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1. **Does each grade level follow a complete and logical development of ELAR concepts?** Yes. I like the way that the writing teams have followed the framework established by the professional organizations. Suggestions at each grade level are enumerated below.
2. **Have the correct vocabulary and terminology been used throughout the TEKS?** Not in all cases. Alignment should now be achieved so that across the grade levels the terminology and alignment are correct. Currently it is obvious that the writing groups have not had a chance to align the TEKS across the grade levels for consistency in elements and terminology.
3. **Is the level of rigor appropriate for each grade level?** For the most part yes, but refinement is necessary. English and reading are a recursive process and each year should build upon the prior years.
4. **Are student expectations clear and specific? Yes, they are clear but not inclusive enough.** The one test that matters for all students in Texas is the SAT/ACT. The new SAT will be available in the spring of 2016, so it is important for the writing teams to be cognizant of those assessment requirements. All Texas students must be prepared to be successful on that assessment.
5. **Are the TEKS aligned horizontally and vertically?** Generally the framework was followed throughout from K to 12. However, within each 3 grade level breaks the alignment is not consistent so there are gaps from grades 2 to 3, from 5 to 6, and from 8 to 9. Now it is important for horizontal alignment to occur with grade level representatives forming teams for each of the eight strands utilizing an aligned document to streamline the standards, delete definitions and rules, close gaps, use consistent terminology, consider progression of developmental expectations, and make final edits.
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?** Not until alignment is established can we determine this. I believe that each element at each grade level of the ELAR TEKS must be aligned so they build upon each other and can be learned and assessed at each grade level.
7. **Are there student expectations that can be eliminated in order to streamline the standards?** In some cases the expectations can be written more generally so that they apply across the reading/listening or speaking/writing/thinking spectrum. However, the reading and writing standards are stronger and more specific than the listening and speaking that are equally important but not tested in systematic ways. Perhaps a clarifying document can be added with definitions, rules, and specific suggestions.
8. **Are there specific areas that need to be updated to reflect current research?** The biggest void in the current document is lack of attention to a

balance between aesthetic and efferent reading and response. Students must understand that reading is neither pronouncing words correctly, nor parroting back facts. Reading is thinking, making connections, responding emotionally and reflectively across texts. It is vital to overtly include the importance of aesthetic reading and the efferent/aesthetic balance.

9. **Are the College and Career Readiness Standards adequately and appropriately addressed throughout the TEKS?** The CCRS are more specific than the current draft of the TEKS. Alignment will be important as the TEKS are revised. Here are some specific suggestions:
 - a. The word “appropriate language” speaks to purpose and audience in writing from the CCRS. That wording might be incorporated into the TEKS.
 - b. The term “language precision and fluidity” in CCRS speaks beautifully to revision in both speaking and writing.
 - c. In the CCRS the term “proper voice” is included in the edit process. I commented to this under the English 1-4 section below.
 - d. Under reading in the CCRS the focus is upon coherence and logic. I believe that even early elementary children can listen to a piece read and begin to reason the coherence and logic with teachers asking, “does this make sense?”
 - e. Quality and authenticity of reference guides and materials should be taught and analyzed.
 - f. The CCRS uses the words, “gain and describe insights.” But I would like to see a more clear use of both aesthetic and efferent responses in both documents (TEKS and CCRS) as insights are applied.
 - g. The CCRS has strong descriptors for both speaking and listening that are more explicit than the TEKS. Both are critical parts of education and learning and although we don’t paper/pencil assess, they must be explicit in the TEKS.
 10. **Do I have other suggestions for ways in which the English languages arts and reading TEKS can be improved?** Yes! The most overt omission in the standards is the omission of reading response that includes both an aesthetic and efferent response. For readers to read, remember, connect and respond, there must be an aesthetic and efferent response in one’s head. It would also be important to stress the importance of building fluency through reading, re-reading, connecting over and over with predictable novels or with information that is important to the reader. Research calls this “unconscious delight.” In the research by Fink with dyslexic adults, in-depth reading in special interest areas, formula novels and re-reading became the elements that helped dyslexic adults become successful readers. Finally, it is important to understand that these are State Standards and not curriculum or instructional strategies that are being developed by the writing teams. This is **not** a place to list rules of grammar, punctuation, sound/symbol correspondence, or spelling. Perhaps an accompanying document that lists important terminology and rules can be supplemental.
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Specific suggestions:

