

Summary of Feedback and Changes in the K-8 Publishers' Criteria for Mathematics

The updated criteria incorporate a great deal of helpful feedback contributed by partner organizations and individual experts over the past six months, including practical feedback from districts working with the criteria. Some of the main themes in this feedback included:

Stating each criterion as carefully as possible. For example, a number of reviewers felt there was room for improvement in criterion #1, which had originally used the phrase “approximately three-quarters” to describe the time spent on major work. Some reviewers worried that three quarters of the time on major work would be too much time in some of the middle grades; others worried that three quarters of the time on major work would be too little time in the primary grades. The updated criterion is stated more carefully, in a way that attends to these and other concerns. A number of other criteria in the document also have small wording changes that clarify meaning, avoid unintended interpretations, and otherwise respond to expressed concerns. In addition, there are a number of specific wording changes in the framing text that respond to general and specific input about tone and meaning.

Providing additional information about special populations. Some reviewers wanted the criteria to include a great deal of information about meeting the needs of students in special populations. After consideration of the purpose of this document, it was decided to refer readers to external sources for this information. We will be working with our partners to ensure that organizations dedicated to special populations are working with the criteria and connecting their efforts to those of math educators implementing the Standards.

Additional concrete examples. Part of the process of clarifying included providing concrete examples in various places throughout the document. This occurs in both the discussion of the standards in Part I and in the criteria themselves in Part II.

Some additional changes of note include:

An additional sub-criterion for coherence. Sometimes a content standard is a compound statement, such as ‘Do X and do Y’. More intricate compound forms also exist. It is sometimes helpful or necessary to isolate a part of a compound standard, but not at the expense of the Standards as a whole. Implementation efforts should not break the standards into bits at the expense of focus, coherence, or rigor. Hence, an additional sub-criterion 6(c) expresses the need to “preserv[e] the focus, coherence, and rigor of the Standards even when targeting specific objectives.” This was already implied by the “Structure is the Standards” essay in Appendix A, but it is here made more explicit.

Quality indicators. The last quality indicator (which had mentioned page counts) attracted a number of criticisms relating to the differences between teaching in the U.S. and teaching in other countries; it was deleted. There is also a new quality indicator dealing with lesson structure, as the previous document’s silence on this topic had been interpreted as a recommendation that lessons have no structure beyond posing problems.

Sample rubric removed (to come). Many reviewers appreciated the concision of the sample rubric that was initially included with the Summer 2012 version. But others found the Yes/No frame to be impractical, and this impression has been strengthened by working with districts. A revised rubric tool is under development with district partners and will be available in the coming months. Please subscribe to updates at www.achievethecore.org for this and other news.