

# Middle Grades Content Area Standards

## Standards for Mathematics Teacher Candidates

What mathematical knowledge do teacher candidates need to know? Content knowledge that pre-service teachers learn in mathematics education must strongly emphasize “mathematical knowledge for teaching.” This includes an understanding of the ways learners think, knowledge of didactic representations, the ability to make pedagogical judgments about students’ questions and solutions to mathematical problems, and the ability to make judgments about the mathematical quality of instructional materials. The advanced mathematics in a traditional college mathematics program, while important, may be “remote from the core content of the K-12 curriculum.”<sup>1</sup> It is important that the mathematics curriculum of a teacher licensure program include content necessary for teacher licensure candidates to develop deep understanding of the mathematics that *they will teach*.

An accredited teacher licensure program provides bridges from traditional mathematics content to the mathematics knowledge for teaching. Ideally, such bridges are integrated in mathematics coursework. However, given that this is not always possible, then other special courses may need to be designed specifically for pre-service teachers. Elementary grades teachers must be provided with *substantial* opportunities to focus on real numbers, data analysis and probability, geometry and measurement, and algebra. Similar and possibly more extensive opportunities are recommended for middle grade teachers, focusing on real and imaginary numbers with an emphasis on rational numbers and proportional reasoning, geometry, algebra, and data analysis and probability. Secondary mathematics teachers need *substantial* opportunities to address the mathematical knowledge for teaching 9-12 school mathematics. The focus needs to address knowledge of the mathematical understandings and skills that students acquire in elementary and middle school and how they affect learning in high school. In addition secondary mathematics teachers need a deep understanding of the fundamental mathematical ideas in grades 9-12 mathematics curricula and strong technical skills for application of those ideas (e.g., Algebra I/II, Geometry).

<sup>1</sup>Online introduction to Ball, D.L., Hill, H.C., & Bass, H. (2005). Knowing mathematics for teaching: Who knows mathematics well enough to teach third grade, and how can we decide? *American Educator*. pp.14-22, 43-46. Retrieved April 19, 2008 from [http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american\\_educator/issues/fall2005/bond.htm](http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/fall2005/bond.htm)

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National Mathematics Advisory Panel. (2008). *Foundations for success: Final report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education

**Standard 1: Mathematics teacher candidates possess the mathematical knowledge needed to enable students to understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, and relationships among numbers and number systems and to enable students to understand meanings of operations and how they relate to one another. Candidates enable students to develop computational fluency and to make reasonable estimates. At the middle and secondary grade levels, teacher candidates need the mathematical knowledge to enable students to transfer their understanding of numbers and number operations to symbolic expressions involving variables. *Number sense, numeration, numerical operation, and algebraic thinking***

### **Middle School**

- Demonstrate conceptual understanding of rational numbers, facility in operating with rational numbers, and the ability to move flexibly among different representations of rational numbers (i.e. fractions, decimals, and percents).
- Understand and explain the distinctions among whole numbers, integers, rational numbers, and real numbers, and use properties (e.g. commutative, associative, distributive, and inverse) of these number systems.
- Understand and use mental computation and computational estimation.
- Understand and explain fundamental ideas of number theory (e.g. factors, multiples, divisibility, and primes) as they apply to middle school mathematics.
- Understand and extend the concepts of place value to make sense of large and small numbers, and use scientific notation.
- Demonstrate conceptual understanding of proportionality and facility in solving proportional reasoning problems, with an emphasis on multiplicative reasoning.