Grade K :

High Frequency Words and Environmental print -- I would not specify how many words can be identified. Probably the word "sufficient" would be more appropriate. Both these word categories are vital to beginning learners. Setting a purpose for reading/listening is critical. The current draft lists "reading" and it should be expanded to "reading/listening" throughout the document or just start with the verb. Here is where consistency in revision will help throughout the K-12 document by working with an aligned document.

In 3H the word "logical" is used. K-1 students have their own preoperational reasoning/ logic and it will develop and mature as they do. Using the word "order" could be more accurate at that age.

Writing—Much can be expanded here to encourage the use of pictures and models for forming letters/words.

Research—Students in kindergarten are capable of gathering evidence from their environment and surroundings (measuring, recording, drawing pictures, making graphs or charts). This can all be used as their forms of research. I would substitute the word "text" for something like "uses multiple sources."

First Grade:

1. Again I would suggest not being specific about the number of high frequency words. In the clarifying document simply add that a research based resource such as Dr. Edward Fry's "Book of Lists" would be used in different word categories: high frequency, environmental print, synonyms, categories etc.
2. In Response area – Students will respond critically to peer writing and to literature heard/read. Responding as stated throughout the document lacks response to appreciate, respond emotionally or thoughtfully. We read because we love reading and we write because we love writing. Both elicit emotions. "Where the Red Fern Grows" elicits sadness and a love for the way that dogs can convey their emotions, loyalty, and connections. Who can read the ending of this book or "Old Yeller" without crying? In 3I could we add the responses that elicit personal responses and appreciation: humor, joy, sadness, and thoughtful connections?
3. In 5 E, rather than "sequential and time order, could the text read "order and descriptive words?" The word "order" can subsume methods of organization.

Second Grade

4. In the item 2/6/B I would add "persuade" to "entertain and inform." Yes, first graders can write and read persuasive pieces – or listing reasons for...
5. In item 7 quotation marks can indicate dialogue

6. In item 8C I like the words “natural and personal.” The other word might be “observations.” Yes, students can obtain research from their recorded observations.
7. In item 8 I would add (F) which would include peer and teacher response to research and the subsequent revisions that might follow research.
8. For all grade levels, I would try to begin to standardize how “sources” are both recorded, cited, and a reference list is made. This could start simply at the first grade and then build with each grade level. Students get very confused with APA, MLA and Chicago styles that various teachers use and adopt. Perhaps Texas could standardize their citing methodology across the K-12 grade level and across curriculum areas.

Third Grade

9. 1/B/i/ Rather than use prefixes and suffixes the word “affixes” can be used and also to relate to part of speech.
10. 2/F use the words “main idea/supporting details.”
11. 3/F historical and cultural context is very important and with all literature (fiction and nonfiction) should be discussed.
12. 5 /G Poetry is very important at all grade levels and should always include more than “describing.” Students should be encouraged to read, respond, and connect using multiple techniques.
13. Responding should always incorporate: appreciate, personal connections, emotional responses (aesthetic and efferent responses).
14. Writing should always include peer response
15. Throughout all grade levels the final part of the “Research” section should include the author’s response/revisions to peer/teacher response.

