

# English Language Arts Standards Public Comments

## EXHIBIT #1

**Date Submitted: September 11, 2017**  
**(Art Marmorstein, Northern State University)**

Eliminating the Common Core label is misleading. These are still pretty much the Common Core standards. Copy any of the standards, do a Google search, and one gets dozens of hits from dozens of states. It's pretty clear that no-one has yet done the work of cleaning up the awful, jargon-filled language of the Common Core.

I've served on state-wide standards review teams myself, and I know how hard it is to get committees to agree on wording. Difficult or no, it's important that \*English\* standards at least are a model of clear, concise writing. The standards here are badly in need of a rewrite.

Problems abound. Consider, for instance, 1.RF.3.d which insists that 1st grade students be able to "Use knowledge that every syllable must have a vowel sound to determine the number of syllables in a printed word."

That's really awkward. It would be simpler to say students should know how to divide words into syllables.

Then there's 2.RF.3.c which says 2nd graders should be able to "Decode regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels and short vowels." Note that the misplaced prepositional phrase makes this ambiguous and hard on the reader. The phrase is unnecessary anyway. What's wrong with simply saying 2nd graders should be able to sound out two-syllable words?

It's hard to tell what "decode" means in 2.RF.3 and elsewhere. Does it mean "sound out"? Does it mean "read"? If "sound out" then 2.RF.3.f (which asks 2nd graders to "recognize and read grade-appropriate high frequency words") is misplaced. That's a sight-reading skill, not a phonics skill.

I suspect that many work-group members wanted to bleed red ink over the standards draft or just put a big 'X' across the page with a big "rewrite" in the margin. Passages like the following really need to be cleaned up:

4.RF.4 Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

- a. Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
- b. Read grade-level texts in a variety of genres orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and prosody (stress, phrasing, intonation, and expression) on consecutive readings.
- c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

This is the kind of language George Orwell (among others) warned against. Be great to see some of your work-group members read Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" and then clean up the standards following Orwell's suggestions.

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## EXHIBIT #2

**Date Submitted: September 11, 2017**  
**(Art Marmorstein, Northern State University)**

It's curious that the Standards web page goes out of its way to make this claim:

"The South Dakota Content Standards were neither written nor funded by the Federal Government. South Dakota educators and content specialists participated in the review, revision, development, and feedback process."

Wouldn't it have been more useful to the public to know who \*did\* fund the development of the standards? And wouldn't it have been more useful to note who the \*primary authors\* of the standards were instead of stating (rather misleadingly) that South Dakotans helped in the review and feedback process?

Since the new standards retain so much of the Common Core, primary credit ought to go those who paid for and wrote the original Common Core standards.

As to authorship, Wikipedia says this:

"In 2009, the NGA convened a group of people to work on developing the standards. This team included David Coleman, William McCallum of the University of Arizona, Phil Daro, and Student Achievement Partners founders Jason Zimba[6] and Susan Pimentel to write standards in the areas of English and language arts."

And as to funding, Wikipedia says this:

"Development of the Common Core Standards was funded by the governors and state schools chiefs, with additional support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Pearson Publishing Company, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and others."

Credit where credit is due...

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## EXHIBIT # 3

**Date Submitted: September 16, 2017**  
**(Anne Moege, Mitchell Middle School)**

In particular, I support the additions of students' self-selection of texts and writing prompts (RL.10, RI.10, W.10) and the continued use of literacy standards within content areas outside of English language arts. The National Council of Teachers of English have affirmed the importance of student choice and reading/writing across the content areas within the attached policy belief.

The process in reviewing and ultimately suggesting standards followed a specific protocol that leaders and teachers faithfully followed. The outcome lays a strong foundation for the next step, one of which will be unpacking the standards to assist teachers in better understanding the standards. Educators in South Dakota are ready to continue to move forward.

[Exhibit 3A](#)

## EXHIBIT # 4

**Date Submitted: September 19, 2017**  
**(2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher, Fred Assam, Brandon Valley)**

Adding the handwriting piece, simplified language is nice.

