

# Oklahoma Business Focus Group Oklahoma Academic Standards

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**October 8, 2015**

## **Business Focus Group Session - Business Focus Group Quotes**

“Continue to involve diverse groups/constituencies as implementation occurs...”

“Curriculum writing and turning the standards into real world skills will be the most important task.”

“Emphasize real-world applicability throughout standards...”

“Continue business focus groups as implementation occurs.”

“There are passionate educators behind this project.”

“We all want Oklahoma to improve K-12 education.”

“This focus group is a sincere effort at seeking input and value.”

“The group behind these standards clearly want to adequately prepare our students for the workforce or employment.”

“The group at the SDE is competent and thoughtful.”

“This process is doing a great job putting a large project together taking into account many stakeholders.”

“I love the approach to empower teachers instead of over-regulating them.”

“Make everything match! It was difficult to compare ELA vs. Math due to mismatched templates.”

“Love the progress and would love to participate more.”

“The standards need to focus on communication and problem solving skills.”

“I love the intentional process that was followed to get to the new standards. I think the communication to the public will be critical.”

“It’s obvious that a variety of feedback has been solicited.”

“It’s important to know that small districts are being heard.”

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“What do we need to do as a community to get an increase of pay for the teachers?”

“I felt good about the people working on this process. I feel good about the team trying to include so many diverse perspectives, and I’m happy that things are being presented in a way that is easily understood.”

“The writers are looking to make education relevant to real-world needs.”

### *Questions from the Business Leaders during the Focus Group Session*

1. Where are we as a state on the NAEP?
2. What is the benchmark that we are chasing (on the NAEP)?
3. Where are we (as the State of Oklahoma)?
4. How are our subgroups (various populations) doing as compared to the total population (of students tested)?
5. Does it feel like we are holding back the talented kids?
6. What is the tipping point? What does the data show us in terms of if a student doesn’t get this grade and/or skill? Is it 3<sup>rd</sup> grade? Are we looking at the data, can we tell?
7. From my experience, when looking at junior high kids who have come from small, rural schools they don’t seem to have as strong of a foundation in skills as kids from larger schools – are you taking that into consideration as you build this?
8. What is the actual process, what is the expectations for teachers to follow this?
9. You talked about eliminating duplication – was that the goal to have no duplication (in math standards)?
10. Math teachers need to slow down to make sure students know – harder and faster is not always better – does this slow things down?
11. Talking about skipping ahead (skipping grades in math) that the student may have missed a foundational skill – how do you address students who want to get to advanced math in high school without skipping a grade in middle/junior high?
12. How do you avoid kids skipping grades because they are smart – but miss scores on the ACT because they haven’t had that math since 7<sup>th</sup> grade? Does this (the standards) address that?
13. You seem to understand the employability issues of the business community but how do we know that connectivity to the workplace – will happen at the school level?

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14. Bringing a business perspective is good – a cross functional team is always better in business to make sure we have a lots of input – Do superintendents have the leadership and/or connections to develop cross functional teams to bring these concepts to the teacher level?
15. Related to the standards and employers - Is there a connection to electronics and these standards? I need employees who can figure out the math, develop the spreadsheet and need PowerPoints for presentations. Do you have it?
16. Is there equity with technology (at the schools)?
17. Is there an area in here that focuses on personal finance skills? What is it benchmarked against?
18. How do the teachers stay up-to-date on the technology issues while they are teaching?
19. Do schools partner with outside organization on STEM projects?
20. Are the applications connected to the standards going to teach concepts like how to count back change? We are having a hard time finding people with that skill.
21. How do you balance the flexibility of teachers during implementation? How do you know that the teachers will be ready and/or prepared without more of a directive?