and histories ([see related Board resolution](#)).

To ensure our students are well-prepared for the future, it’s crucial to address these gaps (and potentially others). However, we can’t simply add more requirements to what students already need to graduate. Instead, we need to take a comprehensive look at our graduation requirements and learning standards to thoughtfully create space for students to develop these essential skills while meeting high standards in core subject areas.

As part of this initiative, the Board will explore the following key questions:

- Alignment with the Profile of a Graduate: How well do the existing graduation requirements and learning standards align with the skills and abilities outlined in the Profile of a Graduate, and where are the gaps?

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- Integration of Skills: How can the framework effectively integrate skills needed to prepare students for the complex and rapidly evolving challenges of the future?
- Balance of Core and Elective Courses: How can the framework balance the need for a strong foundation in core subjects with the desire for students to explore subject areas and elective courses that align with their interests and career goals?
- Interdisciplinary Learning: To what extent should the framework encourage interdisciplinary learning and problem-solving, mirroring real-world challenges?
- Expanding Learning Horizons: How can the framework recognize student learning that happens outside traditional classrooms and beyond the traditional concepts of seat time and credits?
- Inclusivity and Equity: What strategies can be employed to ensure the revised framework promotes inclusivity and equity for all students, regardless of their background or abilities?
- Implications for Earlier Grade Levels: What impact might these changes have on the content and curriculum in earlier grade levels, and are there opportunities to introduce certain content at an earlier stage in a student's educational journey?
- Implementation Considerations: What is needed to facilitate a smooth transition to the new framework, taking into account critical implementation aspects such as resources, professional development, and realistic timelines?

The Board's approach to developing an improved graduation requirements framework for the future is grounded in meaningful stakeholder engagement and robust public involvement. To ensure the revised framework aligns with the diverse needs and expectations of the educational community, the Board is committed to gathering input from a wide array of stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, employers, and community members. Their insights will be pivotal in shaping the framework to be more relevant and responsive. Furthermore, the Board recognizes the importance of public engagement throughout the process. Mechanisms will be established to inform the public about the changes and provide opportunities for their input, ensuring transparency and community ownership in the development of the graduation requirements framework.

Create more opportunities for Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Mastery-based Learning. The Board is leading the effort to create a supportive policy environment for the implementation of Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Mastery-Based Learning (CRS MBL) within our K-12 education system. CRS MBL combines mastery-based learning, where students advance upon demonstrating mastery of learning standards, with a culturally responsive approach that values and celebrates each student's unique background and experiences ([see website for definitions](#)). CRS MBL has the potential to transform our K-12 education system by implementing evidence-based practices shown to close opportunity gaps.

Building upon previous work, we will continue to nurture the ongoing transition to CRS MBL. In 2021, the state launched a demonstration project, providing essential funding and professional learning opportunities to select schools embarking on the CRS MBL journey. This initiative was extended through the 2023-25 biennial budget. The inaugural cohort of 20 schools is already

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making strides in this transformative educational approach, and we will be onboarding a second cohort of 20 schools starting in December of 2023. We plan to submit a budget request in Fall 2024 for state funding in the 2025-27 biennium to support schools in Cohort 2 to continue for an additional two years in the project. As part of this request, we might also explore the possibility of adding a third cohort or addressing other emergent needs.

The Board has been evaluating the demonstration project from the outset and is set to submit a comprehensive report with recommendations to the Governor and education committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2025. This report will help shed light on potential obstacles, the necessary supports, early outcomes, and policy recommendations needed to facilitate the transition to CRS MBL. The findings from this evaluation will be pivotal in shaping the future of CRS MBL policy, providing insights into what constitutes quality CRS MBL, the timeframes required for successful implementation, and the crucial activities and resources the state, districts, and schools need to make this transition a triumph.

To support wider adoption of CRS MBL throughout the state, the Board is developing an extensive resource suite, accessible to all interested schools and districts. The resource suite will provide a range of useful tools, such as performance-based assessment templates, model rubrics with scoring criteria, model policies in collaboration with the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), best practices for High School and Beyond Plans, guidance for mastery transcripts, asynchronous professional development, training materials, and considerations for implementing CRS MBL in diverse educational settings. Our aim is to ensure that all schools and districts have access to the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively implement this transformative educational approach, enhancing learning opportunities for students across the state.

