

Literacy Standards Review

Team Report to the State Board of Education

September 22, 2016



Contents

Introduction.....	3
Process	4
Recommendations for revisions of the standards:.....	5
Recommendations for improving the Department's Iowa Core Standards website.....	5
Recommendations for providing professional learning and accompanying supports.....	6
Public input findings.....	7
Conclusion.....	17
Membership.....	18
Appendix A.	18
Reading Standards for Literature 6-12	19
Reading Standard for Informational Text 6-12.....	20

Introduction

Iowa's academic standards, the Iowa Core, have been created to ensure there is a consistent high bar across the state in what students should learn and be able to do from the time they enter school as kindergartners until they graduate. The Iowa Core covers the areas of science, social studies, English-language arts, mathematics and 21st Century skills (employability skills; and civic, financial, health and technology literacy). The intent behind these standards is to give students the skills and knowledge they need to succeed after high school, while still giving each school district's administrators and teachers the ability to make decisions about curriculum and classroom instruction.

Each of Iowa's sets of standards is undergoing a review in response to Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad's Executive Order 83, which was issued in 2013 and called for an ongoing review of the state's academic standards to evaluate the content and to receive feedback from educators and others in order to continue to improve students' learning expectations. The order required a review, revision and possible rewriting process be conducted, so that Iowans determine the content of the state's academic standards. The Literacy Standards review is part of the second phase of standards' reviews. The first phase began with a review and update of the Science Standards in 2015.

The Literacy Standards Review Team consisted of 22 Iowans from a wide range of academia (elementary to post-secondary) and business professionals who work in the areas of communications, reading or English-language arts. The team's charge was to review the Iowa Literacy Standards, which include the kindergarten through 12th-grade English Language Arts standards and the grades six through 12 Literacy Standards for history, social studies, science, and technical subjects. The team also examined feedback via an online public survey, public forums and discussion groups to create a set of final recommendations for the Iowa State Board of Education to review.

The team found that there was strong support for the Iowa Literacy Standards among educators at all grade levels. A common theme from the survey responses of teachers was that they were moving toward full implementation of the standards and finding positive results in their classrooms. Consequently, the team determined not to make any large scale, conceptual changes to the standards. Instead the recommendations focus on changes in language to improve clarity and eliminate redundancy and the identification of additional resources and professional learning for teachers.

This report is a summary of the team's work and includes its recommendations for changes to Iowa's Literacy Standards. The recommendations had unanimous approval.

Process

The Literacy Standards review team was convened in February 2016 and met monthly through June 2016.

During the course of five daylong meetings, the review team studied the current Literacy Standards and reviewed the infrastructure and support for those standards. Specifically, team members were charged with the following tasks:

- Gathering feedback and identifying the level of stakeholder agreement/disagreement with the standards
- Identifying revisions that were necessary to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- Assessing the current levels of implementation of the standards among Iowa's teachers
- Identifying needs for professional development or learning materials and resources related to the standards for teachers and others

The Literacy Standards are a combination of the national Common Core standards and Iowa-specific standards. The portions that are specific to Iowa were added by a committee of Iowans after an alignment study to compare the two documents before final adoption of the Literacy Standards in 2010.

The review team knew public input was critical to the review process. Team members considered the questions that would need to be asked of Iowans to determine their understanding and assessment of the Literacy Standards. Then with the assistance of Iowa Department of Education staff, the review team created a survey they believed would reach a wide sector of Iowans from parents to educators to community members. There were more than 5,000 responses to the online survey. The review team examined and analyzed the feedback it received via the online survey to look for consistent areas of agreement or disagreement about specific standards or the standards as a whole.

The review team also reviewed national articles that provided a variety of perspectives about the Common Core and various standards; examined the Iowa-specific Literacy Standards to insure they added concepts and skills not already included in the Common Core; and reviewed all of the public comment feedback, which included the online survey, two focus groups and two public meetings. Team members used the common issues that arose during the public feedback process, along with their own analysis to determine how to improve the standards. The final result was a list of recommended changes to be made to the Literacy Standards.

After all of the data and public feedback were analyzed, the Literacy Standards review team met within their grade-band groups to create recommendations. They were given the option to keep a standard as it was, revise the standard or eliminate the standard. They were also charged with writing a recommendation regarding implementation of the standards in regards to the amount of professional learning and development, and the materials and resources teachers and administrators have available.

Each group drafted its own recommendations, which were then discussed and voted on for consensus by the entire review team. These are the final recommendations:

Recommendations for revisions of the standards

1. Eliminate specific text titles and authors throughout the Iowa Core Literacy Standards but maintain genre references. Survey and focus group participants said they saw the specific titles as required reading rather than examples of possible text options.
2. Clarify the use of the terms perspective and point of view throughout the standards. This will be done by inserting the proper term in parentheses within the standards statements and including the terms point of view and perspective in the glossary. The authors of Common Core failed to accurately differentiate between the two terms “perspective” and “point of view” in the Reading Standards.
3. Eliminate IA.1 in grades K-12 under Standards for Literature and Informational Text. Survey participants indicated they found this standard to be redundant.
4. Realign Standard IA.2 as a substandard of Standard 10 of the Reading Standards for Literature and Informational Text Standards 6-12. Feedback indicated that Standard IA.2 was a better fit as a substandard than a stand-alone standard. See Appendix A on p. 19 for the revised reading literature and informational text Standard 10.
5. Revise Speaking and Listening Standard 6 to include the content of the Iowa-specific standards IA. 5 and IA. 6. Feedback indicated that settings for public speaking should be incorporated into Standard 6. The revised Standard 6 for each grade level or span can be found in Appendix A on p. 21.

