

# Overview of Incorporation of Independent Evaluations and Public Comment Into Proposed Indiana Academic Standards

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INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



On February 13-14, 2014, the academic standards Evaluation Panels met during a public meeting to complete a blind evaluation of standards that best aligned with college and career ready learning outcomes. This resulted in a draft set of academic standards, labeled “Draft #1”, which was posted for public comment from February 19 through March 12. Six independent evaluators were also invited to provide feedback on Draft #1, and four agreed to do so. These individuals are:

- Dr. James Milgram, Ph.D., Stanford University
- Dr. Shauna Findlay, Ph.D., Indiana ASCD
- Ms. Janet Rummel, Indiana Network of Independent Schools
- Ms. Kathleen Porter-Magee, Fordham Institute

Following the close of the public comment period on Draft #1, the Standards Leadership Development Team and Indiana Department of Education (“Department”) content specialists incorporated the feedback from independent evaluators and the public comments into a second draft of the standards, labeled “Draft #2” and dated March 14, 2014. Draft #2 was distributed to six national evaluators, who were invited to provide feedback on Draft #2. These evaluators are:

- Dr. Sandra Stotsky – E/LA
- Dr. Terrence Moore, Hillsdale College – E/LA
- Joanne Eresh (Achieve) – E/LA
- Dr. James Milgram (Stanford University) – Math
- Professor Hung-Hsi Wu (UC Berkeley) – Math
- Kaye Forgiione (Achieve) – Math

After receiving independent evaluator feedback and public comment, the Standards Leadership Development Team and the Department’s content area specialists reviewed and analyzed the input provided for themes and specific suggestions. The themes and suggestions were shared with the Evaluation Teams (where applicable) and the College and Career Ready Panels. At that point, the Hoosier subject matter experts discussed the feedback and determined whether it should be incorporated into the next iteration of the standards. These determinations were made based on alignment to Indiana’s definition of college and career ready, as well as how the Hoosier experts determined that suggestions would improve or not improve progression across and within grade levels (e.g., skills gaps, grade level appropriateness), clarity, specificity, and bias.

It is important to note that the form of feedback received from the nine independent evaluators varied widely. Some reviewers provided specific feedback on individual standards while others provided more global or thematic feedback.

The responses provided in this document detail how the Hoosier expert panels (Evaluation Teams, College and Career Panels, and content specialists) synthesized, reviewed, evaluated, and, where deemed appropriate, incorporated the over 2,000 comments from Hoosier parents, educators, and community members, as well as the nine independent evaluators invited to provide expert evaluation.

**Some examples of where suggestions were incorporated into the English/Language Arts standards or will be incorporated into support materials (e.g., resource guides) include:**

- A list of sample texts to help demonstrate text complexity will be included in a resource guide that will be developed by the Department. These texts will be examples only and not a recommended or prescribed reading list, in order to continue to recognize the importance of local decision making.
- A number of standards were reviewed in attempts to improve clarity and make it easier for educators and parents to understand the skill being described. For example, a K-5 phonics standard that was identified as unclear was originally written as “use letter-sound knowledge to write simple messages and words which accurately represent at least the initial sounds or many of the most frequent sounds of each consonant.” To improve clarity, the panel rewrote the standard as “use letter-sound knowledge to decode the sound of each consonant (e.g., dog = /d/ /g/; soap = /s/ /p/).”
- Efforts were made to eliminate any language that may appear to promote reading excerpts of texts instead of entire books, as the panels strongly agreed with the importance of reading entire books.
- Some reviewers criticized the lack of embedded examples, which they found to inhibit the clarity of the standard. In some cases, examples were added back in when they improved clarity (e.g., providing examples of word families that would be appropriate for second grade; providing examples of figurative language appropriate for fifth grade). However, in other cases (e.g., suggestions to embed specific texts into standards), the panel deemed those to be overly specific and prescriptive.
- Literacy standards for content areas (History/Social Studies and Science/Technical Subjects) were evaluated, revised for clarity and content-area appropriateness, and were included in the draft standards that were released. Note that these are not English/Language Arts standards; however, they are literacy standards that will help guide content-area teachers in grades 6-12 to incorporate literacy while building content knowledge.
- In order to address concerns that reading standards focused too much on informational text, the reading sections were changed to Reading: Literature and Reading: Nonfiction. Literary nonfiction is incorporated into nonfiction and includes such materials as biographies, memoirs, speeches, essays, etc. These changes will ensure that teachers utilize original documents (e.g., the Declaration of Independence) rather than textbooks that describe the original documents.
- In order to further address concerns about lack of clarity, a glossary of terms will be included in the resource guides that will be provided to schools. Terms to be included in the glossary were identified using specific comments from evaluators; terms identified by panel members; and public comments.
- In order to address concerns about standard progression across grade levels, the standards were articulated side-by-side (in other words, a skill taught in kindergarten was lined up against the skill progression in first grade, second grade, third grade, etc.). Further, the panels were specifically instructed to review the standards from grades 12 down to kindergarten to identify any skill gaps or any standards that did not appear to increase from one grade level to the next.

