
SETTING THE STANDARD

Tennessee's K-12
Standards Review Process



TENNESSEE
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Directions: Ask students to simultaneously name and point to the pictures in each row from top to bottom. Start with the pictures in the top row, then the second row, then the third row, and then the bottom row.



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FOREWORD:

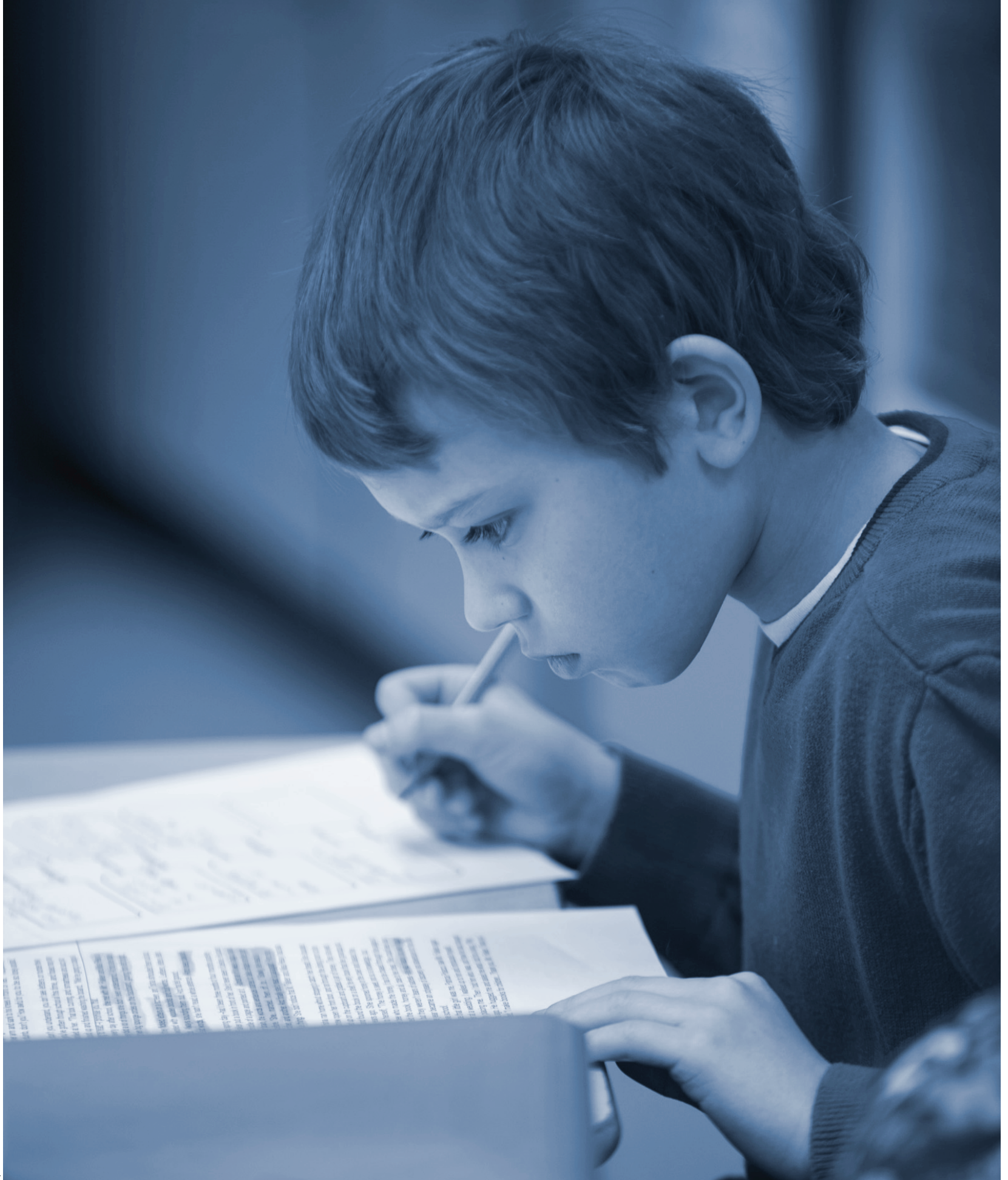
One of the most important things we can do for the overall quality of life for Tennesseans is improve student outcomes and increase educational opportunities. The standards review process that was put in place in 2014 sought to do just that. Through the review process, Tennesseans from across the state had the opportunity to provide input and feedback on academic standards, which are the foundation of what we teach in classrooms every day. Our goal through the review process was to ensure Tennessee had the highest possible standards so we could continue to make historic progress in academic achievement. Thanks to the hard work of educators, students and their families, among other stakeholders who gave feedback, we now have a robust set of state standards that will ensure we can push forward to continue to be the fastest improving state in the country.

The Honorable Bill Haslam
Governor of Tennessee

Thanks to the leadership of Governor Haslam and the General Assembly, Tennessee has set the bar for how to implement a state-wide, transparent, comprehensive standards review process. Their vision put the review process into the hands of Tennesseans and educator experts. Thousands of reviews were received on the math and English language arts standards over the two public review cycles. Over 40 educator content experts read through each piece of public feedback and, combined with their expertise, revised the state standards. And finally, ten educators appointed by the governor and the two speakers of the General Assembly served as the last eyes on the draft standards before they were presented to the state board. Each of the individuals involved and the many steps along the way, helped ensure that the new Tennessee Academic Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts would be a rigorous foundation for our students. The State Board was proud to facilitate and lead this innovative, multi-part review process.

Dr. Sara Morrison
Executive Director, Tennessee State Board of Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In September 2014, Governor Bill Haslam convened a summit of educators and policymakers from across the state to discuss strategies for maintaining Tennessee’s trajectory as one of the fastest improving states in the country on educational outcomes. In response to discussion regarding academic standards at this forum, Governor Haslam subsequently proposed a new process for a public review of the state’s K-12 academic standards for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.¹

Several other states, including Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, and South Carolina, have also recently established similar processes to facilitate public engagement in the creation of new state academic standards – reflecting a shared commitment to creating rigorous and well-defined academic standards that also incorporate the needs and values of each state.

This report is intended to serve as a case study into the structure and implementation strategies employed in the first application of Tennessee’s newly developed standards review process. As ELA and mathematics were the first sets of academic standards to undergo revision through this process, these subjects constitute the primary focus of the report. However, at present, the standards review process described in this report has also been successfully applied to Tennessee’s academic standards for science and social studies as well as a modified review for fine arts, health, and physical education.

As described in T.C.A. § 49-1-310, 311, and 312, Tennessee’s standards review process entails four distinct phases:

- 1) Public review and commentary**
- 2) Educator advisory team revision**
- 3) Standards Recommendation Committee evaluation and recommendation**
- 4) Final approval from the State Board of Education.**

Each stage of the process is discussed in detail within the corresponding sections of this report.

The Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE) hopes that this report will serve as a resource for those seeking to establish rigorous academic standards, in a way that supports educator ownership and addresses the educational needs and cultural values of their communities.

¹ This process was codified in state law during the 2015 legislative session.