Recommendations for improving the Department’s Iowa Core Standards website

6. Improve the quality of literacy resources available to teachers on the Iowa Core website (www.iowacore.gov) by adding the following features:
 - a. Guidance on the selection of learner appropriate texts.
 - b. A resource list of common texts and text types that represent the needs of diverse learners and environments.
 - c. Resources, tools, and basic question protocols for quality grading practices using the Iowa Core Literacy standards, i.e., standards-based grading.
 - d. Resources such as best practices information and example lessons that will support the implementation of the Iowa Literacy Standards in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Standards among teachers of history, social studies, science and career and technical subjects.
7. Include the Iowa Literacy Standards in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects into the named content areas’ listings of standards and accompanying documents. Add the technical subjects’ standards to the PK-12 Iowa Department of Education website so that they are more readily accessible.

Recommendations for providing professional learning* and accompanying supports

8. Provide professional learning on developing, implementing, and analyzing the results of assessments of the Iowa Literacy standards. Professional learning will include formative assessments, common classroom assessments, and summative assessments including statewide assessments.
9. Design and deliver professional learning on differentiated instruction in the context of the Iowa Literacy Standards for all student groups, including but not limited to general education students, special education students, English language learners, and gifted/talented students.
10. Continue funding the development and delivery of professional development supporting the integration of literacy into science, social studies, and technical subjects.
11. Provide learning on collaboration models and scheduling collaboration time for teachers to work together to implement the Iowa Literacy Standards. This professional learning will be targeted for but not limited to district administrators, building leaders, and teacher leaders.

*The Department of Education collaborates with multiple partners in the development and delivery of professional learning, including the Area Education Agencies, schools and school districts, institutions of higher education, informal educators, organizations, and representatives of business and industry.

Public input findings

Public feedback on the Literacy Standards was sought in several ways. An online survey was created and available to the public through the Iowa Department of Education's website. The department posted a press release about the survey and distributed the information to statewide media on April 15, 2016. Review team members also brainstormed and sent suggestions of stakeholder groups who should take the survey. Those organizations, groups of educators and community members – which included literacy consultants/strategists, administrators, teachers, parents/guardians, business owners/professionals, school board members and more – received the survey through an email invitation.

As the survey was drafted and revised, team members and education department employees agreed it was important the final survey take less than an hour to complete or it would limit the number of respondents. Respondents also were directed to different questions depending on whether they were a parent/community member or an educator.

The survey was created using the following goals:

- To determine the opinions and perceptions of Iowa education stakeholders about the K-12 Iowa Core Literacy Standards
- To determine educator and survey-taker's knowledge and understanding of the content in the K-12 Iowa Core Literacy Standards
- To determine whether there is a need for additional professional development and whether professional learning supports student learning of the standards
- To determine the level of implementation of the standards across the state

The survey covered four general areas:

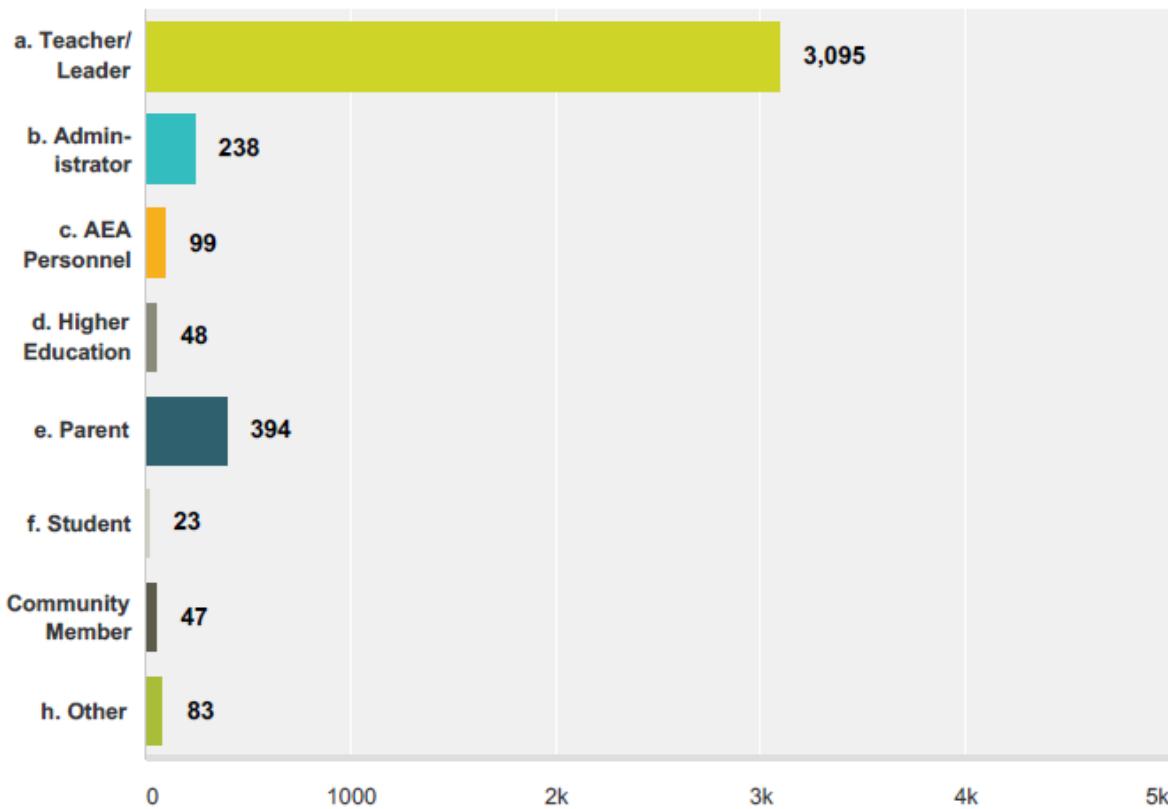
1. Introduction: This included questions about the demographics of the survey-taker and general questions about the standards.
2. Review: Survey-takers were able to choose grade-level standards to review and provide feedback. Within each grade, they could review the individual standards and select to keep the standard as is, suggest a revision or eliminate the standard. Survey-takers could make comments about why a standard should be revised or removed.
3. Understanding: Department consultants wanted to be able to glean data about the survey-takers' understanding of the standards.
4. Closing.

