Professional Organizations’ Affirmations and Considerations for the December 2015 Rough Draft ELA TEKS

Overarching comments for all strands and grade levels:

Appreciations:
• Streamlining with use of the eight strands prioritizes profound learning expectations for students
• Acknowledging the recursive nature of the reading, writing, listening, and speaking
• Moving comprehension to the top of the TEKS. This helps teachers build a solid foundation for higher-order thinking skills
• Allowing for more rigorous learning experiences for students in the writing strands that connect reading, writing, listening, speaking and focusing on skills that apply to all genres

Considerations:
1. Resist defining terms unnecessarily, especially ones that have readily understood components. For example: Concepts of Print is commonly understood and does not need defining.
2. Use consistent terms across grade levels.
3. Confirm that all knowledge and skills and student expectations reference the interconnected nature of all literacies: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Some strands seem to solely address one or two literacies. For example: Collaboration seems particularly focused on speaking and listening. Author’s Purpose and Craft focuses on reading and writing.
4. Use consistent coding systems across grade levels. Avoid using romanettes, “including,” “such as,” or “e.g.” Listing out specifics may limit instruction and keep the focus only on what is listed instead of the concept itself. A clarifying document would be the appropriate place to list specific elements.
5. Place repeated expectations in multiple strands to one strand to avoid duplication. For example: summary currently is in several strands, including Collaboration, Multiple Genres, Author’s Purpose and Craft, and Comprehension. Consider placing summary within the Comprehension Strand. Similarly, spelling and handwriting are within multiple strands, including Foundational Skills and Composition and Presentation. Consider placing spelling and handwriting within Foundational Skills.
6. Provide a glossary for academic vocabulary upon adoption of the new standards. It would be helpful for committees to suggest words for the glossary.
7. Create a comprehensive vertical alignment document showing alignment from the CCRS to 12th grade through kindergarten.
INTRODUCTION:

Appreciations:
• Specific mention of ELL students
• Number 6 in the introduction, especially specific statements of expectations
• Purposes for each strand highlight the interconnectedness of skills
• Explanation for reasoning behind updates
• Interconnectedness of literacies

Considerations:
1. The K-2 introduction is different from the rest of the grade level introductions. There are requirements in the law that may have been left out.
2. Revise the second statement in the introduction to give guidance about levels of assistance for developing students, possibly adding the phrase “with assistance” when the complexity of the text, skill, or student performance levels require teacher support. Professional development and assessment implications should be considered here as well.

1. FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS:

Appreciations:
• Inclusion of print and cursive for handwriting
• Inclusion of word study
• Inclusion of self-selected reading and reading independently across ALL grade levels

Considerations:
1. Note that if you examine high school standards first, you can see an evident structure. Vocabulary, Context, Resources, Self-Selected Text...it is more difficult to see the structure in elementary.
2. Handwriting and spelling seem to fit in this category instead of other strands.
3. Legible print or cursive instruction needs a progressive development through elementary school: recognizing, forming, using with fluency and automaticity for authentic purposes. We suggest deleting the parenthetical statements in K and 1.
4. 4th and 5th grade might use terms of “print or cursive” so that the student will have the option to choose the format for testing.
5. Reading cursive writing should also be a focus so that students can read informal as well as historic primary documents. We recommend including instruction about the purposes/occasions/uses of print and cursive.
6. Consistent terminology across the grades: 3(A) says phonics knowledge, but 2(B) and 5(A) reference phonetic knowledge, and 4(A) is completely different.
7. Word study can be a high priority standard. Including the study of etymology or derivations might be too fine-grained detail but could be included in a clarifying document.
8. 11/12(A) – Does the standard as written imply the vocabulary of other content areas (like Math, SS, and Science) or content vocabulary associated with English? Some districts have interpreted this standard differently. English III and IV say “other content area” vocabulary. Please strike “other content area.”
9. Caution: People interpret the phrase “word study” very differently. What is the intention of “apply word study?” We recommend applying word study in the context of reading (understanding) and writing (creating). 12-K(B) seems to define how one would apply word study.