Improve the High School and Beyond Plan. The High School and Beyond Plan is a graduation requirement that involves a personalized process, starting in 7th grade and updated annually, to support students in setting and achieving academic and career goals. It includes components like identifying career and educational goals, creating a four-year course plan, providing information on financial aid, and is designed to help students transition from high school to their desired post-secondary pathways.

Recent legislation directs the Board to “develop recommendations on how the High School and Beyond Plan could be modified to further support student choice and flexibility in meeting graduation requirements and preparing for postsecondary education and training, including increasing access to mastery-based learning and mastery-based crediting opportunities” (E2SSB 5243). This report is due to the Governor and education committees of the Legislature by August 1, 2025. The Board anticipates a high level of interest in this project and is eager to collaborate with partners to develop useful recommendations that will enhance the High School and Beyond Plan for students.

Basic Education

The Board supports achievement of the “Goals of Basic Education” (RCW 28A.150.210). These goals are about giving all students the fundamental skills they need in subjects like reading, writing, math, science, and more, while also encouraging critical thinking, understanding technology, and how their education connects to their future. The Board ensures that school districts follow the “minimum instructional program of basic education” (RCW 28A.150.220), a set of rules to make sure students get the knowledge and skills they need to succeed after high school. Every school year, the Board checks with school districts to make sure they are planning to offer the required number of instructional hours and the required subjects to cover the state’s learning standards. In addition, the Board approves private schools operating in Washington, and approves and monitors districts wishing to authorize charter schools.

Key questions and initiatives for 2024-2028:

Create flexible options for educational delivery. Meeting the needs of diverse learners and supporting student-centered learning models may require different approaches to how we measure instructional time, fund schools, and deliver the required and encouraged educational offerings. The Board will identify changes needed to remove barriers and incentivize innovations that support student engagement and learning. This may include creating intentional and proactive policies that can replace certain waivers or better recognize new approaches to educational delivery.

Educational system health, accountability, and recognition

The Board sets accountability goals for the education system and consults with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to develop, maintain, and report on the state’s system for student assessment. The Board also establishes the index for school accountability (which combines information to show how schools are doing), metrics for measuring the overall health of the education system, and criteria for school and district improvement plans. Additionally, the Board recognizes and celebrates schools for enhancing student growth and achievement.

Key questions and initiatives for 2024-2028:

Broaden the school and district accountability system to include the conditions for learning. In 2021 the Board began work to design a new school, district, and [state accountability framework](#) to measure the essentials for learning to occur, such as resources and a healthy school climate, to better describe the quality of our learning environments and support continuous improvement in K-12 education.

A key aim of this work is to better align what we measure with the educational goals established in legislation (RCW 28A.150.210) and the best available evidence about how to achieve those goals effectively and equitably. The new model will provide tools that SBE and its partners at every level of the system can use to inform policies and practices for achieving educational goals, as well as to monitor the state’s progress by providing information about:

- the resources being provided at schools,

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- how students are experiencing learning, and
- students' progress toward more meaningful outcome measures at the building, district, and state levels.

This information will help policymakers and educators know how things are working and how well students are learning. Educators can use this information to identify what students need to have sufficient learning opportunities. We can use this information to find out if the K-12 system is operating equitably and effectively.

Specifically, these practices will:

- help the state support students to better meet basic K-12 education goals,
- ensure high expectations for each student and give them the opportunity to graduate from high school prepared for civic engagement, careers, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning,
- find and reduce opportunity gaps, and
- create a public school system that evolves and adapts to strengthen the educational achievement of all students.

Develop a more equitable school and district recognition system. The current school recognition system reflects a number of improvements over prior systems yet it still relies primarily on traditional educational outcome measures coming from state assessments in ELA and math. While these measures are important, they are not sufficient to measure how well a school is serving the community for the purposes of recognition. A revised recognition system would include community feedback and authentic evidence of student learning. In addition, information about what is working in successful schools would be shared so that others may learn from these examples and to inform policy. In collaboration with the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC), OSPI, and community partners, the Board will develop a revised recognition system that:

- considers the conditions for learning outlined in the revised accountability framework
- incorporates evidence of learning based on student work
- reflects community feedback, and
- honors schools and districts while also creating a forum to share their experiences and learning.

