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## English Language Arts Standards

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### The Background:

In October 2014, Governor Haslam announced the creation of a standards review website that would be open to the public to review and offer feedback on what Tennessee students should know and be able to do by the end of each K-12 school year in both mathematics and English language arts (ELA). At the time of that announcement, the Governor also laid out a comprehensive standards review process. This process was further expounded upon by the 109<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Public Chapter 423, which charged the State Board of Education with overseeing the review of math and ELA standards that culminated in the State Board adopting revised standards in April 2016 and schools and districts implementing those standards in the 2017-18 school year.

The review process that concluded in 2016 was exemplary for the level of stakeholder involvement it generated and the work of the expert educators who developed the standards. However, schools and districts experienced several consequences to having the ELA and math standards reviewed at the same time, and ahead of the regular, six-year review cycle.

- The six-year textbook and instructional materials review cycle no longer coincided with the standards review cycle, meaning that **educators did not have state-reviewed materials aligned to the revised standards** in the first year of implementation.
- With support from the Tennessee Department of Education, **districts had to train educators on revised standards in two major content areas at the same time**. Typically, districts could focus resources on one core content area each year; given that ELA and math were implemented at the same time, they had to increase time and resources dedicated to preparing teachers to implement the revised standards.
- **Teachers had to quickly design instruction aligned with revised standards in two of their core subject areas at the same time**, particularly those in elementary grades who teach multiple subjects.

The State Board sought to build on the highly effective ELA standards adopted in 2016 while also returning ELA and math to separate review cycles, each aligned with their respective textbook review cycle, by conducting an implementation check review of the ELA standards. This review allowed educators an opportunity to point out areas of the revised standards that needed additional clarity or that needed other slight modifications. The timeline for the implementation check was:

- **December 2017 – January 2018:** The State Board hosted an online survey for educators and community members to provide feedback on the ELA standards.
- **February 2018:** State Board staff aggregated the data from the survey and added in concerns from the field that the ELA specialists at the Department of Education had noted throughout the training and early implementation period.

- **March 2018:** A team of Tennessee ELA educators met in person to review the feedback and begin incorporating necessary changes. The team worked throughout April and May 2018 and submitted proposed changes to the State Board.
- **June 2018:** State Board and Department staff worked with the review team to answer remaining questions and make final edits.
- **July 2018:** An overview of the implementation check process and summary of proposed modifications to the ELA standards will be presented to the State Board at their quarterly workshop. The standards will be up for approval on first reading.

On first reading, proposed changes to the standards include:

- **Clarifications regarding specific standards:** The reviewers recommended changes to several standards in order to address concerns from educators and other members of the public.
- **Grammatical and formatting changes:** Several changes have been made throughout the standards document to ensure that proper and consistent language and formatting are used.
- **Refinements to glossary definitions.**

In addition, the standards reviewers updated the format of the permanent ELA elective courses. They improved the **coding** of the standards and the **introductory text** for each set of standards to better clarify the purpose of each course. There were few changes to the actual elective course standards.

Following the State Board vote on first reading, the draft standards will be available on the State Board website for continued public comment through September 15, 2018. **The public is encouraged to provide feedback by reviewing the standards and emailing their comments to [TNStandards.Review@tn.gov](mailto:TNStandards.Review@tn.gov).** The standards will be presented on final reading in October 2018 with any necessary changes based on public feedback. The ELA standards approved in Fall 2018 will be implemented in the 2020-21 school year; at that time, districts will also have new, standards-aligned instructional materials to support standards implementation.

Finally, the State Board plans to conduct an implementation check of the math standards in late 2018 through 2019 in order to complete the process of returning the ELA and math reviews to their typical, separate, six-year cycles.

#### **The Recommendation:**

The SBE staff recommends acceptance of this item on first reading.