10. In the Knowledge and Skills statement: please consider revising to “Students apply knowledge and relationships found when studying of the structures, origins, and contextual meanings of words.”

11. For high priority standards, please eliminate the romanettes as they may unnecessarily limit vocabulary in reading and writing.

12. Please consider combining (A) and (B) of the vocabulary strand throughout the grade levels.

13. 3-5(C) Wording is clearer than the high school wording.

14. Reorder the strands to begin with vocabulary so that the numbering system will be vertical through the grades. (Placing Print Awareness for K-1 as (A) causes labeling problems.) Also, this reordering places emphasis on vocabulary and meaning.

15. Oral language development in K-1 does not appear to be addressed adequately.

16. Can the committee look at this entire strand using a lens that centers on what we need to leverage as high priorities? We need to have a greater focus on growing readers rather than listing isolated language elements.
   - Consider that understanding compound words is a high priority skill. Understanding that compound words are made of two words is not a high priority skill. Please consider why we want them to know compound words...so students can find the parts they know in order to read. It is less important to call a word compound than to be able to use the understanding of it being compound to determine the meaning of the word in reading or listening or to create compound words for writing and speaking. The focus is putting words together to create meaning (hyphenated adjectives, making new words, etc.)

17. Alignment of location/placement is important. For example, 12-9(D): self-selected and independent reading needs to be on the same line all the way across the grade levels.

18. Caution: Fluency applies to more than rate in reading (prosody, accuracy, and rate). It also applies to listening, speaking and writing.

19. K-1 letter learning has been changed to “all upper and lower case letters.” It is not developmentally appropriate to learn ALL letters at kindergarten. Leave “all” in 1st grade language.

20. K(Ai) discusses environmental print, 1st does not. Then 2nd grade mentions it again in (Aii). Consider vertical alignment.

21. Concepts of print seem to be unnecessarily spelled out/defined. “Concepts of Print” is enough.

22. Because kindergarten students are expected to read independently, (Aii) should include demonstration of concepts of print instead of just knowing concepts of print (Di).

23. K-3 Phonetic Knowledge: use consistent terms for phonetic/phonetic.

24. Spelling: Can the committee make a decision about where spelling will be located? Does it belong in Composition or Foundational Skills? Can it be in the same place for each grade level? (In Composition and Presentation, spelling appears in 2(L), 6(U), 7(S), 8(T). No spelling is listed for 9-12 in either strand.) If spelling is placed in two places, in Foundational Skills it could be focused more on learning the patterns of spelling, etc., and in composition it could be applying those patterns and knowledge of spelling.
25. Spelling: Shouldn’t we be calling spelling by the term “encoding” in the primary levels and in reference to decoding? We still need a separate student expectation that addresses spelling at the upper grade levels. Spelling could be referred to in the mechanics section in relation to an editing skill or presentation of work.

26. Spelling: Derivational constancy needs to be addressed in Word Study and Spelling in upper grades, probably 5-8. There is also a gap in 2nd in the line after (xiv) – needs something about spelling patterns to keep alignment.
   - 8(T), 7(S), 6(U) and 2(L) Spelling: Using resources needs to be moved from Composition to Foundational Skills on the (C) line for High School. And can it be addressed across all grade levels? Consider this language: Use print and digital reference materials to define, validate understanding, and check correct spellings.
   - 2(D) needs to address why we alphabetize things. Please address authentic purposes: index in a book, names, etc.
   - K(Civ), 1(Cxvi), 2(Bxiv) Recognizing high frequency words is the important skill here, not reading the list.