**Standard 2: Mathematics teacher candidates possess the mathematical knowledge needed to enable students to analyze the characteristics and properties of 2- and 3-dimensional geometric shapes; to develop mathematical arguments about geometric relationships; to understand units, processes of measure, and measurable attributes of objects; and to apply appropriate techniques, tools, and formulas to determine measurements. They enable students to develop the visualization, spatial reasoning, and geometric modeling to solve problems. Teacher candidates particularly at middle and secondary grade levels need the mathematical knowledge to enable students to use coordinate geometry in solving problems, to understand concepts of symmetry, and to apply transformations. *Spatial sense, measurement and geometry***

### **Middle School**

- Identify basic characteristics and properties of common 2- and 3-dimensional shapes.
- Visualize and solve problems involving 2- and 3-dimensional shapes.
- Make conjectures about geometric shapes and prove or disprove the conjectures.
- Understand and use rigid motions (i.e. reflections, rotations, and translations) in the plane.
- Understand how similar figures result from dilation and the role of proportional relationships in determining similarity.
- Connect geometry to other mathematical topics (e.g. algebra and Pythagorean Theorem) and to nature and art.

- Understand and derive appropriate techniques, tools, and formulas to determine measurements.
- Choose appropriate tools, units, and systems for measuring.

**Standard 3: Mathematics teacher candidates possess the mathematical knowledge needed to enable students to understand patterns, relations, and functions. This includes the use of algebraic symbols to represent and analyze mathematical situations, the use of mathematical models to represent and understand quantitative relationships, and the analysis of “change” in various contexts. *Patterns, relationships, and functions***

#### **Middle School**

- Understand the critical importance of the *concept* of variable and the use of variables in expressing functional relationships
- Understand and use algebra as a symbolic language; as a problem-solving tool; as generalized arithmetic; as a study of functions, relations, and variation; and as a way of modeling physical situations.
- Understand functions, including the abilities to read, interpret and create graphs, formulas (in closed and recursive forms), and tables for particular classes of functions.
- Understand linearity and how linear functions can illustrate proportional relationships.
- Recognize patterns of change associated with linear, quadratic, and exponential functions.
- Demonstrate algebraic skills and be able to provide rationales for common algebraic procedures.

**Standard 4: Mathematics teacher candidates possess the mathematical knowledge needed to enable students to formulate questions that can be addressed with data, along with the necessary skills to collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer those questions. They enable students to select and use appropriate statistical methods to analyze data, to understand and apply basic concepts of probability, and to develop and evaluate inferences and predictions that are based on data. *Data analysis, probability and statistics***

#### **Middle School**

- Engage in data investigations, including formulating questions and collecting data to answer questions.
- Understand and use a variety of ways to analyze variability in data distributions, including the use of summary statistics (e.g. measures of spread and center) and data representations (e.g. histograms, box plots, and scatter plots).
- Understand and apply basic concepts of experimental and theoretical probability.
- Understand principles of counting, including combinations, permutations and the Fundamental Counting Principle.
- Draw conclusions, generalizations and/or predictions that involve measures of uncertainty by applying basic concepts of probability.

**Standard 5: Mathematics teacher candidates possess the mathematical knowledge needed to enable students to develop skills in problem solving, making connections between various branches of mathematics, reasoning and proof, and communication and representation of mathematical ideas. [Mathematical process skills](#)**

#### **Middle School**

- Use problem solving to build new mathematical knowledge, apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve problems, and monitor and reflect on the process of mathematical problem solving.
- Use reasoning and proof to make and investigate mathematical conjectures, develop and evaluate mathematical arguments and proofs, and select and use various types of reasoning and methods of proof
- Communicate mathematical thinking coherently and clearly, analyze and evaluate mathematical thinking and strategies of others, and use the language of mathematics to express mathematical ideas precisely.
- Make connections by understanding how mathematics ideas interconnect and by applying mathematics in context outside of mathematics.
- Use representations to organize, record, and communicate mathematical ideas.

**Standard 6: Mathematics teacher candidates must be versed in the appropriate use of mathematical tools and manipulatives. [Mathematical tools](#)**

#### **Middle School**

- Understand appropriate use of technology (e.g. graphing calculators, computer algebra systems, dynamic drawing tools, spreadsheets, or statistical graphing software) to explore algebraic, geometric and data analysis concepts.
- Use appropriate math manipulatives (e.g., algebra tiles, computer virtual manipulatives, or computer applets) to clarify and develop mathematical concepts.