Lack of examples on the new standards. Took out examples listen in the poetry standard which was nice to be reminded of

## EXHIBIT #5

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(Jena Storm, 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Robert Bennis Elementary)**

They appear to be more clear and less general.

*What proposed changes concern you? Please provide specific suggestions, references to specific standards and justification to improve the proposed change*  
None at the moment.

## EXHIBIT #6

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher, Robert Bennis Elementary, Brandon Valley)**

We feel that specific wording changes are very beneficial.

Handwriting. Printing and forming letters correctly is very difficult by ages 7, 8 and we feel it is sometimes too late to fix or master.

## EXHIBIT #7

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Robert Bennis Elementary, Brandon Valley)**

The change in language will better help students teachers better comprehend standards to teach.

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## EXHIBIT #8

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**

**(Erin Lindner, Beth Schaffer, Erica Karl, Kimberly Moots, Jerrid Van Sloten, Kindergarten teachers, Brandon Valley Elementary)**

All the changes seem much more specific and easy to understand. The language matches and ties all other grade levels together. For example: KRF3, KRF4 and KL2. The changes also help clarify the expectation of expected skills. For example: KW5, KW6, KW7, KW8.

None of the changes concern us. We believe they are now simplified and easier to understand. We agree with the changes and feel like they are much more clear.

## EXHIBIT #9

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**

**(FAE Kindergarten , Brandon Valley Elementary)**

K.L.1 We agree with changing 'printing many letters' to 'printing all letters'. We believe this is a valuable skill in kindergarten.

K.RI.10 We don't feel the change to this standards is developmentally appropriate. Quote from National Association for the of Young Children: "Given the range within which children typically master reading, even with exposure to print-rich environments and good teaching, a developmentally appropriate expectation is for most children to achieve beginning conventional reading (also called early reading) by age seven.

[Exhibit 9A](#)

## EXHIBIT #10

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**

**(3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers, Brandon Valley Elementary)**

Several standards seem lengthy- Example- 3.W.3, 3.W.RI10

## EXHIBIT #11

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**

**(1<sup>st</sup> Grade teacher, Fred Assam Elementary, Brandon Valley)**

The standards seem to be more clearly written for students and instruction.

## EXHIBIT #12

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**

**(4<sup>th</sup> Grade FAE, Brandon Valley)**

*What proposed changes do you feel benefit South Dakota, and specifically students? Please provide specific examples from the standards.*

Using the term inference and getting rid of the word prose and use story.

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## EXHIBIT #13

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teachers, Brandon Elementary)**

1.L.1 is beneficial so all students are able to print ALL uppercase and lowercase letters, rather than just some. It is important first graders can correctly form all letters by the end of the year.

1.L.2 Spell grade-appropriate high-frequency words is a change that is concerning. We feel it is reasonable for students in first grade to be able to read the high-frequency words. Focusing on spelling of those words is secondary.

Some wording seems to be easier to understand than in the past.

## EXHIBIT #14

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(4<sup>th</sup> teacher, Valley Springs Elementary, Brandon Valley)**

I think rewording some of the standards so they align better to the grades above them, is great. It will help build student vocabulary and understanding. I also like how some standards are reworded so they are easier to understand and the vocabulary used is clear.

I'm not concerned about the proposed changes. Changing standards so the verbage is the same, they align better with the grades around them, and they are easier to understand, I believe will help everyone.

## EXHIBIT #15

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Robert Bennis Elementary, Brandon Valley)**

3.R.L.6 - Point of View - After reviewing our Star data, we noticed that our students were scoring low on point of view questions in regards to the Smarter Balance Test. This change has made this standard more clear. We like the terminology of "high frequency words." We were wondering what specific words are being used. Fry?