2. COMPREHENSION:

Appreciations:
- Fits well inside the standards instead of a separate document
- Sets a good foundation for higher order thinking skills, starting in Kindergarten
- Includes visualization to support comprehension

Considerations:
1. Use consistent academic vocabulary and structure across all grade levels, especially when the student expectation addresses the same progression of skills.
2. Alignment across with numbering and lettering needs to be the same.
3. Writing members left some student expectation addresses the same on purpose. Add language to acknowledge that it is text complexity that determines the progression; not different wording in student expectations.
4. When the standard fits across several grade levels, use common wording and lettering. For example:
   - 6-12(A) combine information from the text and the reader’s schema in order to create a new understanding:
   - 3-5(G) combine information from the text and schema to create new understanding;
5. Concerns about consistency in terminology (jargon, inconsistent terms, differences in terms like retelling/summarizing; analyze/interpret). We recommend using terms consistent with research.
6. K-12(H) Remove words “paraphrase, or retell texts.” Consider revising to: summarize, paraphrase, or retell texts in ways that maintain meaning in logical order within a text and across texts;
   - Note that the clarifying document needs to explain the developmental progressions of summary (retelling, for example, comes before full blown summary).
7. For clarity, use terms consistent with research, such as:
   - 9-12(A), 3-5(G), 2(A), K-1(I) use background knowledge instead of “schema”
   - K-12(F) use determining importance instead of “sort through”
• 2-5(I) and 1K(A) “making connections” is used in 6-12(I) and “making corrections.” Which term is correct here?
• 6-12(D), 3-5(C), 2(D), 1-K(C) Is there a difference between “visualize to create sensory images to interpret and analyze text” and “visualize sensory images to interpret and analyze texts”?
• 6-12(E) Add language “and use” to “Search for and use connections...” to match language of the K-5 wording

3. RESPONSE

Appreciations:
• Clear categories
• Well-stated and considered concept in 10(F) that could be extended through 6th grade
• Inclusion of note taking as one type of response

Considerations:
1. Some student expectations across the grades are better aligned than others. We recommend starting with high school and working down the grade levels.
2. Can there be a place somewhere for students to discuss their own reading and writing?
3. In the Knowledge and Skills statement add “viewed” to “Students speak and write to effectively convey viewpoints and analysis of texts which are read, viewed, or heard for a variety of audiences and purposes. These texts could be written by self, peers, or published works.”
4. 10-12(A) add “a variety” to “evaluate/defend/communicate insights gained about oneself, others, or the world from a variety of texts.” Add this expectation to grade 9(A) also.
5. K-5(I), 6-8(A), 9-12(A) How does the standard develop and differentiate across the grade levels?
6. 7-8(B) the statement seems ambiguous about what is required. Is there consistency and growth through the grades? Kindergarten students can find a quote-worthy place in the text as well. All grades use text evidence. Please delete “using quotations when appropriate.” Match the language to 6(B). In this entire row, the elementary expectation seems to be more difficult. From 6th grade to 12th grade, students can be expected to explain and defend.
7. 9-12(C) seems to be about vocabulary the way it is written. This is supposed to be about articulating understanding/reaction to the text. There’s nothing on this row for the middle school. Describe/determine/explain the meaning as an addition to all statements might add the continuity and progression needed. Some of the statements in Multiple Genres seem to replicate what is written here. We also wonder if the response is about more than students’ mental images. Should metacognition (how they came to those ideas) be a part of this standard? Is mental images a pathway to text evidence in later grades? Does K-5(F) go with 9-12(D)? There is still a gap in middle school.
8. We think students have something to say about what they read and feel. We like the word “share” in K(B) that implies a more active response rather than a testing of their comprehension. All grade levels should be able to support their ideas with evidence or logic/reasoning.
9. Most of the student expectations from 3-5 seem heavy on responding to reading and do not have enough focus on responding to viewing, writing, or listening. 1-5(B) add “viewing, or
responding” to “share questions and comments generated before during and after reading, viewing, or listening to texts.” This wording would really work well across all grade levels.

10. K-5(H) summary is addressed in the Comprehension Strand. The phrasing in the Response Strand seems clearer than in the Comprehension Strand.” We recommend that K-5(H) be removed from this strand and replicated in Comprehension Strand.

11. K-5(F) really seems to be the same thing as K-5(E) and K-5(B). Can they be combined using the same verb? Personal response, gaining insight, and making connections seem to be the major categories that are reflected here. 9-12 is really strong: perhaps working backward for developmental concerns will solve the problems.

12. 9-12(E) consider using “Use a variety of strategies to respond to a text (written, visual, or spoken).”

