Washington State Learning Standards
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. **When the Superintendent of Public Instruction adopts student learning standards, are they required to be taught in school districts?**
   Yes, when the content area is named as a primary goal in the Basic Education Act. If a content area is not named as a primary goal, then the standards must be taught if and when the subject is offered.

2. **Which content areas are named as primary [goals in the Basic Education Act](#)?**
   Goals 1 and 2 are considered the primary goals:
   (1) *Read with comprehension, write effectively, and communicate successfully in a variety of ways and settings and with a variety of audiences;*
   (2) *Know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics; social, physical, and life sciences; civics and history, including different cultures and participation in representative government; geography; arts; and health and fitness; Goals 3 and 4 are:*
   (3) *Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate technology literacy and fluency as well as different experiences and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and*
   (4) *Understand the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.*

3. **What other content areas are named in the Basic Education Act?**
   Goals 3 and 4 specify that school districts must integrate technology literacy and fluency and understand the importance of work and finance. Washington learning standards that relate to these subjects include educational technology, computer science, and financial education.

4. **Will districts be required to teach educational technology, computer science, environment and sustainability education, and financial education standards?**
   Districts must implement the related learning standards in any stand-alone educational technology, computer science, environment and sustainability education, or financial education courses. Standards associated with content areas not named in goals 1 and 2 must be integrated "to the maximum extent possible" in other goal areas ([See RCW 28A.655.070](#)).

5. **Are districts required to teach content aligned to every standard in a given subject area?**
   Yes, when the content area is required or offered.

6. **What is the difference between Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and Learning Standards?**
   Nothing. Washington's 1993 Basic Education Act defines Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) as what "students need to know and be able to do". In recent years, Washington has shifted to using the overarching term "learning standards" instead of EALRs. All current learning standards are posted on the [Learning and Teaching page](#) of the OSPI website.

7. **How do grade-level outcomes (GLO) or expectations (GLE) differ from EALRs/learning standards? Are GLOs or GLEs required?**
   While each content area named in the primary basic education goals has learning standards, not every content area identifies "grade-level outcomes" or "grade-level expectations". For instance, social studies references grade-level expectations; science does not.

Washington State Learning Standards
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Outcomes are written at grade-level or by grade band, depending on the subject area, and may be labelled by different names, such as "Conceptual Category" (social studies). Regardless of their label, these elements of instruction are learning expectations that districts may consider in developing or selecting instructional materials. How districts implement grade-level outcomes or expectations is a matter of local control and should be determined by districts, school board, administration, and key staff.

8. **What is the relationship between Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Washington State K-12 Learning Standards in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA)?**
   Washington adopted the CCSS in 2011 as the state's K-12 learning standards in mathematics and ELA.

_____

Relevant RCWs specific to *all* standards:

28A.150.210: Identifies 4 basic education Goals; directs districts to "provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills essential to (accomplish the Goals)"

28A.150.220: Directs districts to provide instruction in the essential academic learning requirements

28A.655.070: Directs SPI [OSPI]to develop "essential academic learning requirements [EALRs] that identify the knowledge and skills all public school students need to know and be able to do based on the student learning Goals in RCW 28A.150.210" and periodically revise the EALRs; designates Goals one and two as primary; directs the SPI *to the maximum extent possible*, integrate Goal four and the knowledge and skill areas in the other Goals in the essential academic learning requirements.

Relevant RCW specific to *some* standards:

Financial Education
RCW 28A.300.469: Directs adoption of state financial education learning standards

RCW 28A.300.468: Directs districts to provide all students in grades 9-12 opportunity to access the financial education standards and to publicize the availability of financial education opportunities to students and their families. Encourages districts to grant credit toward high school graduation to students who successfully complete financial education courses.

RCW 28A.655.070: Directs SPI to integrate financial education skills and content knowledge into the state learning standards

Computer Science
SHB 1813: Directs adoption of computer science learning standards developed by a nationally recognized computer science education organization.

Educational Technology
RCW 28A.655.075: Directs SPI to develop technology literacy and fluency standards.

Environmental and Sustainability Education
WAC 392.410.115: Instruction about conservation, natural resources, and the environment shall be provided at all grade levels in an interdisciplinary manner through science, the social studies, the humanities, and other appropriate areas with an emphasis on solving the problems of human adaptation to the environment.