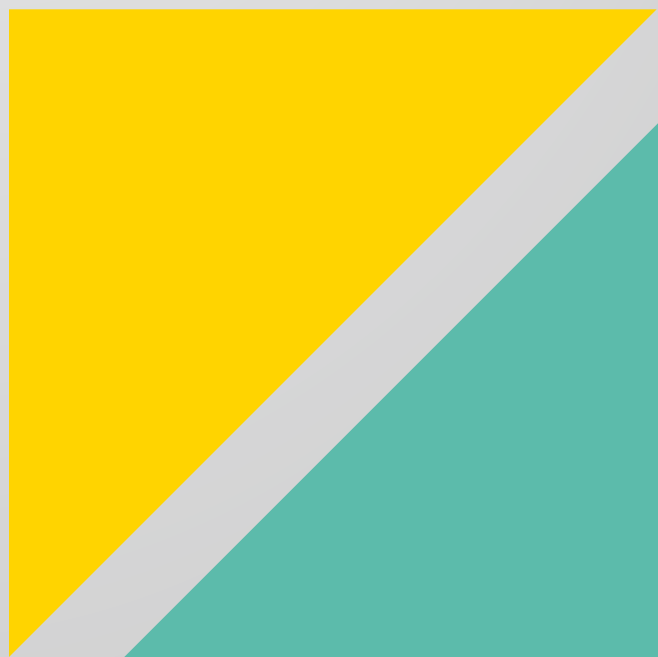




Frequently Asked Questions

Everything you need to know about the BNCC or Base Nacional Comum Curricular, the Brazilian National Learning Standards, and the Novo Ensino Médio (Novo EM), a new model for High School that provides a more flexible and purposeful learning



1.

The importance of the National Learning Standards and their creation

What are the National Learning Standards?

The National Learning Standards define the essential knowledge that all Brazilian students have the right to learn throughout their Basic Education. The Standards are provided for by law and are outlined in a technical document based on other curriculum documents, such as the National Curriculum Parameters. Public and private schools are mandated to use the Standards as a reference for the development of their curricula.

Why did Brazil decide to adopt National Learning Standards?

The Standards are provided for in the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, the 1996 Educational Guidelines and Standards Act, and the 2014 National Education Plan. Nation-wide standards defining common knowledge and learning goals for all students help to ensure equity (no matter which school they attend, all students will obtain the essential knowledge they need) and to make the educational system more coherent: teacher training, instructional materials, and external assessments now reflect what students learn in school—not the other way around. The Standards are not a curriculum, though. Therefore, the local particularities and diversity of each school district can and should be preserved in the districts' curricula, schools' pedagogical plans, and teachers' classroom practices.

Are the National Learning Standards mandatory?

The adoption of the National Learning Standards are mandatory by law. The Standards are provided for in the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, the Educational Guidelines and Standards Act, and the National Education Plan. All public and private schools are mandated to design their curricula based on the Standards.

What is the difference between the National Learning Standards and other curriculum guidelines?

Before the Standards, Brazil did not have a nation-wide, mandatory framework established as a State policy defining the knowledge all students have the right to learn and develop at school. The Standards are mandatory and outline the knowledge and skills to be developed from Early Childhood Education to High School, considering the specifics of each stage of schooling. The National Curriculum Guidelines and the National Curriculum Parameters, for example, served as a starting point for the creation of the Standards. However, the Standards go a step further: 1. They explain what the essential, common knowledge and skills are; 2. They establish that all students must obtain all-round education, i.e., cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural development; 3. They can serve as a reference to structure and consolidate a variety of other public policies that can help to improve the quality and equity of Brazilian education.

What is the difference between the National Learning Standards and a curriculum?

The Standards are not a curriculum. They are a mandatory reference for curriculum design. The school districts' curricula and schools' pedagogical plans must contain the knowledge, competencies, and skills outlined in the Standards, but they can and should go further: they include pedagogical methodologies and approaches, localize skills according to the context, and address local educational and cultural needs, such as inclusive, quilombola*, and Indigenous education.

*Quilombos are communities developed from settlements created by runaway enslaved people.

How were the National Learning Standards created?

The process of formulating and writing the Standards for Early Childhood Education, Elementary and Middle School took approximately three years and was based on collaborative work, respecting the educational laws in force in the country. Several entities representing the different segments involved with Basic Education were consulted: universities, schools, public education

departments, civil society entities, teachers, and education experts. The first version was launched in September 2015 and submitted to public consultation from October 2015 through March 2016. Over 12 million contributions were received during that period. In May 2016, a second version reflecting the conclusions of the public consultation was published and submitted to discussion among nine thousand teachers and school managers in seminars held in all Brazilian states by the Education Secretaries Council (Consed) and the Municipal School Managers Union (Undime), from June 23 through August 10, 2016. The third and final version was delivered by the Ministry of Education to the National Education Council (CNE) in April 2017. Subsequently, the CNE held five public hearings, one in each region of the country, where 283 contributions were heard and 235 documents with suggestions were received. The CNE then issued a Resolution making official the final version of the Standards for Early Childhood Education, Elementary and Middle School, which was approved by the Ministry of Education in December 2017. The third version of the Standards for High School was delivered to the CNE in April 2018 and approved in December of the same year.

