

The Franklin Standards: Taskforce Act



Introduction

State standards are the single most influential documents in America’s education system. State education departments use them to provide guidance to each public K-12 school district and charter school as they create their own courses. State standards also influence what textbook authors write and what assessment companies such as the College Board test for in their advanced placement examinations. They affect teacher training and they provide the framework for teachers’ individual lesson plans. Private schools and homeschool parents also keep an eye on state standards.

States should reform their science standards according to the model provided by *The Franklin Standards: Model K-12 Science Standards*, which provides comprehensive content knowledge, integrates its standards with sustained attention to the scientific method and how to think scientifically, and educates students act as informed and confident citizens and policymakers.

Different states will choose different means to adopt standards based on the *Franklin Standards*. Some will adopt them by means of their Education Department’s administrative procedures, some will adopt them by means of gubernatorial initiative—and some will adopt them by means of legislators enacting a state law.

Our model Franklin Standards Task Force Act provides a means for a state legislature to enact a version of the *Franklin Standards*, which is tailored to the state and which ensures legislative control over the process. The Act creates a science task force, appointed by the governor and the state legislature, to draft science standards based on the *Franklin Standards*—and which therefore can be adapted to suit the state’s own needs. The task force provides an opportunity for public input, its work product has to be approved by the education committees of both legislative houses, and every member of both legislative houses will have a chance to move amendments of the standard in detail. If the standards pass by concurrent resolution in both legislative chambers, then they are in effect for five years—at which point, they will be subject to review by a new task force.

We specify that the standards must receive the approval of the education committee in each legislative house. States which divide responsibility for K-12 education among multiple committees should adjust the model text to ensure that the task force reports its draft standards to every K-12 education committee.

The Franklin Standards Task Force Act allows state policymakers to move the power to draft state science standards from the state education departments, all too frequently opponents of science

standards reform, to a committee of their own choice—but it makes sure that the task force will be accountable to state policymakers, that a broad consensus of state policymakers approve the final standards, and that the public will have opportunities to provide input upon the standards. The use of concurrent resolution allows for the standards to be approved swiftly and efficiently, once they have received the approval of a consensus of policymakers.

We believe that the Act will allow education reformers who wish to use a legislative route to science standards reform a means that is flexible, accountable, and efficient.

Different states have different political complexions. This model bill is best suited for states where the governor and both houses of the legislature all are committed to education reform. Policymakers in each state should judge whether the political conditions in their states are appropriate for the introduction of the Act.

MODEL LEGISLATIVE TEXT

SECTION A

1. There is hereby created the **{State}** science standards task force. The task force shall consist of nine members, three each appointed by the governor, president of the senate, and speaker of the house of representatives.
2. The task force shall develop statewide academic standards in science for grades kindergarten through twelve based on the standards published in “The Franklin Standards: Model K-12 Science Standards,” a product of the National Association of Scholars and Freedom in Education, or their successor organizations.
3. The task force shall provide opportunities for public input when developing the standards, including the input of both of the following:
 - a. Parents of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade; and
 - b. Active **{State}** classroom teachers, other school personnel, and administrators with expertise in the science subject area.
4. The task force shall report its statewide science academic standards to **{the education committees}** of both the house of representatives and the senate not later than **{Month Day, Year}**.
 - a. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in **{the State Statutes}**, the standards reported to the full house of representatives and senate shall not be effective unless approved by the general assembly by concurrent resolution. Once so approved, the standards shall be in force for period of five school years beginning with the **{2024-2025}** school year.

- b. If **{the education committees}** of both the house of representatives and the senate fail to report the standards as submitted for consideration by the general assembly, or the general assembly fails to approve the standards as submitted by concurrent resolution within two months of the date of the initial report by the task force of its statewide science academic standards to **{the education committees}** of both the house of representatives and the senate, the task force shall reconvene and report revised standards to **{the education committees}**.
5. A task force similar to the one established in this section shall review the standards once every five years from the time of their effective date, and any revisions shall be subject to review by **{the education committees}** of both the house of representatives and the senate in the same manner as prescribed by this section.
6. The **{State education department}** shall revise all model curriculums, curricular frameworks, professional development materials, and state assessments for science to reflect the standards adopted under this section.
7. The task force created under Subsection (1) of this section ceases to exist once the science standards developed by that task force take effect under Subsection (4) (a) or (b) of this section.

SECTION B

If any provision of this chapter, or the application of any provision to any person or circumstance, is held to be invalid, the remainder of this chapter and the application of its provisions to any other person or circumstance shall not be affected thereby.