WEBSITE AND PUBLIC FEEDBACK



Built on the belief that robust and transparent public engagement is essential to the creation of rigorous, educator-driven academic standards, the initial phase of the standards review process for ELA and mathematics provided all Tennesseans with the opportunity to review and share detailed feedback about the current state standards.

In his original proposal for the standards review process, Governor Haslam called for the creation of a publicly accessible website where every Tennessean could review current state standards and comment about strengths, weaknesses, or possible areas of improvement. To ensure integrity and transparency throughout the review process, the State Board of Education partnered with the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)² as a third-party, independent collaborator to facilitate the collection and analysis of data generated through the website³.

Website Development

The review website was designed to create a platform that was both easy to use and capable of collecting detailed feedback on the current set of standards. As such, the website asked participants to indicate, for each standard, whether they believed the standard should be kept as is, reviewed, or removed.

Participants were invited to provide additional commentary and explanations for all ratings

and required to provide a comment for all “review” or “remove” responses. For all “review” responses, participants were also asked to indicate whether they believed the standard should be rewritten or moved to a different grade level.

Because the process invited all Tennesseans to provide feedback on the existing standards, the website also contained a guidance document intended to help ensure that participants from outside the field of education were comfortable both navigating the structure of the standards and distinguishing between standards and curriculum. As explained in the document’s introduction:

Standards focus on what is most essential and do not describe all that can or should be taught. The standards do not determine how teachers should teach or which materials should be used to support students. A great deal is left to the discretion of teachers and curriculum developers. Therefore, the standards must be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum developed at the local level consistent with the expectations laid out in the standards.

The website also provided graphics and full-text explanations about the structure and formatting of the standards for each subject area.

The inclusion of these explanations was essential for maximizing the validity and reliability of the collected feedback data and also provided an opportunity to help raise public awareness about this critical distinction.

² The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states, including Tennessee, to improve public education at all levels.

³ This occurred only for the math and ELA standards due to the volume of contents and feedback on the other area standards was handled by the state board staff.

Outreach and Engagement

To encourage participation from as many Tennesseans as possible, SBE, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE), and Governor Haslam’s office engaged in a joint public outreach campaign to notify key stakeholders and constituents about the review process. Press releases announcing the launch of the review website were distributed to state-level organizations such as the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA), the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS), the Tennessee Educators Association (TEA), and regional support offices of TDOE.

Local news media also provided significant coverage in the form of news articles, editorials, televised reports, and interviews with SBE staff.

In addition, SBE sought to boost public participation and provide regular updates about the process through social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

Many school leaders also anecdotally reported taking time out of staff meetings to provide teachers with the opportunity to review and leave commentary on the standards.

Results

The initial public review period for ELA and mathematics ran from November 2014 through April 2015. The complete results were compiled into a series of reports for each subject area, grade level, and individual standards, and transmitted in hard copy to each member of the educator advisory teams to commence revision work.⁴

Over a five-month period, nearly 2,300 Tennesseans left feedback on the ELA and math standards. Users could review as many or as few standards as they chose. In total, the website received more than 122,000 reviews, with an additional 19,000 open-ended comments. The ELA and math standards garnered over 78,000 and 43,000 reviews, respectively. Of the 78,000+ reviews of ELA standards, 67,517 of them (or 86% of the total) rated an ELA standard as “keep.” A complete breakdown of the “keep,” “review,” and “remove” rates for both ELA and math can be seen in the graphic [on the right].

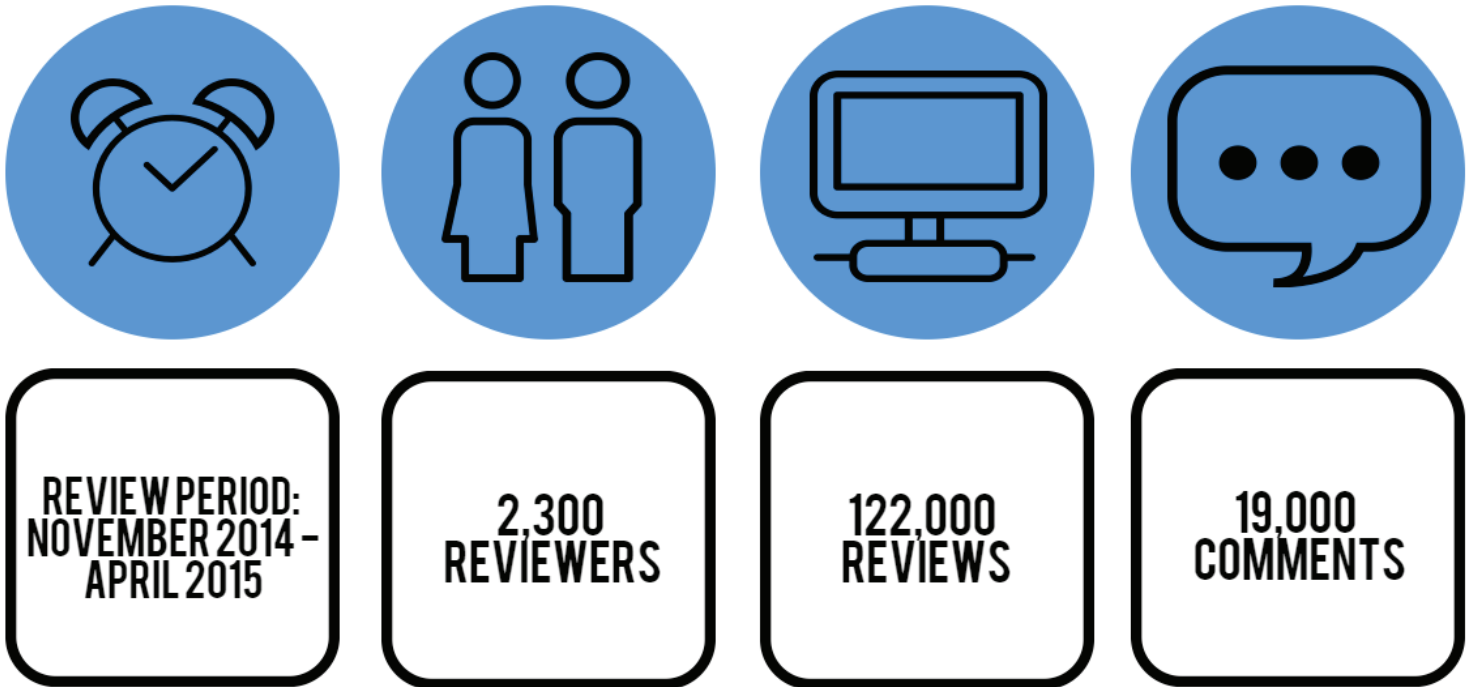
Public feedback was essential in helping our team understand both the public perception of each standard and the clarity of the language of the standards. As we considered each standard, we looked at the comments provided by the public. In some cases, the majority of the comments were favorable; in those cases, we rarely changed the language of the standard. In some cases, we had an almost even split between keeping the standard as it was written or changing the standard in some way. Those standards required more deliberation to determine if the standard was essential and whether we could change the wording of the standard to address the issues the public had identified. Finally, in some cases there was an overwhelming majority of comments that recommended changing or deleting the standard. In those cases, the comments were essential in determining why that particular standard was an issue.”