Where can I read the National Learning Standards?

You can find the full document and other information about its creation and implementation on the Ministry of Education's portal.

What are the 10 General Competencies of the National Learning Standards?

The Standards are a set of 10 general competencies that must be developed throughout Basic Education. The competencies were defined based on the ethical, aesthetic, and political rights guaranteed by the National Curriculum Guidelines, as well as the knowledge, attitudes, and core values that students need to succeed in the 21st century society. The 10 competencies are a translation of what we call all-round education, which takes into account all aspects that children and young people should develop: intellectual, emotional, physical, social, cultural. The 10 competencies are outlined in the Standards' introduction and all grade- and subject-specific competencies and skills are based on them.

Will traditional disciplines disappear with the National Learning Standards?

No. In the Elementary and Middle School Standards, all current disciplines or subjects are maintained and broken down in areas of knowledge (Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Human Sciences, and Religious Education). In the High School Standards, the content is divided in areas, but these areas include competencies and skills related to all subjects. Each school district must design a curriculum breaking down such content in the way they consider most appropriate (which can be subjects) over the three High School years. Since Portuguese and Mathematics are mandatory by law and must be taught across all three years of High School, the Standards define skills for both subjects.

What is Movimento pela Base and how does it work?

We are a non-governmental, non-partisan group founded in 2013 that brings together entities, organizations, and people from several sectors of education.

We dedicate our efforts exclusively to the cause of the creation and implementation of the National Learning Standards and the New High School. We believe that the Standards are a critical State policy to ensure the right to learning and development to all Brazilian children and youth. We devote our work to the production of evidence and consensus-building to support the high-quality implementation of the Standards in public schools and to inform the public debate on the subject. We build connections among stakeholders for the creation of critical public policies—on curriculum design, teacher training, instructional materials, and assessments—with the purpose of making the educational system more coherent. When the Ministry of Education was formulating the Standards, we participated in the public consultations and contributed with critical analysis papers focusing on the quality of the document and potential points of consensus.

2.

New High School

Is the High School Exam going to change because of the National Learning Standards?

According to the Ministry of Education, the High School Exam framework will be adapted to the Standards, but there is still no deadline for this to happen, since the Standards and other changes under the New High School Act have not yet reached the classrooms. The new curricula should be implemented in high schools by 2023. Thus, the High School Exam aligned with the Standards should be implemented only after that date. Also, the frameworks of all external assessments, for all stages of schooling, will be aligned with the Standards. After all, the assessments need to reflect what students learn at school—as opposed to schools teaching the content assessed in external tests.

What are the flexible and the common parts of High School?

The New High School Act increased the total workload from 2,400 to 3,000 hours across the three years of High School. It also determines that, out of the 3,000 hours, 1,800 must be devoted to the skills contained in the Standards, which are common and mandatory for all students. In the remaining 1,200 hours—the so-called flexible part—students will be able to choose among several pathways, i.e., they will be able to choose subjects according to their interests. *Check out a series of videos explaining how the New High School works.*

What is the difference between the High School National Learning Standards and the High School Reform?

The Standards and the reform were established by two distinct processes. The High School Reform was instituted by a 2016 presidential decree (New High

School Act) and promotes a structural change in High School. It determines that High School curricula must have two parts: a common, mandatory part for all students, and an optional one, the so-called educational pathways, in which students can choose what to study to complete the total mandatory High School workload. The High School Standards defines the first part of the curriculum, i.e., the common, mandatory knowledge that all students are entitled to learn at school. Its design process was the same as the Early Childhood Education, Elementary and Middle School Standards. In other words, society was consulted about its content. [Check out a series of videos explaining how the New High School works.](#)

Why were the High School Standards created separately from the other grades?

In 2016, when the Standards for all Basic Education grade levels were in their second version, the High School reform took place. The New High School Act changed the structure of High School and the Standards needed to reflect these changes. To preserve the other parts of the Standards, a decision was made to wait and finish the High School portion later. The Early Childhood Education, Elementary and Middle School Standards were approved in December 2017, while the High School part was approved in December 2018. Nevertheless, the Standards are comprised of one single document governed by the same 10 general competencies. The National Learning Standards apply to Basic Education as a whole.

Why are the High School Standards not broken down in subjects?

According to the Ministry of Education, this arrangement was proposed to give greater flexibility and integration to the curriculum. The idea is that the 13 subjects that had previously been taught as fragments can now be taught in an integrated way, making learning more meaningful and creating synergy across skills and activities. States will have the flexibility to build curriculum arrangements best suited to their local contexts—including by breaking down the current model into disciplines.

3.

Implementation

When did the National Learning Standards come into effect?

