



THE FRANKLIN STANDARDS: ACTION SUGGESTIONS FOR STATE POLICYMAKERS

State policymakers (governors, state senators, and state representatives) play a crucial role in improving state science standards. They must work for reform, however, partly by means of state education departments, which, in most states, have been delegated authority over much state education policy. They also should work for reform in ways that respects the power of school districts to set their own curriculum.

We provide below a series of Action Suggestions for State Policymakers. We do so keenly aware that state policymakers know their state and their business better than we do. (Indeed, we would welcome suggestions from any state policymakers about how to refine our advice.) We hope, nevertheless, that these suggestions will be useful to policymakers who wish to introduce the *Franklin Standards* into their states—or to forward any sort of education reform.

PERSONNEL

- Governors should appoint Superintendents who are dedicated to the cause of science standards reform, and who will themselves appoint more reformers to the state education department. Governor Ron DeSantis (R-Florida) forwarded social studies standards reform by appointing Richard Corcoran as Education Commissioner, while the bipartisan Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education did likewise by appointing Dr. Cade Brumley as State Superintendent of Education.
- State legislators should communicate to governors that they would favor appointments of individuals who will press for science standards reform.
- Governors and state legislators should assemble lists of education reformers who will champion science standards reform, to be ready for appointment as Superintendents, and throughout the state education department. Education reformers who can serve on standards writing committees will be particularly useful.

SCIENCE STANDARDS REVISION

Some states have regular academic standards revision processes; others depend on legislative or gubernatorial initiative for academic standards revision.

- State policymakers should inform themselves about the particular standards revision process in their state. They should communicate with state education departments to discover what is the precise nature of the process in their state, so they may exert effective influence on the process of science standards revision.

- State policymakers should inform themselves about the state education department’s selection of committee members to determine the revision of science standards. State policymakers should make sure that these committees include champions of science education reform, and ideally champions of the *Franklin Standards*.
- State policymakers should inform themselves in each stage of the review process of the contents of draft revised science standards, keep their constituents informed about these contents, and encourage public participation and input. In 2021-2022, the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education accepted public comments throughout the social studies standard revision process. These comments from concerned citizens provided crucial support for improved social studies standards as Louisiana developed its “Freedom Framework” Content Standards. State policymakers should facilitate similar public comment in favor of the *Franklin Standards*.
- State policymakers should communicate their preference for the *Franklin Standards*, and similar reformed science standards that provide comprehensive content knowledge, integrate content knowledge with sustained attention to the scientific method and how to think scientifically, and educate students to act as informed and confident citizens and policymakers, in letters to education departments, in committees where they seek testimony from education department personnel, in public debate in the state legislature, and in public speeches. By all these means they should exert influence on state education departments, to encourage them to incorporate as much as possible of the *Franklin Standards* into the state’s revised science standards.
- State policymakers should use the *Franklin Standards* particularly as a counter-model to draft science standards, or existing science standards, which do not serve their state well. They can use the *Franklin Standards* to make critiques in detail of misguided standards—but the *Franklin Standards* can be more effective as a counter-model as a whole. State policymakers should use the *Franklin Standards* as a way to say, *Why don’t you start over entirely the process of drafting science standards?*
- State policymakers should inform grassroots activists of occasions for public testimony on behalf of the *Franklin Standards*. The National Association of Scholars and Freedom in Education will be glad to provide testimony on behalf of the *Franklin Standards*, but we know that such testimony is more effective when complemented by similar testimony from state citizens.
- State policymakers should be willing to initiate special means for science standards revision. In South Dakota, Governor Kristi Noem first [halted the regular social studies revision process and set aside the existing draft standards](#). She then [appointed a special commission](#), whose personnel largely came from outside South Dakota’s education establishment. Whenever it is an appropriate means to forward science standards reform, state policymakers should follow Governor Noem’s example.

OTHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SCIENCE MATERIALS AND REGULATIONS

State education departments produce a great deal of material and regulations tied to science standards, including model curricula, curriculum frameworks, licensure requirements, teacher training, resources, and assessments. State policymakers should follow up on work to reform science standards with work to ensure that all these science materials also have been reformed to align with the *Franklin Standards*.

SCIENCE STANDARDS LEGISLATION

We particularly recommend to state policymakers to consider the Franklin Standards Taskforce Act. The Franklin Standards Taskforce Act establishes a commission to draft science standards based on the *Franklin Standards*.

TEACHER TRAINING LEGISLATION

Science standards reform ultimately depends upon educating a body of science teachers who are equipped to teach American Birthright. State policymakers also should work to reform their public universities and their education schools, to ensure that they will produce this body of science teachers. We recommend that state policymakers consider several of the National Association of Scholars' model bills, from our [Model Education Licensure Code](#). These bills, which also align with the *Franklin Standards*, would forward teacher training reform at the level appropriate to statute law.

- [Education Licensure Certificate Act](#). The Education Licensure Certificate Act creates a new, simplified education licensure pathway, which requires students to take a number of undergraduate courses, focused on subject matter content.
- [Education Licensure Review Act](#). The Education Licensure Legislative Review Act requires all existing education licensure requirements, and all forthcoming revisions, to be submitted to the state legislature and the governor for review and possible veto.
- [Education Licensure Nondiscrimination Act](#). The Education Licensure Nondiscrimination Act depoliticizes all state education requirements, processes, and materials.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The *Franklin Standards* can and should be adopted at the school district level. State policymakers should inform school board members and school district administrators of the existence of the *Franklin Standards* and encourage them to adopt it.



PUBLICITY & COOPERATION WITH GRASSROOTS EFFORTS

We recommend that state policymakers work to publicize the *Franklin Standards* to their constituents, and to work with grassroots activists to inspire public efforts in favor of the *Franklin Standards*. We believe that joint efforts by policymakers and the public will be more effective in promoting science standards reform keyed around the *Franklin Standards*.



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