

Problems with Idaho's Common Core Standards
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English/Language Arts

They contain political agendas:

page 6 - Career and College Readiness - "They come to understand other perspectives and cultures." Why not just say, "They understand differing viewpoints and perspectives."

e.g. p 11—RL.3.2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

e.g. p. 57 "SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

The overall impact is to suck the joy out of reading and writing throughout all of the grades.

Too much emphasis on analysis, understanding, evaluation, critical thinking (all of which are good things) at the expense of reading for the joy of learning and entertainment. (Why do people enjoy so many novels in their later years. They want to read for the sheer enjoyment of reading without being compelled to analyze and critique every implicit, explicit, nuanced meaning of every sentence and paragraph.

The language and organization are simply too complex.

The organization is too complex and difficult to follow: strands, sections, grade levels, and two content sections for 6-12 (which are then shown to be in K-5).

-Grade level teachers ought to be able to see all of their standards in one place.

-No single student could do what is expected at any of the grade levels.

-Students are expected to do things that Masters Degree English majors could not do.

-Young students are expected to do what may destroy their initial joy of reading.

-To expect our teachers to be able to teach all of the standards with clarity and accuracy is absurd.

-The complexity of the numbering system creates confusion, not ease or clarity.

- Organizing lower grade standards (maybe all grade standards) by College and Career Readiness Anchors complicates the standards and forces standards to be grade level inappropriate.

-The duplication of language from **literature** to **informational text** is unnecessary and adds confusion.

-The duplication of language from **grade level** to **grade level** is unnecessary and adds confusion.

-The duplication of language from **Reading** to **Writing** to **Speaking and Listening** to **Language** is unnecessary and adds confusion (including the Career and College Readiness Anchor standards). This is especially confusing in the 6-12 standards. Simply lay out the standard once and let schools and districts determine where, when, and how the standard is introduced and reviewed.

- The duplication of the Career and College Readiness Anchors in several places is unnecessary and adds confusion.
- Reading Standards for Foundational Skills K-5 should come first and be the primary emphasis.
- The **Handwriting** section is disconnected and seems to be thrown in (which it was). The section is terribly inadequate.
- The duplication of specific language and expectations across grade levels in the 6-12 standards is confusing and unnecessary.

The collective nature of the standards sets expectations that are too lofty for virtually any student to demonstrate “proficiency:”

-e.g. p. 53 “Apply grades 11-12 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. and other texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., The Federalist, presidential addresses]”). It may be better to understand the reasoning first. There is always an attempt to get students to “higher level thinking” before they are prepared to do it.

-e.g. p. 55 “evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.”

-e.g. p. 57 “Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.”

Standards for Conventions of Standard English (usage, grammar, punctuation, tense, parts of speech, sentence structures, clauses, phrases, voice, etc.) are terribly inadequate in the K-5 standards (and are also inadequate in the 6-12 standards).

The inclusion of sample literature contains items that are sexually explicit or politically motivated to promote certain new ideas that contradict long established morals and historically evident standards of a civil society. More emphasis should be on reading that promotes kindness, generosity, civility, and socially acceptable behavior. No literature should denigrate religion or religious worship or promote historical viewpoints that go against settled historical evidence. No literature should promote and glorify sexually explicit behavior and vulgar and demeaning language.

So, the question: What does “uplifting” literature mean?

The Reading and writing Standards in History/Social Studies and Science and Technical Subjects asks English teachers to be proficient and knowledgeable in areas and subjects which they most likely cannot be. Teach students the best practices of reading generally. Leave specific subject matter literacy to the experts in each subject area. This is a dangerous effort that will produce misunderstanding and misinformation.

The duplication of language in the reading and writing Standards in History/Social Studies and Science and Technical Subjects adds to the confusion of the standards.

The appendices should be part of the document. They are too hard to find on any of the state websites (State Board of Education and State Department of Education).

What are the Extended Content Standards in ELA? Massive document with even greater confusion and lack of purpose and clarity.

Math

Look at the comments on pages 15-16 of the Math Standards. We are not following those comments about "Greater Focus and Coherence." "Mathematics experiences in early childhood settings should concentrate on (1) number (which includes whole number, operations, and relations) and (2) geometry, spatial relations, and measurement, with more mathematics learning time devoted to number than to other topics. Mathematical process goals should be integrated in these content areas."

But there are problems with the introductory material: (p. 17 - "One hallmark of mathematical understanding is the ability to justify, in a way appropriate to the student's mathematical maturity, why a particular mathematical statement is true or where a mathematical rule comes from." Why are we asking young students the question "why" too early?

The emphasis on word problems and problem solving at the early grades before basic math facts are mastered.

Students are asked to read complex problems which complicates the math with reading comprehension (one, two, or three step word problems that may challenge them just in the reading and understanding of what is being said) This seems especially true in the K-3 standards.

The emphasis on modeling problems may be asking students to do things beyond their maturity and ability, especially in the lower grades.

Looking for and making use of structure may also be asking students to do things that are beyond their maturity and ability (especially in the early grades).

Multiple strategies may confuse students rather than help them. (It may help a few students but confuse most of the students.)

Curriculum writers and textbook authors may be the problem: They have taken the concept of multiple strategies too far.

Forcing students into "operations and algebraic thinking" and "equations" and "representing" too early may be more harmful than it is helpful.

e.g. First Grade - "Apply properties of operations as strategies to add and subtract.

3Examples: If $8 + 3 = 11$ is known, then $3 + 8 = 11$ is also known. (Commutative property of addition.) To add $2 + 6 + 4$, the second two numbers can be added to make a ten, so $2 + 6 + 4 = 2 + 10 = 12$. (Associative property of addition.)"

Things have been pushed into the lower grades that may be more harmful than they are helpful.

Listing high school standards in “conceptual categories” is confusing for teachers, students and parents. The standards need to be listed by traditional classes.

Science

Biggest Issue: Our science standards are not standards, they are curriculum and enrichment activities—The Performance Standards are not standards, they are curriculum! The Supporting Content represents better expressions of standards than the Performance Standards. The performance standards and be used as curriculum suggestions, not standards.

We should legislate standards (content standards—what students should know)

We should be more focused on simple lists of content knowledge.
that moves us from controversy

How we resolve this issue - get back to true standards, not enrichment or curriculum

Knowledge standards do not promote rote memorization

They give us a true standard that is measurable
good teachers have never promoted rote memorization
learning and memorization are closely relate things

We do need alignment, but it needs to be based on content,
not performance of enhancement activities

Many of the science standards, particularly in the elementary grades, are NOT appropriate for the grade level where they appear. Some of the expectations for young children are not realistic.

The science standards contain political agendas: everything from the negative impact of humans on the environment to global warming. Eliminate politically-charged standards where the science is not settled and where there are strong differences of opinion (or provide appropriate balance of opinions).

So we must answer a basic question: What are “politicized” science standards and what do we want?

A basic question about the process:

Are we starting completely from scratch or taking a set of standards and reworking them? If we are reworking them which set of standards? Idaho, California, Texas, Florida, etc.