Dr. Stephanie Kolitsch

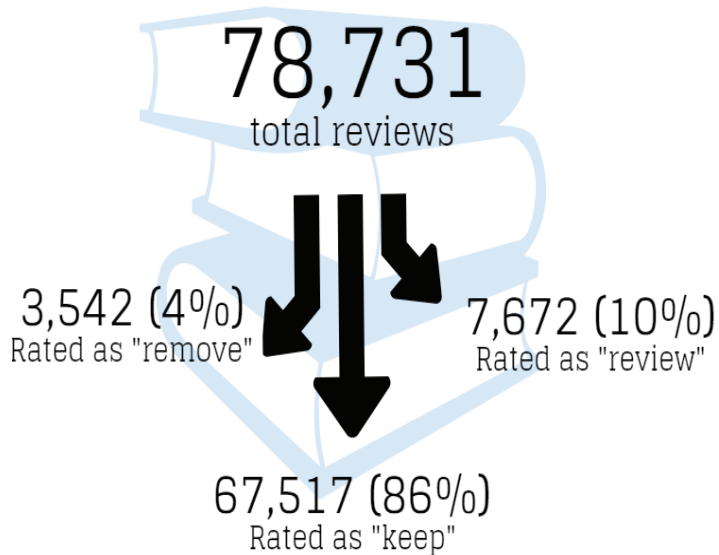
Lead of Grades 9-12 Mathematics Educatory Advisory Team
Faculty, UT-Martin
Director, West Tennessee STEM Center for Learning

⁴ The process through which these reports were created is discussed in greater detail in the *Work of the Advisory Teams* section later in this report.

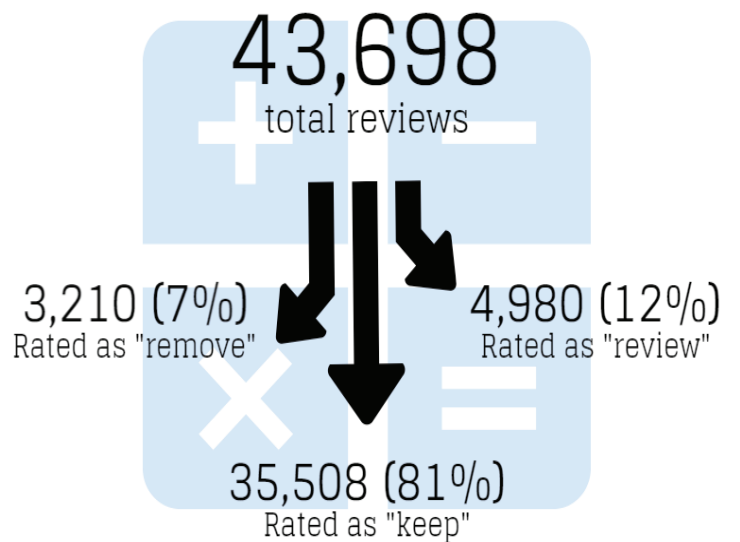
ONLINE FEEDBACK:



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



MATHEMATICS



EDUCATOR ADVISORY TEAMS



The second phase of Tennessee’s standards revision process called for the creation of educator advisory teams (henceforth, “advisory teams”) for each subject area to review the public feedback collected from the website and draft a set of recommended revisions to the standards. Given their knowledge about pedagogy, student learning and development, the communities they serve, and their invested interest in the product, practicing K-12 educators comprised the majority of these teams. For each subject area (ELA and mathematics respectively), the advisory teams consisted of 22 total members divided evenly across the three grade-band specific groups: elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high school (9-12). In turn, each grade band-specific group consisted of six Tennessee educators with significant experience teaching the target subject at the requisite grade level, as well as one representative from a Tennessee institution of higher education who provided additional content expertise and helped ensure the revised standards were well aligned to postsecondary expectations.⁵

Selection of educators was guided by a desire to create advisory teams that successfully capture the diversity of districts and schools across the state, such that standards would truly meet the needs of all Tennessee students. Accordingly, the advisory teams for ELA and mathematics ultimately consisted of educators from 29 different districts - ranging from small rural districts to large urban districts - who had experience in teaching in a diverse range of

school environments.⁶ Though many were veteran educators with over 30 years of teaching experience, some were younger educators who could better speak to the experience of teachers that have recently entered the profession. Others had significant experience leading professional development for teachers and adult learners or had worked on curriculum development at the district level.

Team Member Selection

For the review of English language arts and mathematics standards, educator advisory team members were appointed by the Governor in consultation with SBE and TDOE. However, SBE subsequently developed a selection protocol that was used to form the advisory teams tasked with reviewing Tennessee’s science and social studies standards. The selection process seeks to identify potential team members who:

- **Possess strong knowledge of content and pedagogy**
- **Demonstrate a clear understanding of the distinction between standards and curriculum**
- **Have prior experience conducting trainings or professional development for adults**
- **Represent the diversity of Tennessee with respect to geography, years of experience, and different types of school environments.**

⁵ Educator advisory teams are formally defined in T.C.A. § 49-1-13(a)(2).

⁶ Differences across school environments in Tennessee include factors such as size, access to external resources, and operational structure (e.g., traditional public and public charter schools).

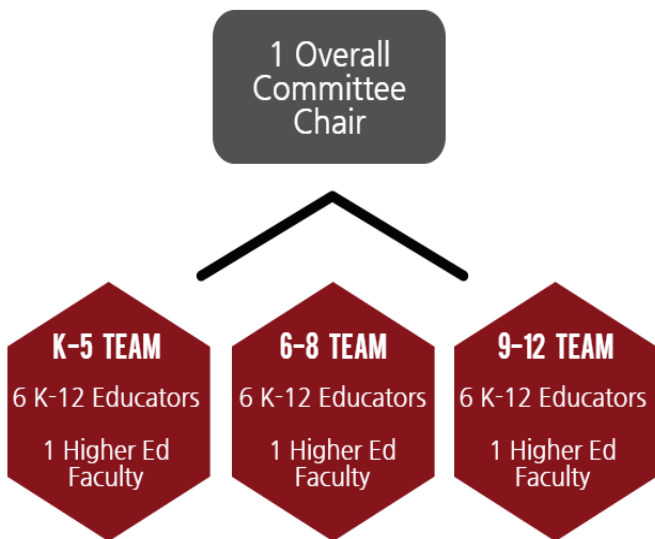
Under SBE’s selection process, advisory team applicants must be nominated by their director of schools, submit a full résumé, and complete a series of short, open-response questions. At present, the open-response questions ask applicants to explain the difference between standards and curriculum, identify a standard that needs revision and explain how and why that standard should be revised, and explain any unique contributions the applicant believes he or she will bring to the team’s work.

After reviewing all applications, SBE and TDOE staff jointly identify a pool of finalists who are then asked to participate in a phone interview. During the phone interview, SBE and TDOE staff pose a combination of questions and hypothetical scenarios intended to further assess the applicant’s knowledge of content and pedagogy, as well as his or her ability to build consensus with others and represent the work of the committee with integrity.