4. COLLABORATION

Appreciations:
• what businesses have been clamoring for
• Inclusion of specific collaboration skills to successfully participate in teams
• Inclusion of quality assurance to analyze feedback, evaluate, and validate collaboration

Considerations:
1. There seems to be an over-focus on speaking and listening. Could written language be included? There might be duplication of some things that belong in Author’s Purpose and Craft. Have the major components of collaboration been fully explored? Have they been addressed throughout the grade levels? For example, 8(B) seems to miss the point a bit by focusing on the summary instead of the discussion. We are concerned that some of the wording really references listening skills over collaboration.
   • Solution: The knowledge statement is a strong commentary that could be used to refocus and evaluate how student expectations develop and connect to the focus of the strand. 3-5(C) is close in matching. 6-7-8(D) is close. K(D) and K(1A) seem closer to the intent.
   • Also consider that much of the speaking statements might fit better in presentation.

2. Should active listening approaches be added to this section?

3. Collaboration really does have important implications during the writing process. Is that communicated clearly enough? Professional development on this strand is probably going to need emphasis. Three big categories from www.P-21.org suggest these items:
   • Demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams
   • Exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal
   • Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the individual contributions made by each team member

4. There are a variety of contexts for this strand such as peer conferencing. 9-12(C) has some good language here for giving and receiving feedback in oral and written formats.

5. The focus of collaboration might be on any of the following: agreeing on a goal, reaching consensus on an idea, or the process of producing....” Notice that 1(E) references posters. This
reference suggests that the focus is on the product, not the collaboration to produce the product. Let’s have consistency in all grade levels with terms, coding, etc.

5. MULTIPLE GENRES:

Appreciations:
- Integrating reading and writing: 5(A) “Read, respond to, and compose…” It would be nice if all the grade levels used this language and applied it to all genres.
- Including analyzing types of texts as models: 9-12(B). It would be nice if literary, informational, and argumentative genres were addressed in all grade levels.
- Referencing skills across genres (inferences, evaluation, conclusions, etc.)

Considerations:
1. Perhaps a revision of the Knowledge and Skills statement would make the direction of the TEKS more apparent. Consider adding “within and across genres.” “Students recognize genre-specific characteristics, structures, and purposes within and across genres in order to analyze, respond to, and compose a variety of texts.”
2. Note that Grades 4 and below should be analyzing multiple texts and making connections across texts. The current language does not reference this skill.
3. Feel free to break away from listing isolated genres and subgenres as it has been in previous TEKS, focusing on skills across genres instead. Understand that teachers can focus on a variety of texts that are developmentally appropriate for those grades.
   - For example 12(C) – Make subtle inferences and draw complex conclusions across multiple texts, within and across genres, and in technical sources for elements such as theme, tone, characters, topic, perspective, and style using textual evidence.
4. 9-12(B) expand to include all genres “Analyze text from literary, informative, and argumentative genres including written and visual texts as models to craft authentic writing.”
5. There will be a great need for professional development about the kinds of rhetorical devices, elements and features of text, organizational patterns, etc.
6. Romanettes make the document difficult to read and manage for streamlining/prioritizing standards. Prioritize and collapse student expectations.
7. Both modern and classical texts include multiple genres within individual texts.
8. Please consider the following order and terms for genre distinctions: literary, informational, and argumentative. There are sub-genres underneath these distinctions. At what level does the breakdown of genre end? There are too many text types to list for inclusion or exclusion.
9. Literary elements can appear in any text; therefore, our current TEKS term of “literary nonfiction” such as personal essay, memoir, biography, and autobiography does not belong with literary text. Informational or argumentative texts may be written in narrative form; however, they are true and verifiable. Function should be more important that form. Be consistent with terminology: use the term informational narrative or nonfiction narrative. Structure and elements are more important to examine in each genre.
10. Consistent terms and divisions of genres:
   - We recommend using the same terms at each level with placement of narrative nonfiction under the informational genre because of its purpose (can be validated)
instead of structure (narrative organization). Currently, literary nonfiction is placed within literary texts and is sometimes called narrative nonfiction.

