FAQs about Ohio’s Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics (rev. 2017)

BACKGROUND
What are learning standards?
Learning standards tell schools what skills and knowledge their students should have in each subject and grade to be on track for success in college or careers once they graduate.

What is a curriculum?
Standards are different from curriculum. In Ohio, local school districts choose their own curriculum – which is how schools teach and what materials they use. For example, one English language arts standard describes that students should show understanding of key ideas and details in text they have read. Local school districts select which materials their students will read to build these skills.

Why and how did we revise the standards?
Ohio’s Learning Standards for mathematics, English language arts, science and social studies were adopted more than six years ago. Starting with mathematics and English language arts, we began a process in 2016 to review all the standards and update them where necessary, based on teachers’ experience in using them.

LEARNING ABOUT THE 2017 REVISED STANDARDS
What has changed for English language arts and mathematics standards?
The State Board of Education approved improvements to these standards in February 2017 following a year-long review process. Ohio teachers helped make the intent of specific standards more clear. At times, teachers recommended changing the grade level when students will learn certain skills or information.

How extensive are the changes school districts need to make?
This effort was not a major re-write. We fulfilled the purpose of fine-tuning the standards, making what is already working well even better.

Districts will want to begin reviewing, but not replacing, their existing local curricula, instructional plans and resources to see what modifications they might need to make.

When should districts use the revised standards?
We encourage educators to begin learning about and using the revised standards. They can review the standards comparison resources that display the 2010 and 2017 standards side by side. The Department also is working on additional professional development suggestions for learning about the standards.

We also have posted a suggested timeline of activities that calls for districts to develop a transition plan to guide their efforts this year and next. The goal should be to move toward full implementation of the revised standards into local curricula.

What about Ohio’s State Tests?
Ohio’s Learning Standards will continue to serve as the basis for Ohio’s State Tests. In 2018-2019, these tests will begin assessing the knowledge and skills specified in the revised standards.
What is an example of a math revision?
Elementary school teachers said they believe schools should teach money concepts early and for several grades. In fact, many said they already include money in their instruction. Although Ohio’s model curriculum already suggests teaching about money in many primary grades, the standards language previously only included money concepts in second grade. Based on teachers’ feedback, the revised standards now specify a learning progression for money concepts from kindergarten through grade 4.

What is an example of an English language arts revision?
The advisory committee charged the working groups to draw a connection between determining a theme and writing a summary in the Reading Literature anchor standards for kindergarten through grade 12. The working group revised the standard below with the deletion and addition noted:

Revised standard CCRA.R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas provide a summary or thorough analysis of the text, including the appropriate components.

To assist teachers with this revised standard, the Department posted a resource here that describes how to write various types of summaries.

STANDARDS REVISION PROCESS
How was the public involved with standards revision?
As we begin looking at each area of Ohio’s Learning Standards, the Ohio Department of Education asks for opinions through an online survey. During a later survey, members of the public have the chance to review and comment on proposed updates. We received thousands of comments about mathematics and English language arts standards from educators and members of the public through surveys in spring and summer 2016.

Who wrote the standards revisions for English language arts and mathematics?
The Department invited many educators with knowledge of the standards to get involved. Representatives of statewide education associations, who served on advisory committees, read all survey suggestions and identified standards needing revision. Working groups of teachers then drafted the revisions. As a final step, the State Board of Education reviewed and approved the updates.