Team Leads

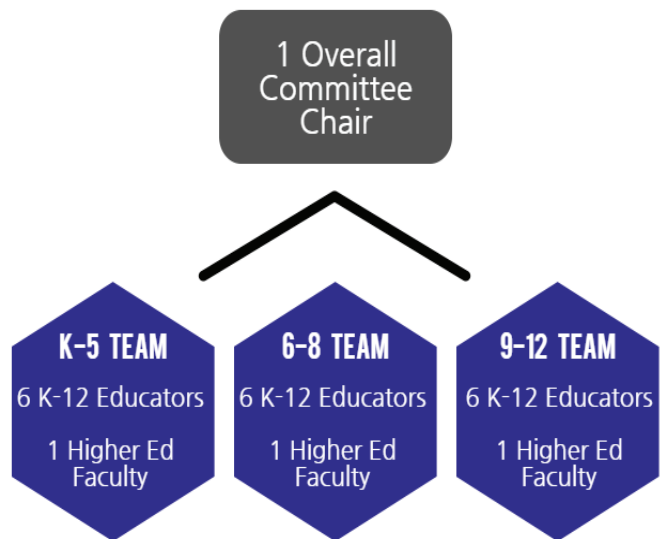
Educators from the applicant pool who demonstrate exceptional leadership ability, breadth and depth of content knowledge, as well as substantive experience leading adult learners, are asked to serve as team leads. For both ELA and mathematics respectively, a team lead was appointed for each of the three grade bands. Team leads, many of whom had previously worked as district level supervisors of instruction, serve as facilitators for the work of each grade band and are thus responsible for shaping team norms, resolving ideological differences amongst team members, guiding and pacing the work of each grade band, and in the case of the committee chairs, monitoring the coherence and progression of each standard across grade bands.

ELA EDUCATOR ADVISORY TEAMS



TOTAL: 22 MEMBERS

MATH EDUCATOR ADVISORY TEAMS



TOTAL: 22 MEMBERS

Work of the Advisory Teams

In April 2015, ELA and mathematics team leads began meeting with representatives from SREB and the SBE to discuss preliminary data results from the public feedback. These meetings also provided an opportunity to discuss data analytics and identify a reporting structure that would best facilitate the work of the advisory teams. These conversations helped define the need for data reports at the subject level, grade level, and individual standard level. Leads also emphasized the importance of being able to view all comments made on a particular standard in their entirety, which later proved to be the most frequently referenced report throughout the advisory team's work.

The first full meeting of the ELA and mathematics educator advisory teams was held over the course of five consecutive days in June 2015. The kickoff session began with presentations from SBE staff that helped contextualize the advisory team's work within the broader standards revision process.

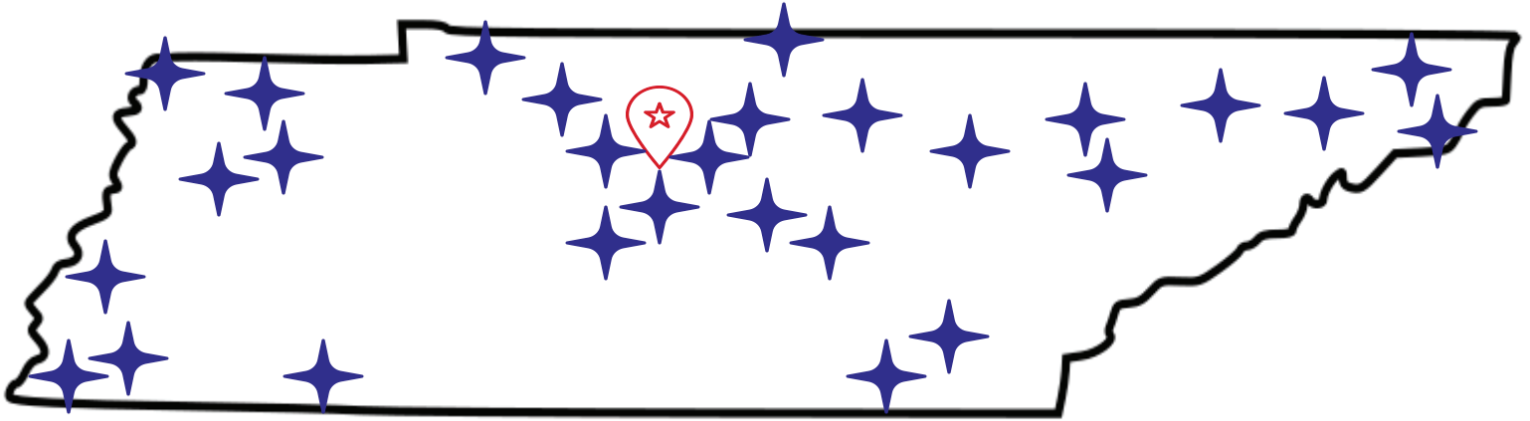
Team members were also briefed about the specific charge of their role: To review all of the public feedback and use it in conjunction with their own professional expertise to develop a set of proposed revisions to the standards.

The initial meeting was also an opportunity to set working norms for the teams as a whole. Team leads facilitated this discussion, which led to the creation of key guiding questions for the work such as:

- **Are we putting the needs of students first?**
- **Are we honoring the commentary of reviewers?**
- **Are we maintaining rigorous expectations?**
- **Will teachers feel supported in implementing these standards?**

SBE staff encouraged the advisory team members to consider their work within this framework and remain independent of political dynamics to the greatest degree possible. Staff also emphasized that there were no predetermined expectations for a specified amount of change to the standards.

Two additional weekend meetings were held in July and August 2015 to facilitate completion of the first draft of proposed revisions.



The advisory teams for ELA and mathematics ultimately consisted of educators from 29 different districts who had experience teaching in a diverse range of school environments.

The map above shows the geographic diversity of the teams, while the statistics below outline the various roles of team members.

5
**COLLEGES &
UNIVERSITIES
REPRESENTED**

29
**DISTRICTS
REPRESENTED**

14 teachers

10 instructional coaches

7 principals

7 district administrators

6 professors

PERSPECTIVES:

Standards are important because they provide the common expectation for students across the state; however, reading and writing standards bereft of knowledge competencies are empty vessels. Districts must build upon the standards to create a rich, knowledge-based curriculum at the local level.

We were a group of 30+ educators from across the state who were strangers to each other at the beginning of the process. But, we developed into a team bound by a common goal, even if not always common points of view on how to achieve it. In our deliberations, we all grew as educators and leaders, and we became more hopeful for our students and our state each time we convened.

Maintaining a common purpose was critical to the work. As a group, we reviewed every decision and its impact on the progression throughout the process.

Working with teachers from across the state reinforced my belief that Tennessee teachers are invested in continuing to learn and improve their practice to ensure that children are able to engage effectively in the workforce and to achieve postsecondary aspirations.

Ms. Shannon Jackson

Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Knox County Schools
Overall lead of the K-12 English Language Arts Educator Advisory team

I was humbled to become the chairman of the Standards Recommendation Committee (SRC). This work enabled me to better explain the thinking behind the standards to any interested Tennessean. I was pleased to see the work of educators and their voices were heard, and I truly believe we have Tennessee-specific math and ELA standards.

