

Guidelines for Expert Feedback on the English Language Arts and Reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Overall, the new TEKS are written in a more succinct, direct way with control given to the teacher to meet the needs of his/her students.

There will be appropriate time allotment for students to achieve expected outcomes, as long as the teacher evenly addresses all of the TEKS. Many times in the classrooms today, the students are smothered with “testable TEKS” and the other TEKS are not acknowledged, much less addressed, until after the STAAR.

As an educator, I understand the pressure and responsibility the teacher feels to help their students be successful on the STAAR. I also understand that students need and deserve to learn all the things listed in the standards equally. For the most part each standard deserves the same level of introduction, practice and reteach to be successful. We all know this is not happening. What can we do to make this a reality?

1. Does each grade level or course follow a complete and logical development of English language arts and reading concepts?

Overall Comments

- I am pleased to see the TEKS are now developmentally aligned, even with each standard.
- The coordination of standards across all areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking allows for a more consolidated, uniformed expectation for the teacher and students.
- The lower level TEKS make the expectations clear while giving the teachers the flexibility and permission to meet the needs of their students.
- No lower level standard directly addresses students reading independently for sustained periods of time. They also do not recognize the evidence of their reading through reading logs, journals or participation in book talks or groups.

Specific Comments:

- In standards, such as, 4th grade (1)(B)(ii) add the phrase “but not limited to...”
- Add to 4th grade standards (1)(B)(ix), spelling derivatives using common derivative rules.

2. Have the correct vocabulary and terminology been used throughout the TEKS?

- The alignment of vocabulary and terminology has greatly improved in the new standards.
- There is one specific place the terminology differs: Kindergarten (1)(C)(iv) and 1st grade (1)(C)(xvi) should be written the same with the exception of the number of words.

3. Is the level of rigor appropriate for each grade level?

- Kindergarten standard (2)(F) is above developmental expectation for an average Kindergarten student.

4. Are the student expectations (SEs) clear and specific?

- The student expectations are usually clear but often not very detailed. The new standards are global enough to allow the teacher the freedom to create a lesson designed for different levels of students; however, they set up the need for strong vertical planning.
- In 2nd grade standard (1)(D), “alphabetize a series of words...” should be more specific as demonstrated in 3rd grade standard (1)(B)(v) which reads...”alphabetizing a series of words to the 3rd letter.”
- The 2nd grade Composition standard should add: (7)(F)(vii) *time-ordered transition words* to the list.
- The 3rd grade standard (1)(E) reads, “write legibly in manuscript and cursive.” This needs more specific details such as:

The student will be able to:

legibly write the lower case letters of the alphabet in cursive.

legibly write the upper case letters of the alphabet in cursive.

- In standard (2), comprehension, the phrase...in groups and individually... should be added, especially in the lower grades.
- In standard (2), comprehension, the phrase...when reading aloud or silently... should be added.

5. Are the TEKS aligned horizontally and vertically? If not, what gaps should be addressed?

- There is a large gap in verbiage as well as expectation between the 5th and 6th grade standards. It is obvious there were different writers.
- In 6th grade standard (7)(U) should be divided into 2 sub standards
(U)(i) Use spelling patterns and rules and print to determine and check correct spellings.
(U)(ii) Use electronic resources to determine and check correct spellings.

In fact, these could go back to the 4th grade and become standards (7)(I)(i) and (7)(I)(ii) and 5th grade standards (7)(J)(i) and (7)(J)(ii). This would also help with some vertical alignment between 5th and 6th grades.

For any student to refine and grow their use of basic spelling patterns, they must have the opportunity to internalize the pattern, which happens through frequent use.

This standard raises a couple of questions.

1. Are students going to be permitted to use electronic devices for writing on STAAR?
 2. If the use of electronic devices is required by TEKS will all students be given access?
- There is an assumption that teachers in grades 6 – 8 will have to be cross trained to know what to specifically teach in Standards 1, 2, 3, 4 because they are exactly the same in each grade level.
 - Levels 1 – 4 have standards 1, 2, 4, 5 the same. That is making it necessary for each level to meet together to plan vertically. With all the exact same standards required, it will be up to the teachers to plan

appropriately for their students while moving the learning of their students forward.

6. Can all student expectations reasonably be taught within the amount of time typically allotted for the grade level or high school course prior to the end of the school year or prior to a state assessment?

- Kindergarten standard (2)(F) is above developmental expectation for a Kindergarten student. It is the same as 2nd grade (2)(F) which is appropriate. I feel this may have been a mistake in placement.
- As stated at the beginning, there will be appropriate time allotment for students to achieve expected outcomes, as long as the teacher evenly addresses all of the TEKS. Many times in the classrooms today, the students are smothered with “testable TEKS” and the other TEKS are not acknowledged, much less addressed, until after the STAAR.

7. Are there student expectations that can be eliminated in order to streamline the standards?

- Due to the consolidation of the new TEKS, no additional streamlining is necessary.

8. Are there specific areas that need to be updated to reflect current research?

9. Are the College and Career Readiness Standards adequately and appropriately addressed throughout the TEKS?

- After reviewing the College and Career Standards, I feel the standards are addressed adequately though the new TEKS.

10. Do you have any other suggestions for way in which the English language arts and reading TEKS can be improved?

- Kindergarten standard (1)(D)(iii) should read ... “identify and sort pictures...” not sorting.
- 3rd grade standard (1)(A)(ii), change the final part to ... “when adding endings including –less, -ful...”

- 4th grade standard (2), the word ‘skills’ is misspelled.
- In 7th grade standard (1)(B)(i) the word ‘purpose’ is not there as in 6th grade (1)(B)(i) or 8th grade (1)(B)(i).
- 7th grade (6)(F) and (G) are the same.