

## Using Academic Standards in Design Education

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### Bringing three key ideas together...

- a) your state's academic standards
  - b) the built environment as a catalyst (*stories, places*)
  - c) activities and/or experiences (*incorporating the design process*)
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1. **Demystify the Standards:** Spend some quality time learning the language of state and national academic standards. We found it helpful to rewrite the standards, paraphrasing the key idea for each one. Additionally, reading the standards within a single subject from kindergarten through high school, and then reading standards within a single grade level across all subjects is enormously useful for understanding the progression of student learning. Use this site to locate state and national academic standards: [www.education-world.com/standards](http://www.education-world.com/standards)
2. **Standards are a Powerful Development Tool:** Using standards in program development can be a powerful development tool and not a creativity-stifling burden. Standards help frame program development so you are not starting from a blank slate. Standards-based programming is an easier sell to teachers who are often required to defend the curriculum-worthiness of field trips, programming choices, and materials. Additionally, many funders look more favorably at standards-based programming.
3. **Audit Current Offerings:** Crosscheck your current programs against the standards to understand the level of alignment of your programming. It is easy to add to or fine-tune existing programming to more closely align with standards.
4. **Where is the Design Process Lurking in the Standards?:** In Illinois, it's 11B, in the science standards. Many states have added technology and design process sections to the science standards.
5. **Create a Template for Organizing Program Development:** We created a simple template for use in this workshop exercise. The key for program planning is to spell out how the design process will be used to help the learner solve a problem.
6. **Review Programs to Ensure Good Alignment:** Once you have designed innovative programs, go back and review alignment with the standards. Think about your programming as 3-part events: pre-visit, on-site, and post-visit-. That way you will be able to include, for example, language arts and fine/visual arts activities that you may not be able to complete on-site.