

Comprehensive Review of Standards Grades First through Fourth

Overall:

I reviewed the Fordham Report on Oklahoma’s 2010 standards and the 2010 OK curriculum document itself. I do not understand why Oklahoma has departing so dramatically from this document. The OK 2010 document had a solid foundation but needed a few adjustments to add rigor. I have provided a list of observations and suggestions for the 2015 Academic Standards for ELA Document.

- The format and organization of the document is difficult to read and process.
- The use of different colors highlighting text is distracting to the reader.
- The categories and subcategories are confusing. This will be a challenging document for teachers to understand and use, particularly those early in their career. It is difficult to understand the essential knowledge and overarching understandings at each grade level.
- There is an overemphasis on fiction. Specific non-fiction skills and knowledge have not been included. (For example: the direct teaching of text features such as pictures, headings and charts)
- Consider writing separate standards for Fiction and Nonfiction. This will allow for standards that are specific and measurable. For example, “Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.” (Massachusetts, 2011)
- There is an absence of specific genres listed. Massachusetts has listed specific genres at each grade level. (Example: Identify the characteristics shared by folktales and fairytales). In a companion document, they list specific titles at each genre and each grade level so that the teacher can see a growth progression of skills and rigor. (For example: Literacy: Over in the Meadow (K), Mr. Popper’s Penguins (1), Who Has seen the Wind? (2-3), etc.)
- The standards are numbered, but the knowledge under each standard does not have a system of reference (no numbers or letters to identify individual lines). This will make it difficult for teachers as the work and discuss specific standards.
- The attempt to align Reading, Writing and Speaking under each Standard creates overlap of information and seems forced, and at times doesn’t align. Consider using this document as a supplement/appendix to the original framework to support the alignment between Reading/Writing/Language. Create a framework that clusters Reading, Writing and Oral Language standards in order to build a instructional understanding of the Big ideas and essential understandings. The supplemental document might look something like this:

Standard 1: Speaking and Listening		
Students will develop and apply effective communication skills through speaking and active listening.		
Reading	Writing	Listening/speaking
Students will ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.	Students will generate questions about a text.	Students will participate in collaborative conversations about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

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First Grade Standards:

Where Kindergarten is focused on developing oral language and exploring concepts about print, first Grade ELA centers around the development knowledge about how the written page is constructed and an understanding that print has meaning. Students should engage in learning experiences that build on how written language and visual features work together to communicate the author's message. Children learn that through meaning, language and text structures they are able to understand the message of the author.

- Oral Language Standard Observations:
 - Research and our knowledge of primary learners point to a need to build and develop oral language with targeted and measurable standards.
 - Readers must have acquired oral language in order to read more complicated text structures. For example, in order to read, "First we were scared, but then we saw the dog." The reader must be able to speak orally using the same structure. Students struggle while reading when they have not acquired this more complicated language orally. This leads to a need for explicit instruction in oral language in the primary grades.
 - Within this document, there are limited, non-specific oral language standards listed. These standards are vague and do not contain measurable expectations (example: Students will participate in collaborative conversations about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.)
 - Possible Considerations/additions needed:
 - It is recommended that the committee review research on EL learners to develop oral language standards that will develop their ability to communicate effectively.
 - The committee might want to reference such texts such as Continuum for Literacy Learning, Grades K-8 (Fountas and Pinell), pages 182-183 for support in writing oral language standards.
 - Consider adding standards that address:
 - Collaborative conversations with peers and adults
 - Ask questions to the speaker for clarification
 - Description of people, places and things
 - Production of complete sentences and proper use of grammar

1. Reading

There is a heavy emphasis on decoding and word work strategies. There is an absence of rigor and standards that address reading comprehension of the text.

Considerations for first grade comprehension:

- Consider adding standards that address:
 - Main idea/topic/theme and details
 - Describe the connection between two ideas, events, individuals, or pieces of text

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- Describing the setting of the story (where and when)
- Preview text by ...
- Characteristics of fiction and nonfiction
- Ask who, what, where, why, and how questions about what is read (this would be an extension of an existing standard listed under Standard 3)
- Know and use text features (list specific for first grade)
- Compare and contrast two texts on the same topic
- Edit current standards to add more support to teachers:
 - Respond to text – How?
 - Use pre-reading skills – what are they?
 - Monitor their own comprehension and adjust strategies – How?
- What types of text do you expect first graders to read? Poetry? Nonfiction? Which genres?

2. Phonological Awareness:

This section is not specific in the 2015 document. In the 2010 PASS document, these standards were written clearly with specificity for teachers. The committee should consider using the 2010 document, in addition with other resources to revise these standards.

- For example:
 - Taken from the Oklahoma PASS document, 2010:
 - 3. Distinguish onset (beginning sound) and rime in one syllable words. Examples: onset: /b/ in bat; rime: at in bat
 - In the 2015 document it is written:
 - Onsets and rimes in one syllable words
- Under the Standard 2 Phonemic Awareness, consider removing “a. hear, identify, and count syllables in spoken words” and “b. identify and produce groups of rhyming words” and move to Kindergarten
- Consider rewriting remaining standards to represent more complexity.
- In the Print Concepts section
 - Remove “first name, last name...” and move to Kindergarten
 - Consider adding identify letters, words, and sentences.
- Standard 5, Language: the Reading standard “expand simple and compound sentences?” is difficult to understand and assess. This is traditionally a writing standard and will need elaboration for teachers.

3. Writing

- The writing standards are very difficult to read and do not give specificity. There is a heavy emphasis on mechanics. Components of the writing process such as prewriting, drafting composition and revising are missing. The OK PASS 2010 document uses very specific, explicit standards relating to the writing process and it is recommended that the committee review and reuse many of the previous standards.

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- In addition, consider adding specific genres of writing such as: opinion, narrative, informational, and poetry.

4. Research and Multimodel Literacies

- Standard 6 and 7 requires significant revision. Items listed under writing (such as “students will make informal presentations of information...”) are not writing standards but rather fall under an oral language category. In addition, the previously listed standard is vague and lacks specificity.
- The research standards have included a specific reference to “generate questions about their community”. This might lead teachers to believe that students should only engage in research on the topic of community.
- As in the research Standards, the Multitmodel Literacy standard contains writing standards need clarity and more specificity.