Fourth Grade

16. Analogies are no longer tested on SAT and it would be more powerful to use terms like “students will investigate word relationships/synonyms/comparisons/origins” etc.
17. Fluency is more than oral reading and from first grade up TEKS must stress silent reading fluency that is established by re-readings, repetition, formula and series books, familiar patterns etc.
18. Response is critical as students read and listen. Students should be guided to compare/contrast, critique the strengths and concerns, support with evidence, agree/disagree with evidence etc.
19. In Item 4/E “Students work productively in teams.” I am not sure what they are supposed to do. I think this is already stated if student response groups are established in the “Response” section. CCRS uses the term “cross-disciplinary.”
20. Again response should include “personal response” such as: appreciation, emotional and meaningful...
21. Research- the hardest part of research is establishing a focus and cohesion. This should be part of the essential element at all grades from 4th through 12th grade.
22. Responding to teacher and peer response to research should also be part of research at all levels to grade 12.

Fifth grade

23. Silent fluency should include “adjusted reading rate.”
24. In item 8 D students should have a focus for their research along with developed cohesion.

Sixth grade

25. Should “Write legibly” be added to each grade level to grade 12?
26. 1B fluency includes adjusted reading rate based upon “purpose and difficulty/background knowledge.”
27. 3A texts evoke response (personal emotions and connections). Would appreciate literature be appropriate too?
28. Response might also include response to drama and poetry (read, listened to or responding to a live performance)
29. 5 (Multiple Genre) Would you like to add media sources too?
30. 6 E – Can eliminate the word “simply.”
31. 7 E (excellent to include a response to feedback from peers and teacher) and should be included at all grade levels. Kindergarten children can respond too! This should be included in the response to research as well. Peer and teacher feedback is critical.
32. Under research, I am suggesting Texas adopt a standard form of citing.

Seventh Grade

33. 5G might include “memoir” as an example too. It is a dominate genre presently.
34. 6 F & G are repeated. Can eliminate one.
35. 7 I I Presents effective introductions and concluding paragraphs (ideas). The word “paragraphs” is not accurate as a conclusion may be only one paragraph or just a few sentences. Using the word “ideas” would be more accurate and useful.

Eighth Grade

36. The comments for 6th and 7th are the same for 8th.
37. 6F should take into account historical and cultural context.

High School

38. Under b-1 at the high school level, there is no need for listing competency in phonological awareness, print concepts and phonics. Word recognition at this level should focus on cognates, vocabulary, word origins, contextual meanings etc.
39. Under 1-D – The reason that self-selected text is so critical across all the grade levels is that this is how fluency is established and maintained. Reading, re-reading, reading familiar texts are methods to increase fluency at all levels.
40. Under 2 (comprehension) I would also look for a balance of aesthetic/efferent responses. It is critical that students understand how to read and listen aesthetically for emotional impact and personal connectivity. Within the comprehension standards should be imbedded reading with understandings of cultural and historical contexts.

41. Under 5 – Multiple Genre- could the verb “synthesize” be added to analyze? And, in fact, readers read, analyze, synthesize and make personal aesthetic connections during the reading process.
42. Under 6 – Author’s craft- I’m glad that “Voice” is included because it is voice that speaks to the reader and it is voice that makes the powerful writing that again connects to the reader.
43. Under 7 C&D – Composition – revisions and edits should understand the importance of voice and how important voice is to syntax and tense and again taking into account the purpose and audience. How did Twain and Dickens use syntax, tense, and grammar to present strong voices? It is all part of the author’s craft.
44. Under 8 – research – It is important for students to understand primary and secondary sources and how to cite. Perhaps a universal citing system would be good so students don’t have to keep changing from APA, to MLA to Chicago styles of citing.
45. At the 10th grade – English II there is a mention of “timed” writing in 7B. I don’t think that is an important element for standards but rather a decision made in curriculum and instruction at the classroom level.
46. English II – 7 M – It is not necessary to insert convention rules (punctuation in this case) in the standards.
47. Excellent to include the word “ethical” into research portion.
48. At all levels, I would hope that response to research would be integrated.