

## **Standards (minimum expectations) vs. curriculum (materials) vs. pedagogy (teaching methods)**

By law, the Utah State Board of Education must establish the standards in core subjects for public schools. This is an important distinction from the curriculum and the instructional methods. **Local schools and teachers control the curriculum and instruction.** The core standards do not dictate the curriculum or delivery of content. Utah's **core standards and the curricula are not the same.** The curriculum includes content, instructional elements, methods, pedagogy, materials and resources that are used to teach the high standards Utah has adopted. The standards help teachers organize and prepare for instruction just like building codes help an architect prepare a blueprint. Homes built using building standards or codes are not identical. They are built based on the individual needs and values of the owner but still use the code. The curricula used to implement the core standards vary according to district or charter and the individual needs of students. Locally-selected textbooks are used as tools in implementing the core. At a state level, research-based strategies and materials are recommended, not mandated, leaving the final instructional decisions to districts, charter schools, and classroom teachers. Local stakeholders will continue to innovate and make improvements to their curriculum over time. Teachers are not restricted to a specific grade level or timeline of standards. If children need to review or move slower, the teacher is in command. If students need to go faster or further the same applies.

Utah State Code **53A-1-402.6. Core curriculum standards:** “(1) In establishing minimum standards related to curriculum and instruction requirements under Section [53A-1-402](#), the State Board of Education shall, in consultation with local school boards, school superintendents, teachers, employers, and parents implement core curriculum standards which will enable students to, among other objectives:

- (a) communicate effectively, both verbally and through written communication;
- (b) apply mathematics; and
- (c) access, analyze, and apply information.”

and also spells out local school board control of materials: “(4) Local school boards shall design their school programs, that are supported by generally accepted scientific standards of evidence, to focus on the core curriculum standards with the expectation that each program will enhance or help achieve mastery of the core curriculum standards.

(5) Except as provided in Section [53A-13-101](#), each school may select instructional materials and methods of teaching, that are supported by generally accepted scientific standards of evidence, that it considers most appropriate to meet core curriculum standards.”

[http://le.utah.gov/code/TITLE53A/htm/53A01\\_040206.htm](http://le.utah.gov/code/TITLE53A/htm/53A01_040206.htm)