- K(E), 1(K), 2(E) the term “procedural expository text” is not accurate.
- Inconsistency of genres throughout the grades. There is no introduction in one grade that is then practiced and mastered through the subsequent grades.
- Inconsistency of language – sometimes language addresses reading and writing, but in other places only reading is mentioned.
- Consider the term “theme” for literary and “thesis” for informational and argumentative texts.
- There are inconsistencies in how genre and mode are addressed:
  - K(G) says informational but switches to expository in 3rd grade. 6th grade has nothing. 7-8th grade goes back to expository.

Edits:
- 6(B): there are two B’s
- 4: there is no B

6. AUTHOR’S PURPOSE AND CRAFT

Appreciations:
- We LOVE that this strand has been included.
- The intent to deal with all genres in this strand is apparent. Well considered and appropriate for student understanding and use.
- The big picture pieces of text and genre specific pieces of text will be assets to teachers and students.
- The clarity of not just analyzing from a written text, but using that to guide their own writing really fosters elements of student engagement and use.
- Analysis of the author’s decisions will also help with broad reading and understanding of text.

Considerations:
1. Please consider adding the terms written, spoken, or visual text to the language of the Knowledge and Skills statement to make sure everyone understands the different types of texts that we are dealing with. This keeps the strand from having an over focus on the written text as opposed to the variety of texts (commercials, speeches) that need to be addressed.
2. We are concerned that there is confusion about what is involved in understanding author’s purpose and craft, especially when looking across the grade levels. There needs to be a common definition about craft/technique, and author’s purpose to foster the approach taken for the Student Expectations. Revisions to the Knowledge and Skills statement might help here. Sample language might be: Students use critical inquiry to analyze the author’s purpose and how the author’s choices influence and communicate meaning within the text. Students emulate author’s craft purposefully in order to develop their own products and performances. This revision would help teachers understand the critical differences between the terms.
3. Craft choices and the author’s purpose are different. The author’s purpose is the overall reason/intent for writing while the author chooses techniques to express messages.
4. Including and such as statements are limiting and hard to vertically align. For example: compare 9-10(C) to 8(E): How do you decide what to put on those lists? It’s really hard to say about where hyperbole goes. It really depends on what appears in the texts and is probably better left to local control or teacher decision. 9-12(D,F,G,H) is another example. The language in 5(E) is general enough for local decisions, but gives direction about what needs to be taught.
   • Perhaps considering the big categories of crafting techniques could be a positive direction: devices such as voice, mood, tone, figurative language, print and graphic features, structure and organization that apply to any type of writing, and rhetoric in informative and argumentative texts. If so, perhaps this could align with the Multiple Genres or Composition and Presentation sections. It will help teachers if all these elements align between strands as well.

5. Let’s remember to be consistent in terms (literary, informational, and argumentative) across all grade levels. For example, 7(I) uses expository. We might also need to make sure that we are using the term “composing” instead of “writing” to keep the language consistent across the strands. 8(F) “composed on the same topic” is another example when compared to 9-12(A).

6. Summary is redundant here and probably belongs in Comprehension. In addition, does summary really belong with Craft?

7. Composition and Presentation

Appreciations:
   • Consideration and prominence of the writing process
   • Repetition removed from the current TEKS
   • Inclusion of multigenre essays in high school
   • Integration of composition and conventions instead of having these as separate strands
   • Inclusion of grammar skills
   • 9-12(M), (L), (K) “Create sentence fluency including a variety of sentence structure and length.” We like this for every grade. This approach will be effective and helpful for the teacher and allow students to grow throughout the grade levels.

Considerations:
1. Inclusion of Presentation in Grade 3-5 is currently missing.
2. Note that 9(F), 10(G), 11(G), 12(G) require specific subgenres of writing that would create an over focus on a particular subgenre.
3. Students should be asked to write in multiple genres (using the same divisions as the Multiple Genres Strand: literary, informational, and argumentative) throughout all grades, culminating in the multigenre composition in high school. Note that multiple modes would appear in each genre (students could write an expository essay using a narrative mode/examples). This would give students many opportunities to constantly refine their purposes for writing and approach to different genres.
4. Transitions belong in the sections about organization. Right now, they appear in different places in each grade.
5. Romanettes make the document confusing and do not fit with high priority, focused standards. Address the components of conventions, focusing only on the first level of subskills. ACT and
CCRS make these divisions: Conventions of Punctuation; Conventions of Usage; Sentence Structure and Formation; Word Choice in terms of Style, Tone, Clarity, and Economy; Organization, Unity, and Coherence; Topic development in terms of development and focus.