The survey was open online for four weeks. During that time, there were more than 5,000 responses.

Review team members were divided into groups based on grade-level bands to evaluate and analyze the survey data. The data were organized into searchable Microsoft Excel files. Team members were asked to pay specific attention to areas of significance, where there were a large number of respondents or a response that stood out, and areas of concern, where results were unexpected or if only a certain subgroup responded in a certain way. The goal was for the review team to use the data to determine if the standards needed to be revised, and if so, what revisions or additions were necessary; and to decide how implementation of the standards needs to be supported to help school districts and teachers.

Q3 Which stakeholder group do you primarily represent?

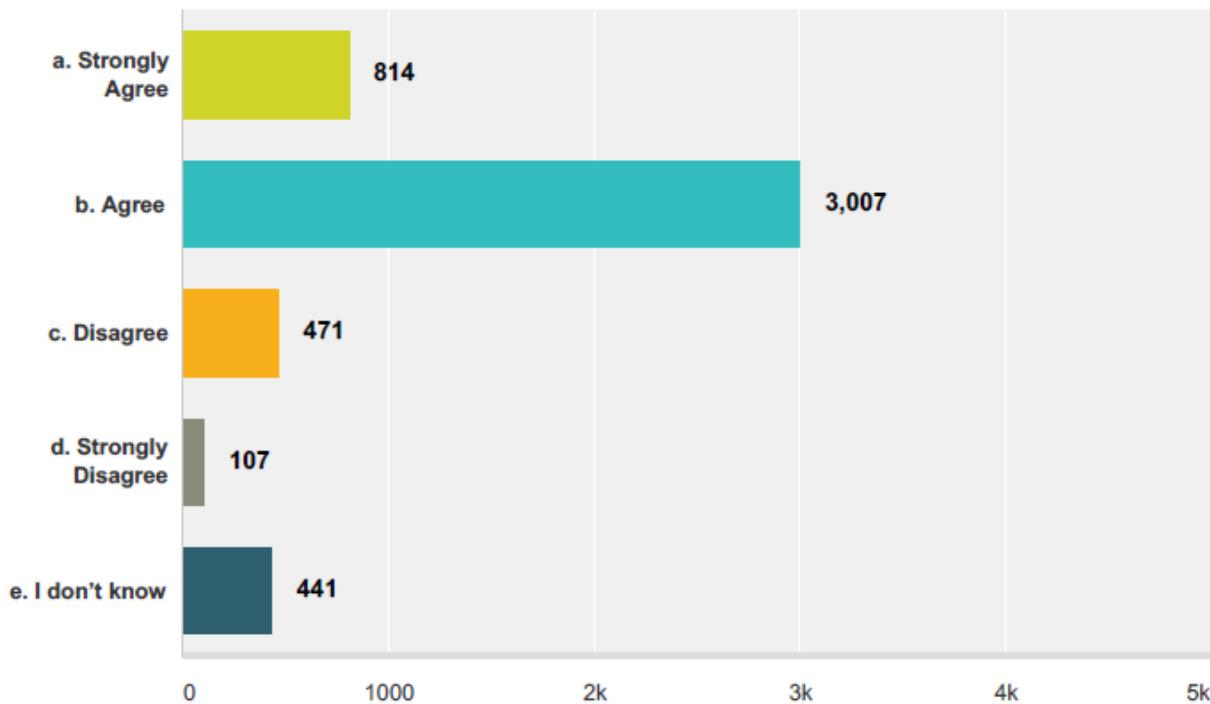
Answered: 4,027 Skipped: 0



Almost 100 percent of survey-takers lived in Iowa, and more than 75 percent were teachers/education leaders. More than half of the teacher respondents were elementary teachers, grades kindergarten through five.