## EXHIBIT #16

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(Kindergarten, VSE, Brandon Valley)**

I feel that there are several standards that have become more specific and will help guide in our teaching expectations and documentation. For example: K.RL.4 in the previous standard it just generalized to "text", now it is more specific asking for stories, poems, nursery rhymes or songs. It broadens ideas and isn't so general. K.RL.10 was very general that student will actively engage in purposeful reading with understanding. Now the standard is much more specific about a variety of literary text. But it was added "with prompting and support" which at this age is very important to know developmentally they will still need some prompting in self-selecting materials for personal enjoyment, interest and academic tasks.

In K.RF.3 c. I would like them to create a specific list of high frequency words that would be common ground for everyone in kindergarten. Right now some schools add the color words and some do not. I think there is probably a list that has been researched that could be added to this standard.

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## EXHIBIT #17

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, FAE, Brandon Valley)**

It made it user friendly and included vocabulary that be used K-12.  
We don't have concerns with the changes that were made.

## EXHIBIT #18

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(1<sup>st</sup> Grade teacher, RBE, Brandon Valley)**

*What proposed changes do you feel benefit South Dakota, and specifically students? Please provide specific examples from the standards.*

No major changes that will seem to make a difference.

*What proposed changes concern you? Please provide specific suggestions, references to specific standards and justification to improve the proposed change.*

None

## EXHIBIT #19

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers, Brandon Valley Elementary)**

It appears that the new language in the standards makes the expectations clearer.  
At this point we do not have any specific concerns.

## EXHIBIT #20

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(RBE, Brandon Valley)**

Some of the language is easier to read and understand. We feel it is more open-ended for student discussion.  
no concerns

## EXHIBIT #21

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(1<sup>st</sup> Grade teacher, VSE, Brandon Valley)**

I think being more developmentally appropriate with wording helps; like the added phonological awareness  
Writing - feel that we are expecting a lot from first graders in the form of writing.

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## EXHIBIT #22

**Date Submitted: September 20, 2017**  
**(Wanda Logan, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, Valley Springs Elementary)**

Some of the changes that were made will help teachers to understand what is expected of students. They are written to understand more of what is expected which will help teachers in their lessons. Therefore students will benefit in their learning.

I am not concerned about any changes.

## EXHIBIT #23

**Date Submitted: September 21, 2017**  
**(4<sup>th</sup> grade, Brandon Valley Elementary)**

Cooperate and problem solve as appropriate for productive group discussions. The more students work in groups and work together in order to solve problems the better.

I am concerned that without the crossed out areas, new teachers may be unfamiliar with the specifics of the standards.

The more examples that a standard defines the less we have to interpret as an educator.

## EXHIBIT # 24

**Date Submitted: September 27, 2017**  
**(12<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, BVHS, Brandon Valley)**

Updating is impressive. Looks good. Matches current state.

1. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
2. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements)

"intended audience" causes problems these days. Sometimes an unintended audience consumes a message. We must be able to analyze what was intended, for whom it was intended, and which audience was ignored/avoided.

I like the updates; they are definitely entering and matching the students' worlds more.

## EXHIBIT #25

**Date Submitted: September 27, 2017**  
**(5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, BVIS, Brandon Valley)**

The language was clarified and is easier to read and understand.  
We think the changes are good changes. Thanks for revising!

# English Language Arts Standards Public Comments

## EXHIBIT #26

**Date Submitted: September 27, 2017**  
**(7<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA Teacher, Brandon Valley Middle School)**

There aren't many specific changes in regards to what is being taught. However, it is written in more student friendly language.

7.SL.1e - How are teachers to evaluate cooperation, mediation, and problem-solving without being subjective? Will there be an objective assessment tool provided?

## EXHIBIT #27

**Date Submitted: September 27, 2017**  
**(6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA teacher, Brandon Valley)**

In Standard RI.10 and RL.10- they are having students self-select informational and personal texts.... More choices are given and encouraged for the students.

6W.6 Demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to produce writing with a minimum of two-three pages in a single sitting. 1. We do not teach keyboarding. 2. 2-3 pages, in a single sitting is a lot for 6th grade students to produce quality writing, at a single time.