How we do our work

The State Board of Education (SBE) will authentically engage with students, families, and communities across the state in shaping education policy. We recognize that meaningful engagement goes beyond simply informing and consulting the public, and we are progressively changing the way we work to move toward a more collaborative approach, where we share decision-making power and partner with the community to design policies together. It is our responsibility to go beyond just listening to students, families, and community members. We must actively involve these groups in shaping policies that directly affect their lives. In this way, we collectively make the education system truly responsive to the needs and aspirations of all our learners. While we have made progress, we acknowledge that we have a long way to go, and we are grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow together with our community partners on this important journey.

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In this spirit, the Board aims to ensure that everyone's thoughts and opinions are considered because education affects us all. And, it's especially important to amplify the voices of people who haven't been well served by the education system. This includes students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, English-language learners, students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and students in foster care. By focusing on their experiences and the challenges our system presents, we can work to make the education system better for everyone.

The Board's efforts are bolstered by Governor Inslee's Executive Order ([EO 22-04](#)), which directs agencies to implement a Pro-Equity, Anti-Racism (PEAR) plan. These plans address the exclusion of Black, Indigenous, people of color, and other marginalized identities from the policy making process by creating a framework for centering their experiences and needs within an agency's work. SBE's PEAR plan gives us a guide for exploring equity and inclusion in our policies and practices alongside impacted communities as we collaborate on strategies to address their most pressing needs and concerns. To improve our equity, access, and inclusion as a board, we have identified the following focus areas:

- **Engage Effectively and Authentically.** Collaborate with community to ensure information is responsive to their needs and transparent and accessible to support improvement and advocacy.
- **Amplify Voices.** Promote voices from underserved communities to build strong policies centered on their experiences and needs.
- **Build Relationships.** Create mutually beneficial and sustaining relationships with community.

Measuring success

The Board will measure success in this plan with the help of:

- [System Health indicators to track the progress of our educational system](#), and;
- Metrics related to Board initiatives and values to track progress on the strategic plan. (The Board will work on developing these metrics during the window of time between adoption of the draft plan in December 2023 and adoption of the final plan in June 2024.)

About the Washington State Board of Education

The sixteen Governor-appointed and community-elected representatives make decisions about our state's graduation requirements, recognize schools for progress, and certify that each district offers the basic education programming outlined in law. SBE also approves private schools to make sure they are following laws meant to keep all kids safe. We represent diverse communities from across the state, and we seek to lift up more voices in creating an education system where each student receives what they need to thrive. The Board's shared beliefs serve as a foundation for their collaborative work to serve students and families in Washington:

- Schools and communities must believe in the brilliance of each student, and teaching and learning must be treated as asset-based endeavors. This means that students and educators develop knowledge and skills honoring the diverse academic and cultural strengths of all students in a learning community.
- Learning environments should be physically and psychologically safe. This means that relationships with and among students foster mutual respect, belonging, risk-taking, and joy.
- An equitable opportunity to learn is a civil right. This means each student deserves instruction based on their needs and interests and access to K-12 learning from competent and caring educators is necessary for all students to thrive.
- Instructional practice should challenge and support every student. This means that instruction is personalized to meet children where they are while fostering the skills of critical thinking and creative problem solving.
- All students must receive the supports needed to access relevant learning opportunities equitably. Schools are inclusive of all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, and provide the appropriate accommodations, scaffolding, and supports needed so that each student can learn, grow, and succeed in college, work, and life.
- Schools are part of the community and the community should be a part of the school. Schools are of and for all students, families, and communities. This means that community engagement is critical to understand and reflect all histories, identities, and experiences that exist in the school environment.
- Education can transform people and society. This means that each student must be seen for their whole self and supported to develop personally as well as academically. Therefore schools must support all students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive personally and academically in a democratic, multicultural society.
- Each student must see their identity reflected in the curriculum. Schools understand the historical legacy of schooling and seek to repair harm for groups that have been under or mis-served (e.g., students of color and students with disabilities). Schools should aim to adopt materials that represent all of their students' cultures. In addition, all students should challenge the status quo and develop the knowledge and skills needed to address societal problems and make the world a better place.
- Learning should be relevant, engaging, hands on, and student centered. This means that learning should be relevant inside and outside of the social and cultural context of the classroom. And students should see how academic content may be applied in the "real world."