

ESSENTIAL STANDARDS AND AASA

ESSENTIAL STANDARDS

Essential Standards are individual standards selected to receive a greater proportion of questions on the AASA exam beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. The AASA exam, administered in grades three through eight, is developed based on a standards blueprint approved by the State Board of Education that includes individual standards grouped into clusters and identifies an allocation of questions for each cluster. Identified **Essential Standards** will receive the maximum number of questions allowed by the standards blueprint. The state assessment will retain the same length and duration. ALL STANDARDS remain valid and subject to inclusion in each year's AASA.

AASA REPORTING

The AASA exam results will include a new report in which **Essential Standards** will be represented. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year identified Essential Standards, from the existing State Board of Education-approved standards for ELA and math, in grades three through eight will have a higher proportion of items on the statewide assessment, keeping within the current blueprint adopted by the State Board of Education. Each given year an Essential Standard Cluster, identified on the table, may or may not be reported, depending upon the final form.

TIMELINE

The Essential Standards go into effect for the 2025-2026 school year.

PLANNING

All standards, whether labeled essential or not, must be taught and are assessed. It is recommended that LEAs plan accordingly to ensure **Essential Standards** are taught to grade-level mastery.



BENEFITS

1. Increased Focus

ADE will release at the beginning of each year a list of reported clusters. This can guide teachers to increase focus teaching those standards to mastery within the cluster.

2. Increased Reporting

LEAs and Teachers will receive cluster level data.

3. No Curricular Changes Needed

Because we are staying within the currently adopted blueprint, existing scope and sequences as well as curriculum can all stay the same.



ACADEMIC STANDARDS ASSESSMENTS



[Essential Standards Website](https://essentialstandards.azed.gov)



K12standards@azed.gov



Testing@azed.gov