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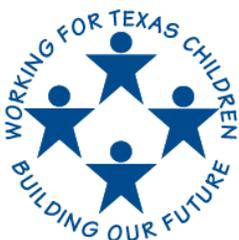
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Recap of the ELAR/SLAR/ESOL Standards Revision Process – Final Adoption 2017

The development process for this set of ELAR/SLAR/ESOL standards is one of the most extensive and inclusive we have ever participated in at the State Board of Education (SBOE).

It is helpful to walk through all the collaboration the SBOE has encouraged from educators for two years now.

The process started early in 2015 with members on the SBOE, including Barbara Cargill, the Board chair at the time, and Pat Hardy, meeting with the eight literacy groups that represent English and Spanish Language Arts and Reading professionals.

The [Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts \(TCTELA\)](#) contracted with [Texas A&M University](#) to conduct a professional survey to gather feedback on our current standards and their use in the classroom. Although we typically begin the TEKS revision process with a review by SBOE-appointed experts, we started this standards revision process differently. We requested that the state literacy groups' leadership examine our current standards as well as the TCTELA/Texas A&M survey results (involving 1128 teachers) and give us any recommendations for the SBOE-appointed review committees to consider. The literacy groups' leadership recommended a starting framework that was subsequently adopted by the review committees to begin their work. The intention of the new framework is to present standards in a more integrated way to encourage the development of instructional programs that (1) emphasize the connections across different facets of literary development (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), (2) foster critical thinking, and (3) emphasize application rather than isolated or memorized content and skills. One primary goal in this revision process has been to create standards that support the literacy development and progress necessary for students to do on-grade-level work in language arts and reading.

Major findings from the Texas A&M survey:

- Teachers find the current ELAR TEKS to be inaccessible because they are “jargon-laden, requiring extensive teacher training in order to understand what certain standards are asking students to be able to do” (p. 32). The survey even revealed that there are differences in interpretation within individual schools and districts. “With this in mind, the current revisions should yield clear and concise standards that are readily accessible and easily interpreted by teachers for the purpose of planning and delivering meaningful instruction.
- Furthermore, professional development should be offered to scaffold teachers' interpretation and implementation of the revised standards...” (p. 37).

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The review committees of teachers, instructional specialists and coaches, curriculum directors, and coordinators started on revising the standards in the fall of 2015 (Committees: [ELAR](#), [SLAR](#), [ESOL](#)).

In January, 2016, TCTELA began hosting an online forum (open to anyone, including the general public, who wished to participate) moderated by Victoria Young (former TEA Director of Reading, Writing, and Social Studies Assessments; currently a member of the NAEP steering committees for both writing and reading) that engaged over 1300 educators using key general questions as well as grade-level questions to be discussed among the professionals. This forum added invaluable feedback to the SBOE, the review committees, and our appointed experts all during our standards development process.

The appointed review committees came together over four meetings, with each meeting lasting three to four days, evaluating feedback and working on the standards. TEA staff also held several webinars for committees to continue their work. The committees did a great job poring through feedback and getting their final draft recommendations to the Board in July 2016.

When the work of the review committees finished last summer, the Board began to send out those committee recommendations to our districts for feedback. As is our usual process, our appointed experts weighed in individually as well. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (with the encouragement of the SBOE) also put together a committee to partner with the SBOE to focus on feedback regarding the alignment of the draft TEKS with college and career readiness standards. The TCTELA forum again hosted discussions among professionals and the general public to give us their final recommendations.

Based on the tremendous amount of feedback received, it was clear that the committees' draft recommendations needed some additional examination and work to be ready for first reading by the Board.

Below are feedback examples provided at the September 2016 meeting from two key groups:

THECB panel major recommendations:

- in the student expectations, ensure progressive increases to higher orders of thinking through all grade levels;
- improve alignment to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards;
- include relevant TEKS in the other content areas in order to ensure the teaching of critical reading and analytic writing skills across the curriculum, notably in science, history, and social studies;
- simplify and clarify the language being used in the TEKS, to avoid ambiguity; and
- develop in students an integrated sense of reading, writing, speaking, and listening by integrating the rich content of the knowledge and skills statements into the student expectations in the TEKS.

The TCTELA forum summary of recommendations:

- 62% (151) of the recommended changes focused on the need for clarity
- 65 recommended changes related to alignment
- 21 recommended changes related to developmental appropriateness
- 6 recommendations came from a fourth category that simply had to do with grammatical or mechanical changes

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In response to feedback submitted and in recognition that any additional funding needed for further work would be quite limited, the Board decided to request an extension of work by our appointed experts to consider all the feedback, take a final look at the draft and put together their recommendations to ready the draft for first reading. Our experts had been with us from the start: reviewing the current TEKS, working with the review committees throughout the process and reviewing the committees' draft recommendations. The Board decided they were well-positioned to carry out this extra task. Six of the eight appointed experts committed to help with this extended effort ([ELAR Experts](#), [SLAR/ESOL Experts](#)).

[The experts' final recommendations](#), built upon the SBOE committees' recommendations and in response to feedback received, were posted in mid-December ready for the Board to consider for first reading. Again, these were dispersed widely to the field for additional scrutiny and any further recommendations from educators. Feedback was also solicited to inform the Board on whether the standards could reasonably be taught before state testing or before the end of the year, as applicable. We received a good deal of additional teacher feedback that was included in our deliberations at the February Board meeting.

The Board decided to move forward and separate the standards into K-8, passed on first reading February 3rd, and English I-IV, to be considered for first reading at the April meeting.

Next Steps:

- Approx. Feb 20th – TEA staff will be posting the updated vertical alignments as amended
- April meeting - 2nd reading and final adoption K-8th standards, 1st reading English I-IV
- June meeting – 2nd reading and final adoption English I-IV
- Proclamations - 2019 (K-8th or K-5th) and 2020 (Eng I-IV or 6th-Eng IV) – PLEASE NOTE that both proclamations are in the same biennium. As was shared at Mid-Winter, careful planning is required for IMA funding. The Board has had limited or no call for instructional materials in proclamation years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

A big thank you goes out to those professionals who were on the appointed review committees. Without them we would not be looking at the quality of standards in the draft we have before the Board.

It is my hope that when passed, these curriculum standards are the very best in the country for English and Spanish Language Arts and Reading and English as a Second Language. Because of the help of so many, I believe they will be.

Many districts have contributed much staff time toward this work. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for partnering with the State Board of Education on these critical standards for our children's futures.



Donna Bahorich
Chair
State Board of Education