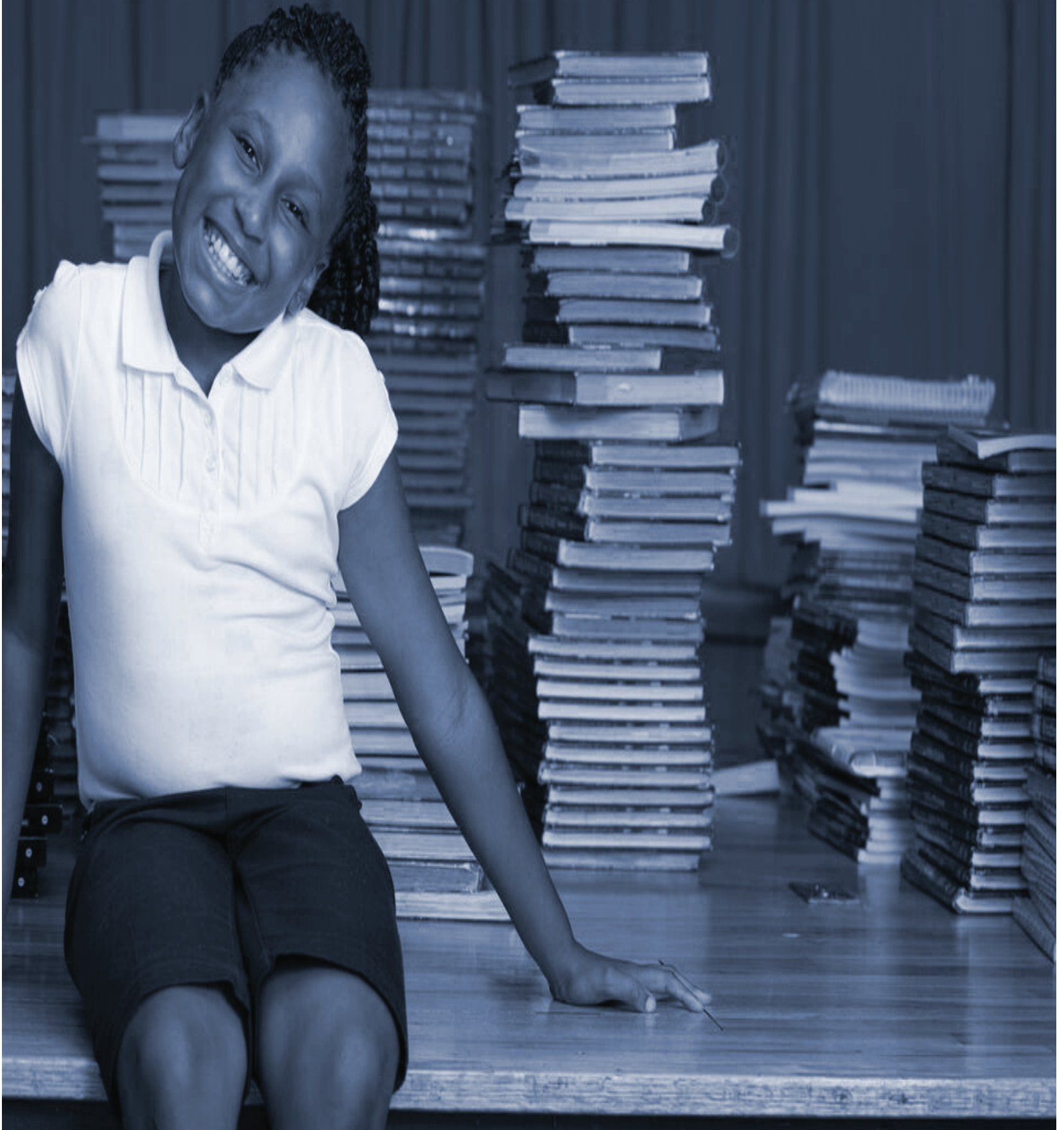
The SRC's primary goal in our part of the process was to ensure we had rigorous, Tennessee-specific standards. The committee made recommendations regarding teacher resources and training that will better prepare teachers to deliver the standards as part of an engaging and challenging curriculum.

Revising the math and ELA standards was not easy, but it was certainly worthwhile. It was important to engage all stakeholders in the review and to promote transparency in our work. I am proud of the standards review process implemented by the state of Tennessee, and I hope our work will succeed in preparing all students for postsecondary success.

Dr. Lyle Ailshie

Chairman, Standards Recommendation Committee
Director of Schools, Kingsport City Schools

STANDARDS RECOMMENDATION COMMITTEE



As defined in T.C.A. § 49-1-312, the Standards Recommendation Committee is responsible for both reviewing and evaluating the work of the advisory teams, as well as issuing final revision recommendations to the SBE members. Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1-312, the SRC for ELA and mathematics was composed of four gubernatorial appointees, and three appointees each from the speakers of both chambers of the General Assembly.⁷ The ten total appointees were subsequently confirmed by the General Assembly. The final committee represented a diverse sample of educational leaders – including district superintendents, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, and classroom teachers – as well as faculty members from Tennessee educator preparation programs, and members of the business community.

The work of the SRC for math and ELA began in August 2015 at an initial orientation meeting. At this meeting, SRC members were briefed on the charge of their role within the standards review process and presented with copies of the data collected from the website during the public comment period. The SRC reconvened in October 2015 to begin reviewing the completed draft of proposed revisions from the educator advisory teams.

Collecting Additional Feedback

The SRC also sought feedback about the educator advisory teams' draft of proposed revisions from members of the higher education community, general public, and SREB.

Higher Education

Feedback from the higher education community was collected through an online survey that was distributed to a team of 10 reviewers from a combination of public, private, and community colleges across the state. In the survey, reviewers were asked to evaluate the revised standards with respect to clarity of language and formatting, as well as coherence of the progression and overall rigor within grades and across the standards as a whole. Feedback from these reviewers was critical in ensuring that the standards were sufficiently rigorous to prepare students for successful work in postsecondary environments and also provided an additional opportunity to verify content accuracy. SBE staff compiled the survey data into a report that was distributed to SRC members.

General Public and SREB

Public feedback about the proposed draft of revised standards was collected through both the public website and a series of public roundtable discussions. Shortly after the educator advisory teams completed their draft of recommended revisions, the draft was reposted to the public website for a second period of open commentary. SBE staff also held a total of five roundtable discussions in different regions of Tennessee. Roundtable discussions were facilitated by members of the advisory teams and sought to provide additional opportunities for educators and parents to review the revised standards and provide standard-specific feedback.

⁷ Though a single SRC was appointed to conduct the review of standards for both ELA and mathematics, two separate SRCs were appointed to conduct the review of standards for science and social studies, respectively.

The results of these feedback sessions and additional public comments were presented to the SRC at their meeting in November 2015.

For the math and ELA review process, SREB commissioned an external and non-partisan group of education experts to conduct an independent review of the revised draft standards. Their feedback examined the same issues of clarity, coherence, and rigor that were addressed in the higher education review process. Results and commentary were compiled in a report and presented to SRC members.

Final Revisions

After reviewing all relevant feedback, the SRC drafted a set of final recommendations. The resulting document was a complete draft of new mathematics and ELA standards, which were proposed to the State Board of Education for first reading at their January 29, 2016 meeting.

