

Massachusetts Recommended PreK-12 Information Fluency Standards

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Massachusetts Recommended PreK-12 Information Fluency Standards
By Valerie Diggs, MSLA Standards Committee

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The creation of the document titled, "Massachusetts Recommended PreK-12 Information Fluency Standards" has been a work in progress for two years. It is hard to believe that this committee of four has been persistently and diligently at work on this project for that amount of time! Committee members Valerie Diggs, Chelmsford Public Schools; Kathy Dubrovsky, Hull High School; Carol Holley, Willow Hill School in Sudbury; and Deborah Cundey Owen, Wellesley High School, have met both physically and virtually over the course of two years to make this happen. Of course, this is in addition to their duties as Library Teachers as well as other professional responsibilities. I commend all of the members of this committee for their hard work and perseverance in making this document happen.

So, how did this all start? Preparing a document such as this was part of the MSLA Board's Standards Committee's Action Plan for two or three years prior to our actually tackling this particular goal. When the Standards Committee and the Curriculum Committee combined forces, it was natural to include all members on the committee to write these standards. Deborah Cundey Owen, Curriculum Committee chair, agreed to join forces, Kathy Dubrovsky was on board as Standards Committee co-chair, and with the addition of Carol Holley, member-at-large, our committee was ready to get to work. It seemed, at the time, to be an immense project.

Our first meeting was in January of 2005, at the Concord Free Library. At this meeting we set the parameters for our work that stayed with us throughout the entire process. Important to the committee was to investigate what other states across the nation had in place for information literacy standards, and if those standards were found on their respective department of education websites. We looked at these results at our first meeting, and found it surprising how many states actually did not have these standards visibly in place.

Our goal was, and still is, to work with the Massachusetts Department of Education in the creation of these standards and in the placement of the document on the "Current Curriculum Frameworks" page of the DOE's website. To that end, the Massachusetts Recommended PreK-12 Information Fluency Standards are modeled after the Recommended Instructional Technology Standards. It was felt by the committee that adoption by the DOE would be smoother if our document modeled the technology document. Adoption by the DOE would have to be in lieu of any monetary commitment to these standards. Thus, the appearance of the word "Recommended" in the title. Connie Louie, from the office of "Instructional Technology" at the DOE, advised both the MSLA Executive Board, and the committee writing these standards, that the DOE would never adopt an "unfunded mandate".

Many meetings later, and after much editing and rewriting, our document is now in "Draft" format and ready for our membership to see what we have been so hard at work on. As we have developed these standards, they have been forwarded to Susan Whittle from the office of "Curriculum Standards". Our goal is to meet with the office of Curriculum Standards during the month of February and discuss the necessary steps towards the adoption of the document by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

The standards/curriculum committee will continue to persevere, with the intended result of having a set of standards that are sanctioned by the DOE for the use of schools and school library teachers to improve the academic achievement of all students in the state of Massachusetts.

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