Q6 I believe that the Iowa Literacy Standards will lead to improved student learning for the majority of students.

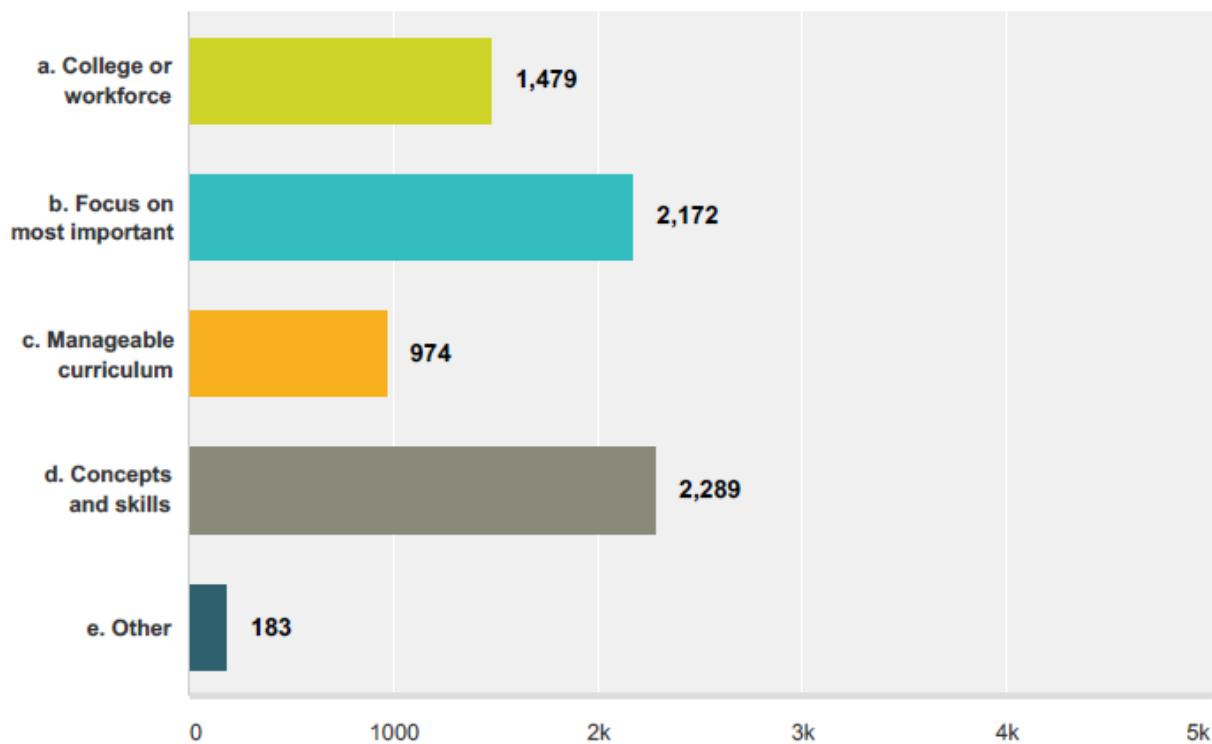
Answered: 4,840 Skipped: 406



The vast majority of respondents, almost 80 percent, agreed or strongly agreed that the Iowa Literacy Standards lead to improved learning for the majority of students. Of the 12 percent who responded to the question about why they didn't think the standards improved student learning, the majority said it had too much curriculum, wasn't flexible and was a "one size fits all" model.

Q7 Reasons the Iowa Literacy Standards will improve student learning

Answered: 3,217 Skipped: 810



Survey respondents saw the standards as valuable in assisting educators in prioritizing learning content. When asked why they perceived the Iowa Literacy Standards as improving student learning, 68 percent selected “They help educators focus on what’s most important” and 71 percent selected “They will help my school system ensure that students are learning the important concepts and skills.”

According to the survey data, respondents said the majority of the Literacy Standards should remain as they are currently written. The standards that generated the most requests for edits or elimination were the Iowa-specific standards. For example, Standard IA.1 Comprehension in the Reading Standards for Literature and Reading Standards for Informational Texts consistently received feedback for the standard to be revised or eliminated throughout various grade levels.

The same was true for Standard IA.2 Read On-Level Texts in the Reading Standards for Literature and Reading Standards for Informational Texts for grades six through 12. Iowa-specific standards IA.5 Conduct Interviews and IA.6 Public Performances, both in Speaking and Listening Standards also received high numbers of feedback with more than half of respondents suggesting the standards be eliminated for grades six through 12.