The SRC also drafted a supplemental position statement to address potential challenges with implementation of the new standards. In this statement, the SRC emphasized the importance of each of the following throughout the training implementation:

- **Strong professional development on the new standards for teachers and school leaders**
- **Alignment of teacher preparation curricula to the new standards**
- **Supplemental resources that provide clarification and examples to help teachers understand the precise meaning or intent of the standards**
- **A communications plan involving the creation of a standards website, social media campaign, and public-facing explanatory documents or other supplemental resources to help parents understand the standards, as well as the process used in creating them**
- **Empowering teachers to make instructional or curricular decisions about how to best help their students access and achieve the standards**
- **Additional flexibilities as needed.**

These standards represent a variety of levels in ownership from the multiple rounds of Tennessee public feedback to the in-depth work by Tennessee educators to the final review and revision work by Tennessee educators appointed to the Standards Recommendation Committee.

Dr. Shannon Duncan

Member of both the ELA/Mathematics and Social Studies Standards Recommendation Committees
Assistant Principal, Tullahoma High School

STANDARDS REVIEW PROCESS

Multiple bodies review public feedback, discuss the impact and significance of academic content, and determine necessary revisions to the standards. The graphic below details the primary actions taken by each group.

STEP 1

Educator Advisory Teams

- Review and discuss public website data
- Bring deep content knowledge and expertise
- Utilize these resources to refine, rewrite, and reorganize the standards

STEP 2

Standards Recommendation Committee

- Review and discuss various forms of public feedback data
- Represent numerous stakeholders, including educators
- Determine final revisions of standards and make recommendations to the State Board

STEP 3

Tennessee State Board of Education

- Review proposed draft standards
- Consider presentations and recommendations made by previous bodies
- Make final revisions and adopt final version of standards

STATE BOARD ADOPTION



At the January 2016 meeting of the SBE, representatives from the SRC and educator advisory team presented the final draft of the proposed standards to the members of the board. The representatives also discussed the recommendations for ongoing work in implementing the standards as reflected in the SRC's position statement.

Board members expressed deep gratitude to the committees and advisory teams for the immense amount of work involved throughout the revision process. The standards were then passed unanimously on first reading, with the understanding that board members would continue to work with SBE staff and solicit feedback from their constituents to further refine the standards before adopting.

Prior to the board's April 2016 meeting, SBE staff worked with Board members to make final revisions, which included the modification of various glossary definitions, minor clarifications and corrections, as well as the removal of several standards from the state's Bridge Math course – a remediation program developed to help ensure high school students are prepared to enter credit-bearing mathematics courses in postsecondary institutions. After reviewing the final changes, the board voted unanimously to adopt both sets of standards.

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

Initiated the standards review process and created the online public feedback website



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Codified the review process and created the Standards Recommendation Committee



STATE BOARD

Facilitated the review process and voted on the final set of standards



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Led implementation, teacher training, textbook adoption, and assessment alignment

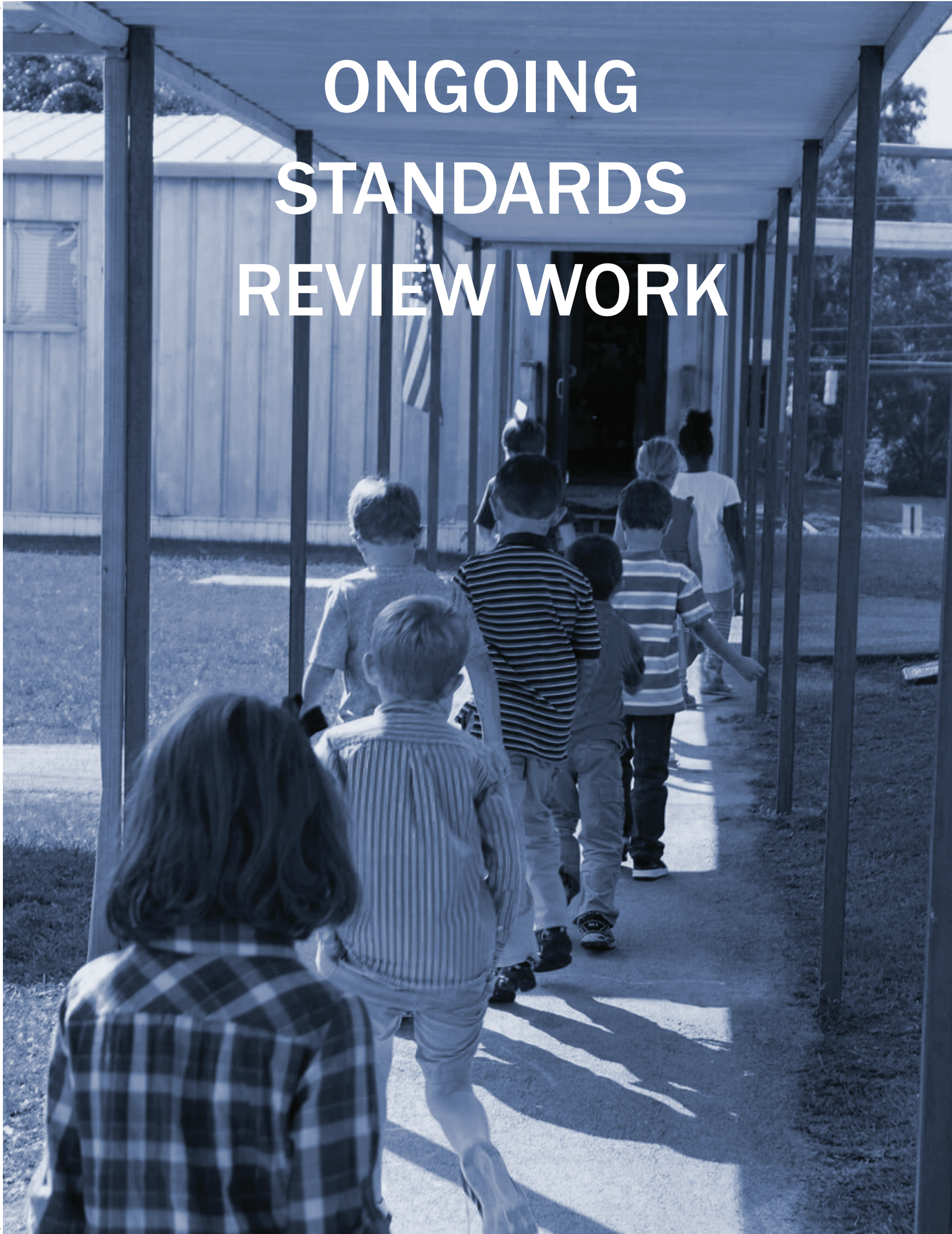
*The board and department will repeat this cycle at least every 6 years for each content area.

This entire review process was exemplary, from the multitude of feedback opportunities for all Tennesseans to the exceptional and thorough work of the educator advisory teams. The Standards Recommendation Committee's proposed standards ensured a strong foundation for our state to maintain rigorous and challenging standards for our students. It was a testament to all who engaged in this robust process that the State Board of Education approved these new standards.

