**Individual Speeches for**

**July 15, 2015 SBOE meeting**

# Comments and Joint Statement Submitted on Behalf of the

Coalition of English and Reading Supervisors of Texas (CREST)

National Writing Project of Texas (NWPT)

Texas Association of Bilingual Education (TABE)

Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading (TAIR)

Texas Association of Literacy Educators (TALE)

Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA)

Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (TCTELA)

Texas Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (TASCD)

**I. Speaker #1 Valerie Taylor, M.Ed. TCTELA**

*Rationale-Why leaders from these organizations came together.*

Good afternoon. I am Valerie Taylor from the Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts. I am here today to applaud the State Board of Education for its continual commitment to the students of the state of Texas and to speak about the revision of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading.

All of us are aware that the process of revision is often a messy one for any writing task. Therefore, our organizations (both those that work specifically in the area of English Language Arts and Reading and with supervisors and administrators) are grateful that the State Board of Education has asked that we help with this process.

We all hope to create an even better set of state standards that are more focused and more connected and that provide students opportunities to gain deeper understandings of the ways language works. With that goal in mind, our organizations have proposed a structural revision to the standards that we believe honors the best of the work of the previous writing teams and state board, including a focus on phonemic awareness and spelling as essential to students’ abilities to communicate effectively. We also hope that this revision in structure will do what all revisions of writing hope to do—enhance our standards with a greater understanding of and an emphasis on 21st century funds of knowledge and inquiry skills. These enhancements to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills will allow teachers to better manage the wide array of skills and knowledge that students need in order to be successful communicators.

Thank you again for requesting our participation in the revision process of the TEKS for English Language Arts and Reading. We look forward to working with you to create standards that will challenge our students and prepare them for both college and career.

**II. Speaker #2 Ann-Marie Trammell, Ed.D CREST**

*Process-How the organizations came together and what we recommend.*

Good afternoon, I am Dr. Ann-Marie Trammell, the President for the Coalition of Reading and English Supervisors of teachers. I am here to speak regarding how we all came together to represent the members of the literacy organizations in Texas.

In February of 2014, representatives from the six literacy organizations (CREST, NWPT, TABE, TAIR, and TALE) met in a round table to discuss the upcoming ELAR TEKS revisions. We, as a collective group, brought forth concerns about the structure, number, and breadth of our current Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. From this meeting, we went forward with the task of working with our individual memberships to suggest revisions to the framework for the TEKS. Each organization devised a way to reach out to their members to ask, “If you could make suggestions about the structure of the TEKS, what would those suggestions be?” We found that there were commonalities among the responses including:

* Comprehension needs to be interwoven among all standards rather than a stand alone piece
* There are too many standards to teach full mastery of each one
* The division of genres keeps each genre isolated and our students struggle with moving between genres
* Reading and writing are recursive in nature, and some repetition is needed among grades, especially in grade clusters

We then joined with both TASA and Texas ASCD to draft a position statement about our collective concerns and began to brainstorm what shape a framework might take. As 8 organizations, we started with the current TEKS with several questions in mind. First, how can we show the importance of comprehension by including it within all areas of the TEKS instead of as a separate chart? Second, how can we show the importance of complex reading and writing processes within and among genres? Lastly, how can we continue to have a strong phonics and phonemic awareness base for our students? The resulting framework creates a comprehensive way to have a smaller number of discrete standards allowing for more depth of learning of complex skills.

**III. Speaker #3 Patricia Durham, Ph.D. TALE (3 minutes)**

*Product-The proposed literacy framework.*

Today we are presenting a framework for your consideration that represents a model for what interconnected literacies could look like as standards.

I **am** Dr. Patricia Durham, President for the Texas Association for Literacy Education, the state charter for the International Literacy Association. I am here today on behalf of the members of the literacy organizations in Texas.

There are a few key considerations to be aware of regarding how the proposed literacy framework was designed.

* First, we feel it very important to stress that **this** framework was **not** derived from the common core but rather from the concept that 21st century literacy is recursive in nature. While the current standards are its foundation, **these** strands offer possible solutions to concerns previously noted, such as . . . an over-burdensome number of standards and the need for interconnectedness.
* Secondly, our members overwhelmingly voiced their concern for the need to revise the standards to discourage teaching the literacies and text types in isolation. You will notice that the “tagline” now suggests: **Reading/writing/speaking/listening/multiple texts types**: followed by a focus domain, and a Knowledge and Skills narrative. The 10 focus domains are:
  + Beginning and Sustaining Foundational Skills
  + Comprehension
  + Fluency
  + Discussion
  + Collaboration
  + Multiple Genres
  + Author’s Purpose and Craft
  + The Writing Process
  + Inquiry, and
  + The Research process

By bringing in the nature of interconnectedness, this meets the teacher’s request to reduce the number of standards ***and*** resists teaching literacy and genres in isolation.

* Next, another concern voiced was the need to extend the emerging literacy skills and fluency through 12th grade, **as well** as bring comprehension skills found in Figure 19 back into the standards. Phonics, word study, and even aspects of phonemic awareness extends past elementary. As the text difficulty increases through the years, **all** students need to utilize the same foundational skills to become fluent readers, writers, speakers, and listeners as they navigate text complexity levels. Strands 1, 2, and 3 meet this request.
* And lastly, our members voiced for a stronger connection between the standards and the state assessment. By integrating genres through a multiple text-type study, these strands align with the currant format of STAAR***and*** support the use of various, more authentic, performance-­‐based literacy assessment at the school, district, and state level.

If **you** believe that our students need to be college and career ready, **with** developed 21st century literacies, than I invite you to utilize this framework of strands.

Again, I am Dr. Patricia Durham with the Texas Association for Literacy Education, and I thank you for your time today.

**Speaker 4: Dr. Denise Collier TASA**

*Closure-Final summary*

To succeed in their world, our students must have a solid foundation in literacy skills and habits necessary to succeed in school, college, career, and life. We believe that to better achieve the critical goal of college- and career-ready literacy, the revised ELA/R and SLA/R essential knowledge and skills should:

# Prioritize and focus on what matters most.

# Current ELA/R and SLA/R TEKS should be coalesced into fewer standards to ensure deep mastery of essential content from grade to grade in consideration of the recursive nature of literacy across grade level bands.

# Content, thinking, and skills all matter when it comes to standards design.

* + - In ELA/R and SLA/R, this means that standards design requires the integration of the literacy concepts, thinking, and skills.

# Align standards with best evidence on college and career readiness.

* + - In ELA/R and SLA/R this means that design requires the integration of future-­‐ ready skills that are backwards mapped from college- and career –ready standards, resulting in a K-­‐12 progression toward college-­‐ and career–ready literacy.

# Recognize that standards design influences assessment design, assessment design influences instruction, and instructional decisions determine the level and type of learning opportunities provided to students.

* + - In ELA/R and SLA/R this means that standards design supports the use of various, more authentic, performance-­‐based literacy assessment at the school, district, and state level to reflect real-­‐world literacy practices and challenges.

Leaders of the organizations represented today request that members of the State Board of Education, the Texas Education Agency staff, the TEKS review committees and expert reviewers consider the concept of high-­‐priority learning standards as described in this letter as guiding principles in the revision and development of ELA/R and SLA/R standards. Finally, we offer our support in working with you in the revision process, as appropriate.