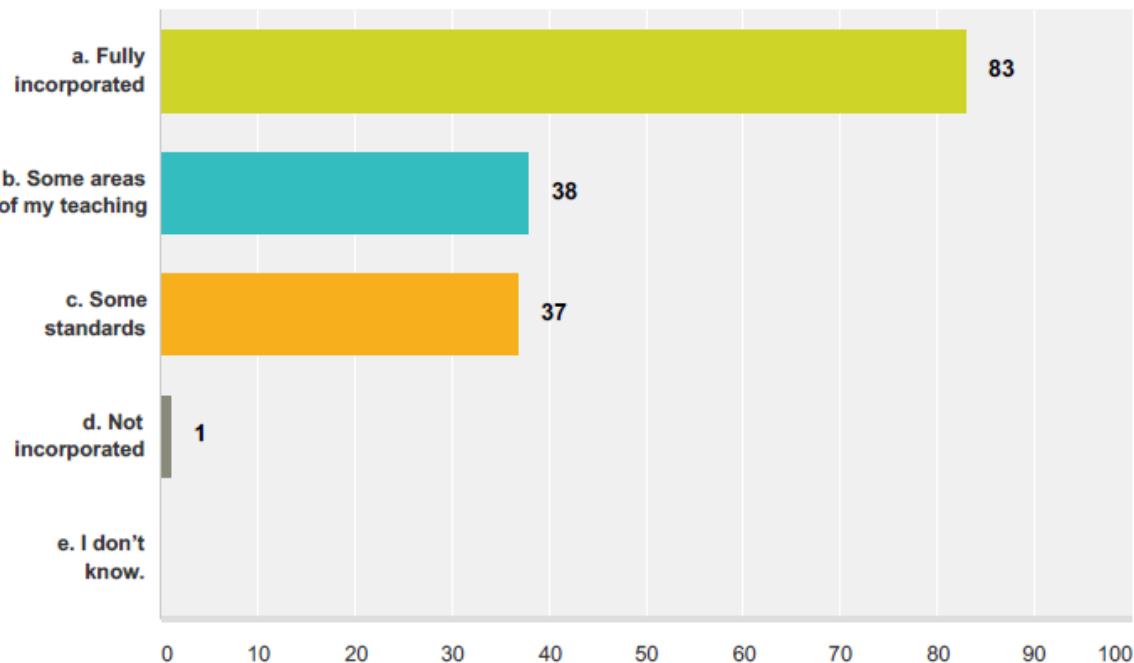
A much smaller number of respondents answered questions that pertained to literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects.

The review team discussed each one of the standards that had garnered feedback to either revise or eliminate the standard and the reason behind the response. In some cases, it was suggested to eliminate an Iowa-specific standard because it was redundant or could be incorporated into another standard. In other cases, standards were suggested for elimination because they were too specific about the use of a specific text or document.

In order to gain a more thorough understanding of how the Literacy Standards are working in the classroom, there was an “educators only” section of the survey in which survey-takers were asked about the implementation level of the standards at their school, the amount of professional development and training they’ve received regarding the standards and their confidence in teaching the standards to Iowa students.

Q158 Extent Iowa Literacy Standards incorporated into your practice?

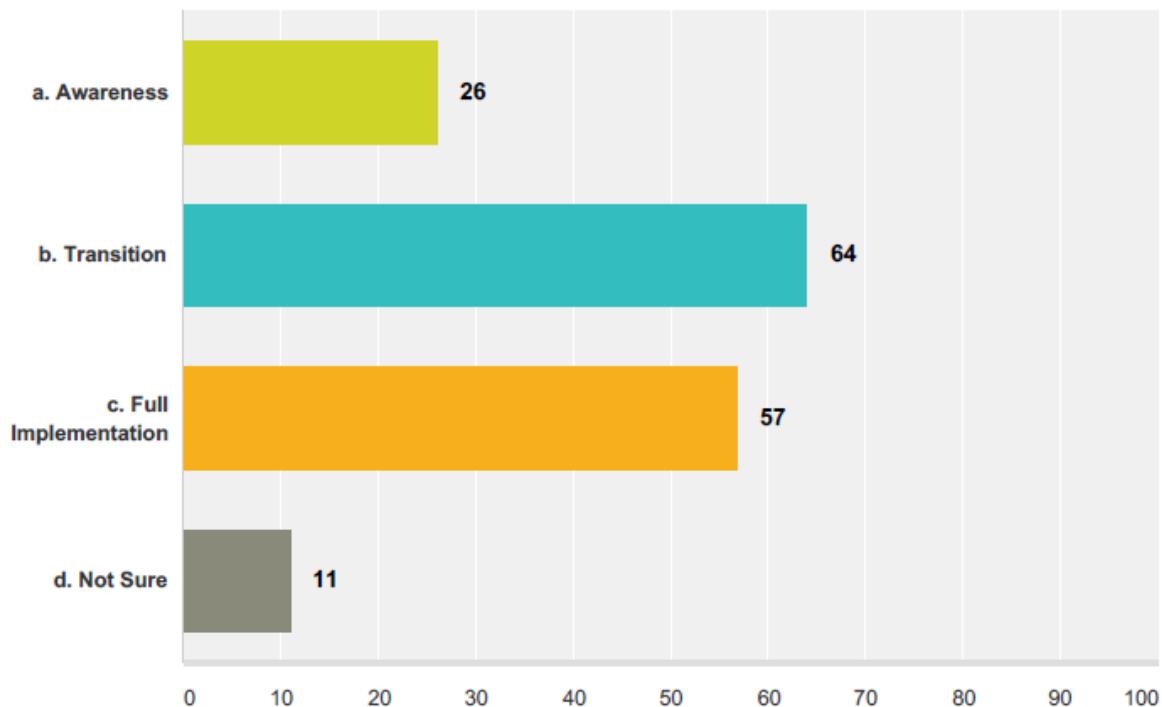
Answered: 159 Skipped: 3,868



Fifty-two percent of the 159 educators who responded to this part of the survey said the literacy standards were fully incorporated into their teaching. Seventy percent responded that the literacy standards had improved their instruction and classroom practice.