Mr. B. Fielding Rolston

Chairman, Tennessee State Board of Education

ONGOING STANDARDS REVIEW WORK



T.C.A. § 49-1-313 charges the SBE with revising the state’s social studies and science standards through a process similar to the one used in revising the ELA and mathematics standards. Accordingly, Governor Haslam and the speakers of both chambers made appointments to standards review committees for both science and social studies, which were later confirmed by the General Assembly.

Science Standards Review

The review process for Tennessee’s academic standards for science began in fall 2015 with an initial web posting of the state’s current science standards. During this period of public review, SBE staff also began selecting applicants to serve on educator advisory teams for each of the three grade bands.⁸ The advisory team commenced work to review public feedback and begin making initial revisions to the standards in February 2016.

During spring 2016, the complete draft of recommended revisions was reposted to the public website, and the SBE facilitated regional roundtables and an external review from representatives of the higher education community as well as SREB. This feedback was then incorporated into a second full draft of proposed revisions and presented to the SRC at their first meeting in March 2016. The SRC met monthly to continue review of the advisory team’s proposed revisions and receive updates on commentary and feedback from stakeholders.

The SRC brought a completed draft of recommended revisions to the SBE for first reading at their July 2016 meeting, and those standards were unanimously adopted on final reading in October 2016.

Social Studies Standards Review

Similarly, the review process for Tennessee’s academic standards for social studies began in winter 2015 with posting the state’s current social studies standards on a public website to solicit feedback and comments. SBE staff worked throughout the period of public comment to select applicants to serve on educator advisory teams for each of the three grade bands. In June 2016 the advisory team commenced work to review the public feedback and begin making initial revisions to the standards. A complete draft of recommended revisions was presented to the social studies SRC in fall 2016 and re-posted for additional public commentary through December 2016. The SRC continued to draft their recommended revisions through early 2017 and brought the standards for first reading to the SBE’s April meeting. Final reading of the revised standards is set to occur at the board’s July 2017 meeting.

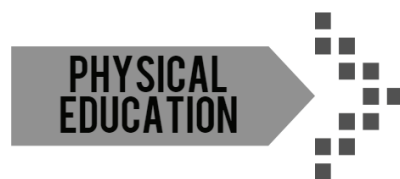
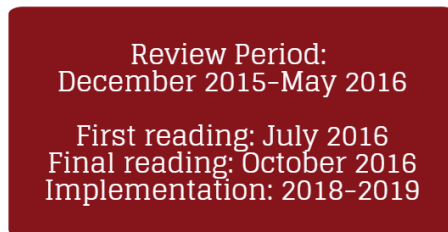
⁸ See “Team Member Selection” on page 4 of this report for additional information on this selection.

OTHER SUBJECT TIMELINES:



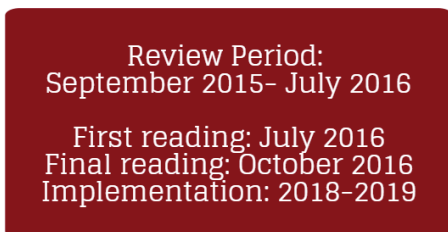
Review Period:
December 2015-June 2016

First reading: July 2016
Final reading: October 2016
Implementation: 2018-2019



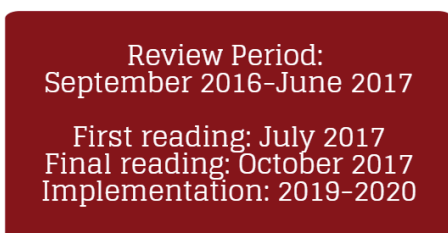
Review Period:
December 2015-June 2016

First reading: July 2016
Final reading: October 2016
Implementation: 2018-2019



Review Period:
January 2016-July 2017

First reading: April 2017
Final reading: July 2017
Implementation: 2019-2020



Other Subjects

SBE is also charged with facilitating reviews of the academic standards for subject areas outside the core academic curriculum, such as fine arts, world languages, health, and physical education. Though these subjects are not assessed as part of annual state-wide testing, different credit hours in each of these content areas are required for high school graduation. As such, developing strong and well-defined standards against which student progress can be meaningfully and fairly assessed is essential for guiding the learning process.

The process for reviewing the standards in each of these content areas is similar to the process used for conducting the reviews of standards for tested subjects. However, the allocation of resources for the review of these standards is considerably smaller and does not allow for the same interactive websites for collecting public feedback in each subject area. Consequently, feedback is instead collected through an online survey form, often hosted by various online platforms. A publicly accessible link to the survey as well as a link to view the existing standards for each subject area is posted on SBE's standards review website and shared widely through social media and state-level communications.

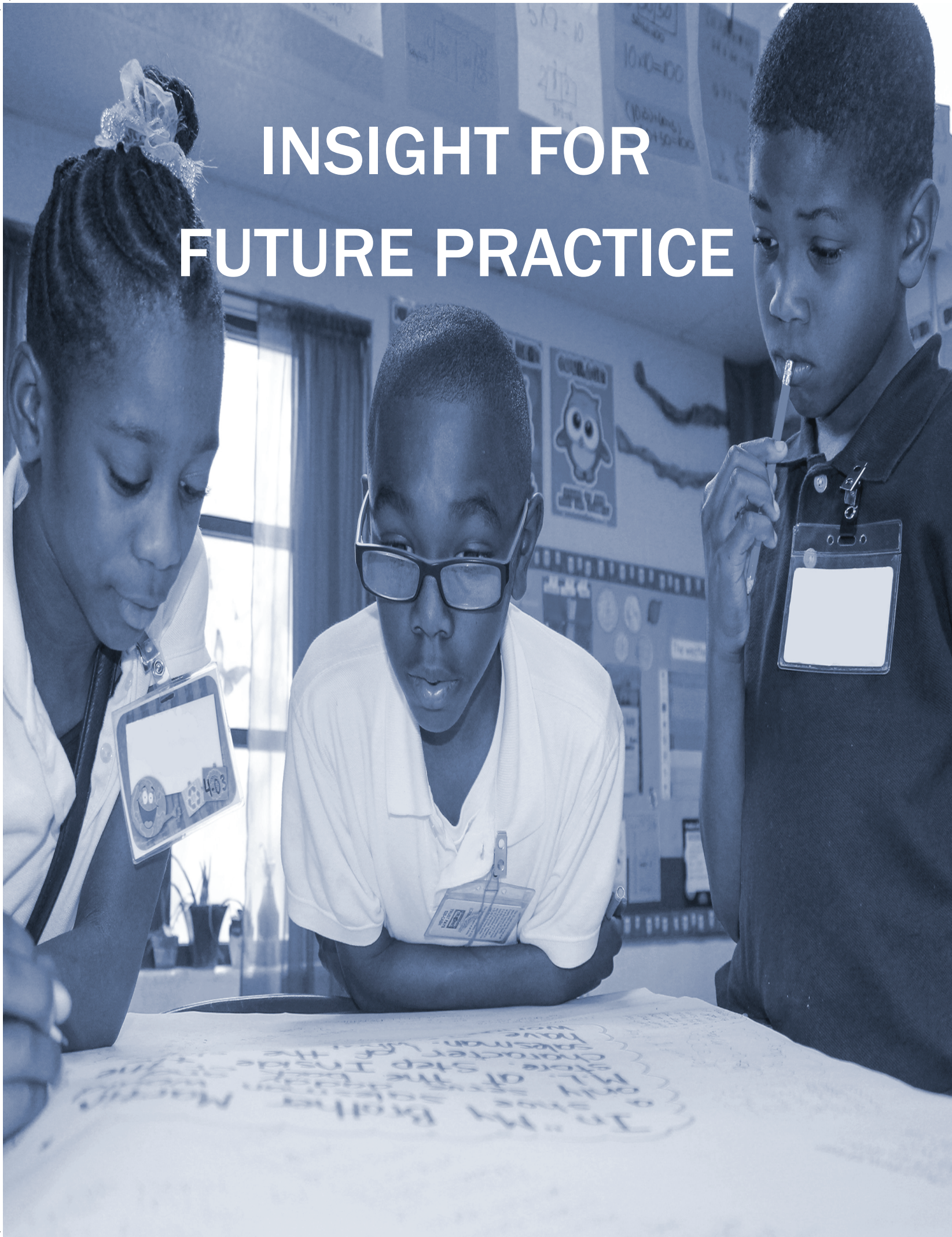
Detailed background and additional specifics about the review process for these subjects can be found on the SBE website.

