

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Executive Summary of Alignment Analysis of Texas CCRS and 2016 Proposed ELAR TEKS
Primary Findings and Recommendations

Introduction

The State Board of Education (SBOE) is revising the state’s English Language Arts-Reading (ELAR) Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and has solicited feedback from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the higher education community, particularly regarding the effectiveness of the ELAR TEKS as a curriculum for readiness to succeed in entry-level college credit courses. The Coordinating Board and the institutions of higher education that it represents are grateful for the opportunity to provide their perspective, observations, and recommendations in support of public education’s efforts to prepare all students for postsecondary endeavors.

THECB contracted with the Texas A&M’s Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) to facilitate the collaboration of a panel of 13 public and higher education content experts to complete a College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)—ELAR TEKS alignment analysis. The panel was charged with:

- Studying the degree of alignment of the ELA-R TEKS to the Texas CCRS;
- Rating the strength of alignment of the ELA-R TEKS to the Texas CCRS; and
- Making recommendations to improve the degree of alignment of the ELA-R TEKS to the Texas CCRS.

Overview of the Panel Findings

The current ELA-R TEKS are relatively well-aligned to the CCRS. The panel felt that the complete revamping of the TEKS, with newly organized and worded strands, was unnecessary, given the relative strength of the current TEKS. The current TEKS, however, might well have been improved with strategic enhancements and refinements of language. There was concern that the substantive revisions and restructuring of the TEKS that is being proposed will require subsequent professional development, new materials, resources, and district-level revisions of curriculum, all of which requires a significant outlay of time, funding, and human capital.

The major recommendations of the panel for ensuring that students graduate with the ELA-R knowledge and skills necessary for postsecondary success were as follows:

1. in the student expectations, ensure progressive increases to higher orders of thinking through all grade levels;
2. improve alignment to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards;
3. 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;

4. simplify and clarify the language being used in the TEKS, to avoid ambiguity; and
5. 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 panelists developed a number of recommended changes in TEKS language for all eight strands of English IV; proposed changes to Strand 5 for English I-IV, in order to show progression of skill development through the grade levels; and recommended combining Strands 5 and 6, for the study of genre cannot be divorced from author's craft and purpose.

The panel concluded that the 2016 proposed ELA-R TEKS would be appropriate for SBOE adoption and classroom utilization if the SBOE:

- accepted all of the panel's recommended changes to TEKS language;
- addressed the marginal comments made regarding language changes to the TEKS;
- completed the development of language to show progression of student expectations from English I through IV in the remaining strands; and
- directed the implementation of the TEKS to include the content-rich knowledge and skills statements.

The panel still maintained some concern that some of the most important standards of the TEKS were not assessable, and recommended that wording and/or assessment be adjusted to accommodate more comprehensive assessment of the TEKS. The panelists as a whole thought the TEKS could benefit from additional refinement of language and would be interested in participating in any additional refinement work.