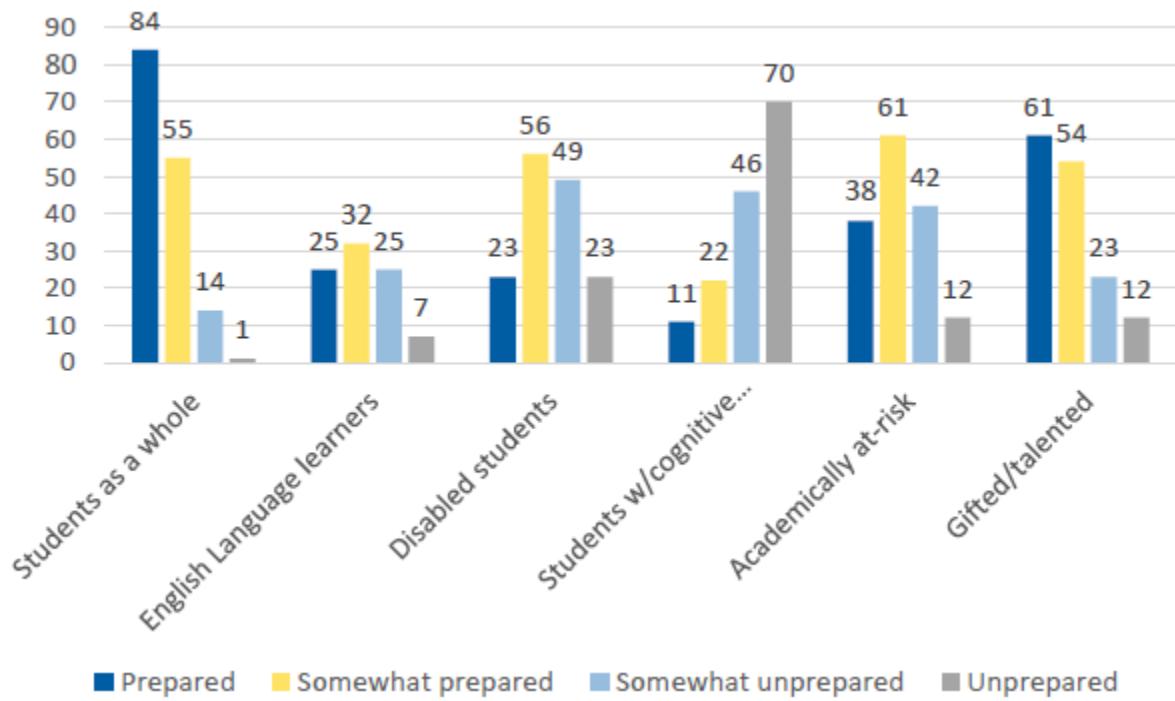
Q160 Your district's current level of implementation.

Answered: 158 Skipped: 3,869



The review team was also charged with gauging the level of implementation of the standards in Iowa classrooms: 36 percent said the standards were fully implemented by their school district, while 41 percent said their district was in transition regarding full implementation.

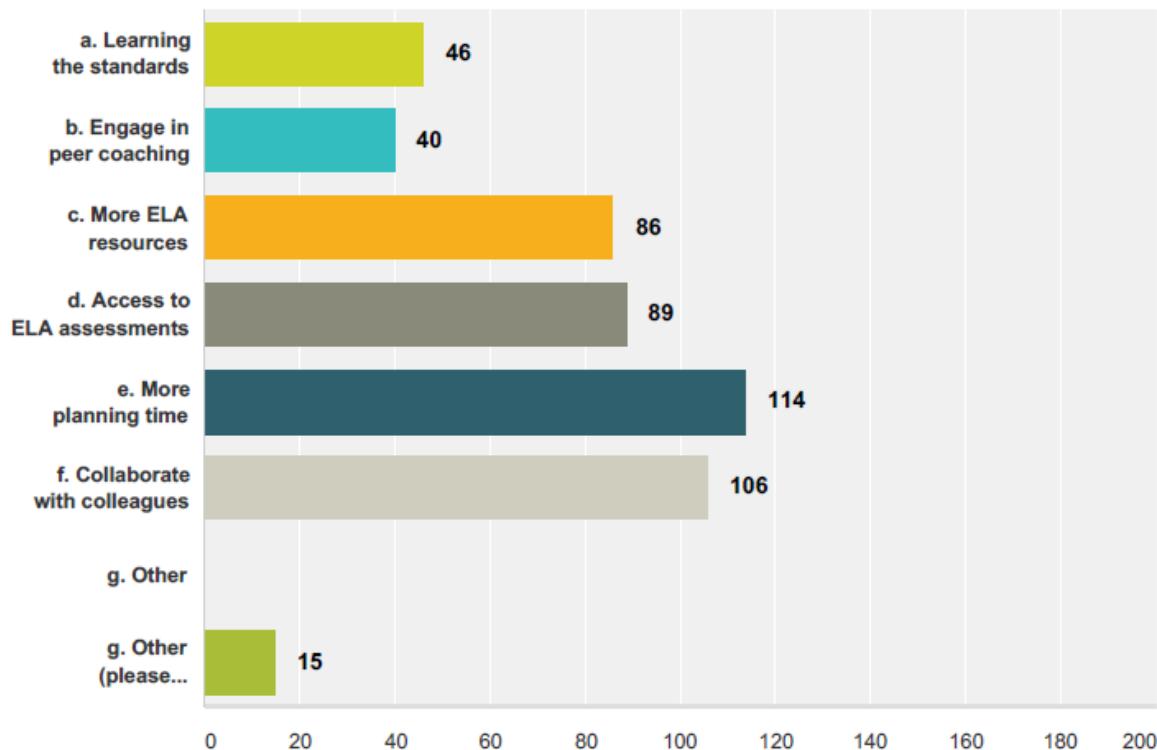
How prepared are you to teach...?