According to the CNE/CP Resolution No. 2 of December 22, 2017 issued by the CNE, the Early Childhood Education, Elementary and Middle School Standards will become effective as of 2020. Throughout 2018 and 2019, public schools prepared themselves for the implementation by adapting their curricula to the Standards and beginning in-service teacher training. The High School Standards, on the other hand, were approved in December 2018 and their implementation in schools should start in 2021, according to the CNE/CP Resolution No. 4 of December 17, 2018. The state education departments have been working on the creation of their new curriculum framework since 2019, also taking into account the New High School educational pathways determined by Law No. 13415/2017, the New High School Act.

How will the National Learning Standards be implemented?

The implementation will take place in five fronts: (re)designing the school districts' curricula and schools' pedagogical plans, developing initial and in-service teacher training programs, reviewing instructional materials, and reviewing external assessments. All these elements should be rethought to reflect the knowledge all students have the right to learn at school so that the Standards can actually materialize in all classrooms. The states, in collaboration with the municipalities, have virtually finished (re)designing their curricula for Early Childhood Education, Elementary and Middle School (started in 2018), and are providing (in 2019) in-service teacher training programs and reviewing their pedagogical plans. The new curricula should be in effect as of 2020, according to CNE's regulations. The New High School curriculum (re)design process started in 2019.

How do the National Learning Standards relate to the collaborative model?

The implementation of the Standards is a collaboration effort between states and municipalities, which means that the implementation actions are spearheaded by the state and municipal education departments. All stakeholders can make better use of the resources—from a financial and technical standpoint—by sharing them, starting with curriculum design. When states and municipalities work together, there is a better chance that the curriculum will take into account all the diversity of the territory, and the school districts can share experiences and support each other in the process. Also, the collaborative model provides access to more resources, and that is particularly important in smaller towns.

How will my school and/or district implement the National Learning Standards?

Implementing the Standards is a lengthy process that involves multiple stages and fronts, and it mobilizes many people. For Early Childhood Education, Elementary and Middle School, the first step was taken in 2018, with the construction of each territory's curriculum framework, in a collaboration model between states and municipalities. The next step is in-service teacher training and reviewing schools' pedagogical plans to adapt them to the new curricula. These actions are taking place across all states under the coordination of the ProBNCC, a program that supports the Ministry of Education in its implementations efforts, in partnership with the Education Secretaries Council (Consed) and the Municipal School Managers Union (Undime). Each state has two representatives, one from Consed and one from Undime, who lead implementation actions and activities. Contact your state's ProBNCC team to find out how to participate in the collaborative implementation actions.

What changes in my discipline/area of knowledge with the National Learning Standards?

Check out the videos from the 'Standards in Depth' series, which explains the main changes that the document proposes for each discipline of Elementary and Middle Education and for Early Childhood Education. And click here to see the main advances achieved by the Standards in these stages.

How can teachers and schools get ready?

First, it is important to learn more about how the collaborative implementation process is happening in your state. To know more about it, please contact the ProBNCC team, which has representatives from the Education Secretaries Council (Consed) and the Municipal School Managers Union (Undime). It is important to become familiar with the Standards text and to know the new curriculum in your region. To do so, you can organize study groups or meetings in the D-Day format. There are many high-quality materials that can help you in your studies, such as the guide for reviewing pedagogical plans, a Training Pathway to train teachers in service, among others. Check out some useful resources in the links below:

- *Reviewing schools' pedagogical plans - guide and videos for school managers.*
- *Training Pathway - teacher training framework on the Standards and new curricula.*
- *Implementation of all-round development - document that provides principles and guidelines for the implementation of all-round development in public policies, school districts, and schools.*
- *Standards in Depth - series of videos explaining the main changes in each discipline and Early Childhood Education.*
- *Standards Guide - series of guides prepared by Nova Escola, by discipline, that help to understand, translate, and explain the Standards.*

- General Competencies in the curriculum - series of 10 videos, one for each competency, explaining how to incorporate them into curricula and pedagogical practices.

Will teachers receive in-service training on the National Learning Standards?

Yes. In-service teacher training is considered one of the critical fronts for the implementation of the Standards and is already happening in all states for Early Childhood Education, Elementary and Middle School. Each state must organize its training program in collaboration with the municipalities and with support from the Ministry of Education.

Will my municipality need to create a new curriculum?

All public schools ran by the states and municipalities will need to align their curriculum documents with the National Learning Standards. Municipalities, however, do not have to start from scratch. They can use the state curriculum framework created in collaboration with the municipalities and, if necessary, adapt it to the local context through complementary curriculum documents. Here are some suggestions of how to do it:

1. **Creating a complementary background document**, with specific guidelines for adaptation/implementation in the municipal school district;
2. **Writing your own introductory text**, listing the core principles to be considered in the local context;
3. **Adding a column in the learning and development framework** proposed by the state to contextualize the learning goals;
4. **Producing pedagogical guidelines specifically for your municipality**, with proposed activities, pedagogical methodologies, and ways to organize the school space and schedule.