A number of standards were either re-written to increase the expectation, or their places were switched (e.g., a 9-10<sup>th</sup> grade standard was moved to 11-12<sup>th</sup> grade, and the 11-12<sup>th</sup> grade standard was moved to 9-10<sup>th</sup>).

- To address concerns expressed by several evaluators about lack of anchor standards, the panels worked to create Learning Outcomes for each content area (e.g., Reading: Literature), as well as summary standards for each sub-content area (e.g., Structural Elements and Organization). The summary standards are designed to provide educators and parents with a high-level overview of what skills are covered in each sub-content area (grades K-5 and grades 6-12), while the Learning Outcomes provide a specific expectation for what students should know and be able to do as they master skills within content area.

**Some examples of where suggestions were incorporated into the Math standards include:**

- Based on the mathematics feedback, a few ideas regarding data analysis, statistics, and probability were identified as lacking from the high school college and career ready standards. These ideas were discussed within the College and Career Ready (CCR) Panel and incorporated into the appropriate high school courses as these ideas were determined to be college and career ready standards and improve the overall learning progressions for these topics in high school.
- Additionally, a few standards in the elementary grades regarding data analysis were deemed as potentially detracting from focus within those grades due to the amount of time that would be required for students to learn such material. In one grade, one of these standards was removed altogether to create more focus within the grade and given that the idea would be studied in later grades. In the other two grades, the two identified standards were revised to make them less demanding, thus helping to keep greater focus in those grades while maintaining existing progressions.
- Another suggestion in the elementary grades was to consider building an approach where students would move from sense-making when first learning a new concept to using a standard algorithm. This idea was discussed within the CCR Panel and incorporated into the standards to more clearly articulate certain expectations of students.

**Some examples of where suggestions were incorporated into both English/Language Arts and Math include:**

- Reviewers who commented on the first draft of the standards made many comments about the overall number of standards, as well as some standards being redundant. Work was done by content specialists and the Evaluation Teams to eliminate redundancy by consolidating, rewriting, or deleting standards, which also resulted in a reduction in the number of standards.

**Some examples of where suggestions were not incorporated into the English/Language Arts standards include:**

- As noted above, there were several suggestions to incorporate or embed specific text examples into the standards themselves. However, the panel felt strongly that embedding specific texts into a standard is often perceived as prescribing the specific text that a teacher should teach or curriculum that a school corporation should adopt. The ability for a school corporation to make curricular decisions at the local level is very important, and the panel wanted to avoid appearing overly prescriptive in that area.
- There were comments that the standards were developed for assessment. The CCR Panel concluded that the standards were not written with an eye toward assessment, and acknowledged that , in order for standards to be strong, they must be measurable in both a formal and informal way (i.e., through classroom observation, a teacher’s appraisal of student learning, and more formal assessments). The standards are designed to show what a student must know and be able to do in order to be college and career ready. In order to determine whether a student knows and can demonstrate a skill, the skill must be written in a measurable way.
- A suggestion was made to eliminate print concepts from Reading Foundations (grades K-1) because the skills are too low-level and most students come into school already possessing these skills. However, the panel was in strong disagreement. The panel indicated that in fact many Hoosier students do not come to school with print concept skills; that print concepts are supported by research and have been present in Indiana standards since 2006; and also that kindergarten is not required in Indiana, so it’s imperative for teachers to ensure that students have mastered print concepts by the end of first grade.

**Some examples of where suggestions were not incorporated into the Math standards include:**

- A suggestion was to split some of the standards into standards containing sub-standards. This idea was not incorporated as to maintain coherence within the standards and maintain the overall structure of the standards.
- A suggestion was made to re-incorporate examples and embed them into the standards. However, the panel felt that including examples increased the length of the document, and the examples fit better into resource guides that will be provided as supporting materials for the standards.