The majority of educators reported they feel very prepared to teach the Literacy Standards to students, as a whole, and gifted and talented students; however, they said they were not prepared to teach the standards to English Language Learners or those students with students with intellectual disabilities.

Q165 Which of the following would help you feel better prepared to teach the Iowa Literacy Standards?

Answered: 156 Skipped: 3,871



The review team also analyzed the amount and quality of professional development and learning educators have received: 59 percent said they either strongly agree or agree they receive adequate ongoing support to implement the Literacy Standards. Respondents said they needed more help in summative and formative assessments and teaching strategies, and overall needed additional resources on how to implement the Literacy Standards. They said this could be achieved through more planning time and more collaboration time with colleagues, as well as access to English-language arts assessments.

In addition to the survey, there were two public forums, which took place at Grinnell High School and West Des Moines Valley High Schools. Iowans across the state could participate in the forums through remote sites, which were available in each of the area education agencies. Sixteen speakers, all educators, offered comments during the two forums, with the majority supporting the standards. One said these standards represent the “gold standard” in learning expectations for students and marveled that experts and researchers came together and agreed upon them. Other supporters said that the Iowa Literacy Standards have been embraced by teachers and asked that the Department not make any large scale changes. One teacher, a lead teacher from an urban district, said that the new teachers were “holding on to these standards and seem to have more confidence about what they are teaching”. A few identified areas that they found problematic; among them, that the kindergarten standards were developmentally inappropriate for some students, especially those whose pre-reading skills were just emerging. Others found some of the language of the standards confusing.

Additionally, there were two focus groups of teachers who met independently of the review team to discuss the standards. Teachers in the focus groups said they had done extensive work to implement the standards and would be resistant to significant changes. But they also indicated they needed more time and collaboration with others who taught the same classes or grade levels to improve implementation of the standards.

Team members either received transcripts or had access to audio/video of each of these forums and focus groups’ discussion and comments. Each review team meeting also was open to the public, and minutes of each meeting were posted to the education department’s website for review.

Conclusion

The Literacy Standards Review Team has completed its thorough review of the standards in the Iowa Core and has adequately considered all public feedback that was received during this process. As a result, the review team puts forth this document, which includes 11 recommendations to the Iowa State Board of Education for its approval.

Membership

Vickie Anstey, Griswold Community School District

- Beth Baker-Brodersen, Des Moines Area Community College
- Sandra Beisker, Dubuque Community School District
- Kelsey Bowers, Grundy Center Community School District
- Lauren Burt, Meredith Corporation
- Bridget Castelluccio, Cedar Rapids Community School District
- Kara Dietrich, Ballard Community School District
- Dixie Forcht, South Tama Community School District
- Carol Glackin, Morningside College
- Mendy Haefs, Kuemper Catholic Schools, Carroll
- Liz Hansen, Grinnell-Newburg Community School District
- Sally Huddle, Iowa Wesleyan University*
- Laura Johnson, Grant Wood Area Education Agency
- Heather Lundquist, Atlantic Community School District
- Kelsey Meyer, Grundy Center Community School District
- Kristine Milburn, West Des Moines Community School District
- Erin Miller, Ames Community School District
- Kathy Perret, Northwest Area Education Agency
- Jonathan Rogers, Iowa City Community School District
- Janelle Thompson, Heartland Area Education Agency
- Molly Tripp, A-H-S-T-W Community School District
- Josh Wager, Des Moines Public Schools
- Sarah Brown Wessling, Johnston Community School District

*Did not participate in the vote

Appendix A.

