



**OKLAHOMA**  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

January 29, 2016

Superintendent Joy Hofmeister  
State Superintendent of Education  
Oklahoma State Board of Education  
Oliver Hodge Education Building  
2500 North Lincoln Boulevard  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Dear Superintendent Hofmeister and Members of the Oklahoma State Board of Education,

I am writing this letter in support of the Oklahoma State Standards for English language arts and mathematics. As Secretary of Commerce for the State of Oklahoma, I lead the team focused on improving communities and creating opportunities for all Oklahomans. We work toward this goal through a number of avenues, including the recruitment of new businesses to the state or by working with existing Oklahoma companies who are ready to expand their facilities and workforce.

In order for us to be successful in these efforts, it is essential that we are able to show companies that they will find a talent pipeline that can support and grow their operations, especially in industries and companies that require a workforce with STEM education. STEM jobs have an average annual earning of nearly \$65,000 which is 62% higher than the average of other industries in Oklahoma. By bringing more of these high paying jobs to our state, we can create more opportunities for our citizens and help individuals achieve an improved quality of life.

The Academic Standards for Mathematics are the positive steps Oklahoma needs to take in order to prepare students to be job-ready graduates with math, science and engineering backgrounds. These standards outline what our students need and also highlight the guiding principles to help educators understand the importance of the standards and how they will direct students to future endeavors.

For example, Guiding Principle 2:

“Mathematical ideas should be explored in ways that stimulate curiosity, create enjoyment of mathematics, and develop a deep understanding.”



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Principles such as this take the study of mathematics and link it to a greater understanding and fluency of the subject. By creating a focus on the comprehension of the subject, and utilizing education in a way that stimulates curiosity and creates enjoyment, we can help students understand how mathematics extend beyond the classroom and create pathways to fulfilling and high-paying careers in STEM fields.

In summary, I applaud the work done by the Board of Education staff and community members who participated in writing and reviewing these standards and am happy to provide my recommendation that they be accepted by the Board. I firmly believe that putting these standards in place will provide the structure and direction our schools and educators need to provide students with the mathematics education they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

Sincerely,

Deby Snodgrass

Secretary of Commerce and Tourism

Executive Director, Oklahoma Department of Commerce