We feel that most of the revisions we have already been teaching/practicing.

## EXHIBIT #28

**Date Submitted: September 27, 2017**  
**(Grade 8 teachers, Brandon Valley Middle School)**

Word changes clarify meaning, as in 8.SL.2. 8.RL.10 allows for more freedom choice in their writing.

Standards 8.SL.3 and 8.RI.8 clarify "delineate" differently. For consistency, each should read either "deconstruct" or "break down."

For consistency in editing, consider 8.RH.3, 8.RH.6, 8.RH.7, and 8.RST.7. The addition of "etc." should be within the parenthesis (8.RH.3), and should include a comma before each "etc."

8.WHST.1 notes an addition of (f), but (f) in the standard has been struck.

8.WHST.6 notes the standard will be kept as is, but the phrase "including the Internet" has been struck.

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## EXHIBIT #29

**Date Submitted: September 28, 2017**  
**(7<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA teachers, Brandon Valley Middle School)**

We like that are very major changes. Stick to the good stuff and we will all succeed.

7.W.6 - "Sufficient command of keyboarding skills to produce writing with stamina in a single setting." Why is this even still a standard regarding "time" as it isn't a skill assessed in Smarter Balance? Students may take as much time as they need to complete the test. In addition, the "keyboarding" part doesn't seem to relate to ELA but rather a computer class. Obviously, we use the keyboarding skill (as do most classes) but it shouldn't be a required standard listed for ELA.

## EXHIBIT #30

**Date Submitted: September 29, 2017**  
**(9<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Brandon Valley High School)**

*What proposed changes do you feel benefit South Dakota, and specifically students? Please provide specific examples from the standards*

Nothing at this time

*What proposed changes concern you? Please provide specific suggestions, references to specific standards and justification to improve the proposed change.*

Nothing at this time

## EXHIBIT #31

**Date Submitted: November 6, 2017**  
**(Tom Cartney, English/Language Arts Teacher, Wagner Community School)**

*What proposed changes do you feel benefit South Dakota, and specifically students? Please provide specific examples from the standards.*

We already have far TOO MANY standards. Rather than teaching reading and writing, we end up teaching to standards. As Mike Schmoker writes in his book Focus, we need to greatly simplify the standards and focus on reading quality texts, writing based on these texts, and discussing quality questions about those texts. Students who can read well, write well, and think deeply will do very well in life.

*What proposed changes concern you? Please provide specific suggestions, references to specific standards and justification to improve the proposed change.*

Reduction of Standards

## English Language Arts Standards Public Comments

### EXHIBIT #32

**Date Submitted: December 13, 2017**  
**(Jill Reimer, Teacher)**

I do not notice any significant changes.

### EXHIBIT #33

**Date Submitted: January 18, 2018**  
**(Jennifer Macziewski, Parent & Kindergarten Teacher, Rapid City School District)**

I wish I could be in attendance at this board meeting. It is frustrating that these meetings happen during the day when we teachers have commitments to students and parents.

My expertise is in Kindergarten. The updates to the standards are encouraging for teachers like me. Kindergarten is a developmental keystone, so it should be age-appropriate AND rigorous. I feel the standards are both. I have taught Kindergarten for 7 years. I have seen first-hand that kindergarten students are fully capable of achieving the current standards. The powerful tweaks I notice in the new kindergarten standards keep the rigor and appropriateness.

I am especially excited about the handwriting standards. It is completely necessary and important for kindergarten students to be able to write ALL the letters with proper formation and pencil grip.

These standards will effectively prepare kindergarten students for the 12+ years of education in their future.

As a PARENT of a future student who will be taught by these standards, I am excited for my children to experience a rigorous education in South Dakota.

I do not have any concerns. I was a member of the committee working on the standards revision. I have never been in a room with such passionate, intelligent, admirable people. Though I am not an expert at the other grade levels, I am confident in the decisions made because there wasn't a person in the room I wouldn't trust to teach my own children.