

**Public Comments to the State Board of Education**  
**July 15, 2015**  
**Comments and Joint Statement Submitted on Behalf of the**  
Coalition of English and Reading Supervisors of Texas (CREST)  
National Writing Project of Texas (NWPT)  
Texas Association of Bilingual Education (TABE)  
Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading (TAIR)  
Texas Association of Literacy Educators (TALE)  
Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA)  
Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (TCTELA)  
Texas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (TASCD)

**I. Speaker #1 Valerie Taylor (TCTELA)**

*Rationale-Why leaders from these organizations came together.*

The process of review for ELA/R and SLA/R comes at a critical period in public education in Texas. In today's world of global competition for college acceptance and entry-level jobs in their chosen careers, our students require in-depth knowledge and skills to be fully prepared to compete and succeed. National and international student achievement comparisons (TIMSS, PISA, NAEP, SAT, ACT, etc.) tell us that our students—while showing progress in some areas—are not at the level of achievement that ensures they are fully prepared to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century world they will encounter. To succeed in this world, our students must have a solid foundation in literacy skills and habits necessary to succeed in school, college, career, and life.

It is in the context of these critical issues that representatives from literacy, curriculum, and leadership organizations come before you today to provide comment. We are pleased to provide testimony consecutively as our comments are inter-connected and sequential.

We believe that profound, lasting learning occurs when students have multiple opportunities in meaningful experiences integrating critical competencies (digital and future-ready skills) and content knowledge essential for college and career readiness. The sheer number of standards creates a significant impediment to profound learning (as has been recognized in recent proposed legislation). Therefore, we believe the development of high priority learning standards in ELA/R and SLA/R is essential.

High-priority learning standards provide focus on the competencies, content knowledge, and skills essential for student success in a globally competitive environment. These standards provide an organizing framework empowering all students to achieve and demonstrate profound learning. High-priority learning standards in literacy are:

- Reflective of current research in the area of literacy and college and career readiness (TX-CCRS, ACT, SAT, AP, IB, etc.)
- Reflective of national and competitive international standards
- Inclusive of the essential knowledge and processes of literacy in English and Spanish
- Manageable in number
- Related within and across grade levels

## **II. Speaker #2 Anne Marie Trammell (CREST)**

*Process-How the organizations came together and what we recommend.*

During the past several months, leaders of eight professional organizations came together to examine these issues and to provide testimony before the Board today. Input was gathered from members of our organizations regarding improvement of the ELA/R and SLA/R standards. Key findings include:

- The inordinately high number of standards makes it difficult for teachers to provide students with ample opportunity for depth and complexity.
- Reading, Writing, Thinking, Speaking, and Listening are not isolated processes; they are interconnected (e.g., in the area of digital literacy, skills are interconnected as a student must learn to write in that particular format as well as be able to read a writing sample and determine it was written in a digital format.)
- The *reading comprehension process skills* (as shown in TEA’s Figure 19), added after the last ELA/R TEKS revision was complete, need to be woven into the actual ELA/R standards during the revision process that is about to begin.
- A realization that literacies have a (interconnectedness) relationship not currently represented in the TEKS.
- This principle of interconnected literacy knowledge and skills will better prepare students to be college and career ready.

These key ideas were used as the basis of a proposed “literacy framework” that was developed by leaders of our organizations for consideration by the State Board of Education and in support of your work.

## **III. Speaker #3 Patricia Durham (TALE)**

- *Product-The proposed literacy framework.*

The framework presented to the SBOE for consideration (included in your materials as a handout labeled “ELA Organizations’ Recommendations for TEKS Framework) represents a model for what interconnected literacies could look like as standards. We believe this framework is a strong tool for preparing students to be college-and career-ready. There

are a few key considerations to be aware of regarding how the proposed literacy framework was designed.

- We used the TEKS as a starting point and included the same language in the proposed strands. This framework was *not* derived from the Common Core or any other set of standards. It *is* derived from the current TEKS in recognition of the key factors we have previously noted (over-burdensome number of TEKS, the need for interconnectedness, lack of college- and career-readiness focus).
- The framework extends developing literacies through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - Example: early literacies- phonics, phonemic awareness, word study.
  - Examples: extending developing literacies for navigating the complexity of the text.
- Where “Figure 19” currently resides outside, or separate from the TEKS, we have suggested a way to bring these comprehension process skills back into the TEKS by integrating them into the strands.
- The proposed framework supports and aligns with current state assessments, and reflects rigorous college- and career-ready literacy that can best be demonstrated through multiple, varied, and more authentic assessment of learning.
  - Example: Strands integrate genres through a multiple genre study as presented in STAAR, but recognize the use of various, more authentic, performance-based literacy assessment at the school, district, and state level to reflect real-world literacy practices and challenges.

#### **Speaker 4: Dr. Denise Collier (TASA and TASC)**

##### *Closure-Final summary*

To succeed in this world, our students must have a solid foundation in literacy skills and habits necessary to succeed in school, college, career, and life. We believe that to better achieve the critical goal of college- and career-ready literacy, the revised ELA/R and SLA/R essential knowledge and skills should:

1. Prioritize and focus on what matters most.
  - Current ELA/R and SLA/R TEKS should be coalesced into fewer standards to ensure deep mastery of essential content from grade to grade in consideration of the recursive nature of literacy across grade level bands.
2. Content, thinking, and skills all matter when it comes to standards design.
  - In ELA/R and SLA/R, this means that standards design requires the integration of the literacy concepts, thinking, and skills.
3. Align standards with best evidence on college and career readiness.
  - In ELA/R and SLA/R this means that design requires the integration of future-ready

skills that are backwards mapped from college- and career –ready standards, resulting in a K-12 progression toward college- and career-ready literacy.

4. Recognize that standards design influences assessment design, assessment design influences instruction, and instructional decisions determine the level and type of learning opportunities provided to students.

- In ELA/R and SLA/R this means that standards design supports the use of various, more authentic, performance-based literacy assessment at the school, district, and state level to reflect real-world literacy practices and challenges.

Leaders of the organizations represented today request that members of the State Board of Education, the Texas Education Agency staff, the TEKS review committees and expert reviewers consider the concept of high-priority learning standards as guiding principles in the revision and development of ELA/R and SLA/R standards. Finally, we offer our support in working with you in the revision process, as appropriate.