- For example, parts of speech do not need to be listed separately.
- Time order words are also very specific when a more generic term like transitions could be used.
- The same issue happens with conventions.
- Note that 7(Qi) is inaccurate. Prepositional phrases do not influence subject verb agreement. Prepositions may confuse you, but they do not determine agreement.
- Spelling: 8(T), 7(S), 6(U) and 2(L) need to be moved from Composition to Foundational Skills on the C line for High School. And address spelling across all grade levels.
- 2(D) please use the term rubric and delete “using a teacher developed rubric.”

6. Edits
   - 12(J), 11(J), 10(J), 9(J) take the “s” off of the word “actions”
   - 8(I) and 8(L) are similar concepts using different language
   - 7(N) change the period to a semi-colon
   - 5(E) add an “s” to “draft”
   - 5(F) do not capitalize the “s” in Standard

8. INQUIRY AND RESEARCH

Appreciations:
- Loved that Inquiry and Research is addressed even with the primary age students. Some people think that they may not be able to do these kinds of skills, but they surely can!
- Appreciate the inclusion of formal and informal research
- Nice progression and developmental expectations for the research process in 12-9(B) and 8-K(A)

Considerations:
1. We see two issues here: 1) the language may need to address how feedback is utilized. 2) perhaps the language already exists in the Collaboration Strand.
   - Suggested language for issue 1: Seek, give, and incorporate feedback from self, peers, and teachers to improve products. 5(Aii) already has a similar statement – seems to be a good area to add this statement across the grade levels.) 12(B), (C): Could there be a row added for Collaboration and Response before Presentation?
   - Explanation for issue 2: Another idea is that this kind of work is already addressed in the Collaboration Strand. Adding another statement here in the Inquiry and Research Strand is redundant. We might need to suggest that professional development address recursive natures of collaboration and writing processes that need to be incorporated and considered when understanding how the TEKS strands inform each other. This would apply to all types of writing. It seems to not just apply to one type of writing but to all of them.
2. Does the current order of student expectations really fit the structure of how one conducts inquiry and research? The organization seems “off.” If we keep a horizontal perspective about the same lettering, basic issues and approaches, locations, and vocabulary, this might help. For
example, primary and secondary sources should probably be consistently addressed across the grade levels.

3. Looking across the grade levels, informal inquiry is not present for each grade level. For example, informal inquiry is missing for primary and middle levels.

4. Formal research might not need to be limited to argumentative, as research is appropriate for ALL genres.

5. 11 and 12(A): There are pieces that are broken apart in lower grades that are all together in 11 and 12. Solving this problem might be the first place to begin in addressing the gaps. They seem to be divided into these main ideas. This might reduce and streamline the romanettes.
   - Research Process in Formal and Informal approaches
     - Steps in the process – Detail and align more of the process. For example:
       - Developing topics and questions
       - Address sources: selecting, evaluating, ethics: citations/references appropriate for the genres
       - Presentation/Delivery (technology, data). Also consider that presentation is already addressed in the Composition and Presentation section. We do understand that duplicating it here might be redundant, but leaving it out here as part of the process might be confusing for some and needs to be addressed in staff development.

6. We had a lot of discussion about formal and informal research approaches. We suggest that the committees consider the implications of these differences. For example, we need to make sure that research might be very informal when a student is reading a piece and does some research about the geographic location of the setting. The importance of primary and secondary sources might not be as important in that kind of work.

7. Consider also that research and inquiry have many types. Do we want students only to complete reviews or evaluations of their sources? Or do we want them to add to the field of study? Try things out? Conduct surveys? 1 and 2(C) have some language there that might help give direction. What is meant by the term “natural?”