Reading Standards for Literature 6-12

Grade 6

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (RL.6.10)

Grade 7

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (RL.7.10)

Grade 8

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (RL.8.10)

Grade 9

By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Grade 10

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (RF. 9-10.10)

Grade 11

By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Grade 12

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (RF. 11-12.10)

Reading Standard for Informational Text 6-12

Grade 6

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (RI.6.10)

Grade 7

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (RI.7.10)

Grade 8

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (RI.8.10)

Grade 9-10

By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (RI. 9-10.10)

Grade 11-12

By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Read on-level text, both silently and orally, at an appropriate rate with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (RI. 11-12.10)

Speaking and Listening Standard 6

Grade K

Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly when retelling familiar stories or reciting poems, nursery rhymes or lines of a play. (SL.K.6)

Grade 1

Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation when retelling familiar stories or reciting poems, nursery rhymes, or lines of a play. (See grade 1 Language standard 1 for specific expectations) (SL.1.6)

Grade 2

Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification, when retelling familiar stories or reciting poems, nursery rhymes, or lines of a play. (See grade 2 Language standards 1 and 3 specific expectations) (SL.2.6)

Grade 3

Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation, such as when performing dramatic readings or presentations, in order to provide requested detail or clarification. (See grade 3 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations) (SL.3.6)

Grade 4

Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion); use formal English when appropriate to task and situation, such as when performing dramatic readings or presentations. (See grade 4 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations) (SL.4.6)

Grade 5

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, such as when performing dramatic readings or presentations, using formal English when appropriate to task and situation. (See grade 5 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations) (SL.5.6)

Grade 6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, such as conducting interviews and participating in public performances, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grade 6 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations) (SL.6.6)

Grade 7

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, such as conducting interviews and participating in public performances, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grade 7 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations) (SL.7.6)

Grade 8

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, such as conducting interviews and participating in public performances, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grade 8 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations) (SL.8.6)

Grade 9-10

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, such as conducting interviews, participating in public performances, or debating an issue from either side, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grades 9–10 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations) (SL.9-10.6)

Grade 11-12

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, such as conducting interviews, participating in public performances, or debating an issue from either side, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grades 11–12 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations) (SL.11-12.6)

Glossary of Terms

Iowa Core Literacy Standards Review Team

Digital Literacy: The ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share and create content using information technologies and the Internet. Enables participation with digital media in wise, safe and ethical ways.

Evidence: Facts, figures, details, quotations, or other sources of data and information that provide support for claims or an analysis and that can be evaluated by others; should appear in a form and be derived from a source widely accepted as appropriate to a particular discipline, as in details or quotations from a text in the study of literature and experimental results in the study of science.

Exemplar Texts: Sample texts intended to guide educators as they thoughtfully select texts to serve as vehicles for teaching the Iowa Core Literacy Standards. While the texts serve as examples for each grade span, they are not required grade level reading lists.

Informational Text: ELA Standards emphasize the reading of informational texts in a variety of subject areas. Includes visual images, charts, graphs, magazine articles, diaries, speeches, essays, scientific articles, and legal documents.

Literacy: The skills and competencies required in all aspects of a discipline: reading, writing, language, speaking, viewing, and listening.

Literacy Standards for Iowa: Previously known as the Iowa K-12 English Language Arts Standards and the 6-12 Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. Referencing all standards: writing, reading, language, speaking, and listening.

Media Literacy: Focuses on creating critically engaged consumers of media.

Perspective: Chiefly used in social studies, the author's relationship to an event; often used in conjunction with point of view.

Point of View: Chiefly in literary texts, the narrative point of view (as in first- or third-person narration); more broadly, the position or perspective conveyed or represented by an author, narrator, speaker, or character.

Primary Sources: Primary sources are authentic documents and objects created by witnesses or recorders who experienced the events or conditions being documented. Primary sources provide first-hand testimony or direct evidence concerning a topic under investigation.

Secondary Sources: Secondary sources are materials that report, digest, analyze, evaluate, and interpret information contained within primary sources or other secondary sources. Secondary sources are created later by persons who did not experience first-hand or participate in the events or conditions under review.

Shifts: Understanding how the standards differ from previous standards—and the necessary shifts they call for—is essential to implementing the standards well.

Shifts in ELA/Literacy: Common Core:

Shift 1	Balancing Informational & Literary Text	Students read a true balance of information & literacy texts
Shift 2	Knowledge in the Disciplines	Students build knowledge about the world
Shift 3	Staircase of Complexity	Instruction is focused on reading grade-level text
Shift 4	Text-based Answers	Students engage in rich & rigorous evidence-based conversations about text
Shift 5	Writing from Sources	Using writing with emphasis on evidence to create arguments
Shift 6	Academic Vocabulary	Build essential vocabulary to access grade-level texts

Instructional Shifts for the Iowa Core

Shifts in ELA/Literacy

- Regular practice with complex text and its academic language (vocabulary).
- Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational.
- Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.

Technical Subjects: Courses devoted to a practical study, such as engineering, technology, design, business, or other workforce-related subject; a technical aspect of a wider field of study, such as art or music.

Text: Any material designed to convey a message: visual images, digital recordings (audio and visual), charts, graphs, etc. May include fiction or informational.

Viewing: The act, ceremony or occasion of seeing, watching, or inspecting.

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