Implementation Support

The enduring success of Tennessee's new state academic standards is heavily contingent upon the success of their implementation. As such, the TDOE has worked throughout the 2016-17 school year to help ensure that districts, school leaders, and teachers all feel supported and confident in their ability to implement these new standards in their classrooms successfully.

Tennessee's current implementation strategy utilizes a multi-phased rollout of the new standards intended to emphasize local control and autonomy. Accordingly, the department began presenting the new standards and resources to district superintendents in fall 2016. In winter 2016, the department began working with school and instructional leaders (principals, supervisors of instruction, mathematics or literacy coaches, etc.) through district teams to conduct a series in-depth and content-specific workshops. These workshops aim to build district capacity for implementing the new standards while promoting collaboration across districts.

INSIGHT FOR FUTURE PRACTICE



As an increasing number of states consider revising existing policies for reviewing their state academic standards, we hope to share some of our key insights gained throughout the initial cycle of Tennessee’s standards review process. The practices highlighted in this section have proven critical to the work of ensuring that all Tennessee students are held to rigorous standards that reflect the values of their state and communities. We look forward to engaging with stakeholders and other state education agencies in the coming years to further refine this process and identify additional best practices.

1) Strong and Transparent Communication

One of the fundamental goals of Tennessee’s review process has been to ensure that all Tennesseans are able to participate and provide feedback on the existing standards. Though the SBE is very pleased with the number of participants who engaged in this process during its initial cycle, we hope to maintain public participation in future revision cycles. In addition to promoting participation directly with established education stakeholder groups, we hope to expand our efforts to engage major media outlets throughout the state to help raise awareness about opportunities to provide feedback and participate in the review process. SBE is currently engaged in broader social media campaigns to help raise public awareness about the work of the board; we intend to leverage this expanded social media presence as an additional form of outreach in coming years.

A second key goal of the review process is to ensure that the process is conducted with the highest possible degree of transparency. This goal was developed in response to public feedback about the process Tennessee previously utilized to revise and adopt new academic standards. Strong stakeholder investment, particularly from parents, is essential to successful implementation of the new standards. Maintaining strong and transparent communication throughout this process is key to ensuring that all stakeholders feel positive about the outcome.

2) Multiple Opportunities for Public Engagement

In furtherance of the goals discussed above, the SBE sought to ensure that stakeholders had multiple opportunities and means of engaging in the review process. Posting the standards online both at the start of the process and after initial revisions had been made helped to provide the public with an opportunity to see and provide feedback about how their initial comments had been incorporated into the proposed revisions. The regional roundtable discussions provided an additional opportunity for public participation, as well as an opportunity to engage educators and community members who were unable to access the website or felt more comfortable sharing their perspectives in-person. These roundtable discussions served the secondary purpose of helping to bring local community members together in conversation about the standards and further cultivating stakeholder investment.

3) Distinguishing Between Standards and Curriculum

Public feedback from parents and stakeholder groups on Tennessee’s academic standards highlighted a need to clarify the critical distinction between standards and curriculum. Though this distinction is foundational for education professionals, it is critical that all stakeholders understand that academic standards do not obligate schools or teachers to adopt any specific curricula or pedagogical practices. The SBE sought to clarify and educate the general public about this distinction throughout our communication efforts with the general public through explanatory notes in the standards documents and websites, as well as through direct outreach and media coverage. This understanding is essential both for ensuring that feedback and data collected about the standards is valid and that reliable stakeholder investment is the final outcome.

4) Diverse Educator Advisory Teams

Given the diversity of Tennessee’s citizenry and school systems, it is crucial that the educator advisory teams are comprised of individuals representative of different perspectives. As the standards will ultimately be implemented in all communities and types of schools throughout the state by teachers with different years of experience and professional training or support, the perspectives and experiences of all stakeholder groups should be fairly represented in the standards revision work.

Accordingly, the SBE strived to select educator advisory team members from diverse regions of the state, from both charter and traditional public schools, and with diverse educational backgrounds.

Though reconciling such a range of perspectives can be challenging at times, we were incredibly encouraged by the thought and care that advisory team members gave to such issues. As a result, we believe that the newly developed standards created through Tennessee’s standards review process will fully meet the needs and honor the experiences and values of all students in the state.

5) Multi-Faceted Approach: New Standards and Transition Support

While the creation of thoughtful standards is indeed necessary for academic success, their eventual effectiveness rests on the ability of educators to translate those written benchmarks into dynamic teaching and learning. Educator support, in the form of professional development and various resources, must accompany a significant change such as the adoption of new standards. Accordingly, the SBE and TDOE planned for this transition from the start of the review process. The TDOE began working in 2016 to roll out the new standards, and in spring and summer 2017, district-level professional development occurred throughout the state; approximately 6,000 educators registered to attend free two-day trainings at 11 sites across Tennessee. Focused sessions were designed for each content area and grade band, and districts now have full access to the state resources and materials for redelivery at the local level. Going forward, the TDOE will also continue to provide additional transition support for teachers and districts throughout the 2017-18 school year through its regional support offices.

A blue-tinted photograph showing a hand holding a pen over a document, with a calculator in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image.

For more information, visit:

www.tn.gov/sbe/topic/standards-review

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Further Resources

- <https://tn.gov/sbe/topic/standards-review>
- <https://www.tn.gov/education/topic/academic-standards>
- <https://www.tn.gov/education/section/tdoe-educator-training>
- <https://www.tn.gov/education/topic/tdoe2-training-revised-ela-and-math-standards-training>

Appendix B: State Laws Pertaining to Standards Review

T.C.A. § 49-1-310. Implementation of process to review and replace Common Core State Standards -- Cancellation of memorandum of understanding.

(a) The state board of education shall implement a process whereby the set of standards known as the Common Core State Standards adopted in 2010 will be reviewed and shall be replaced with new sets of standards adopted to fit the needs of Tennessee students. These postsecondary and workforce ready standards shall be adopted through an open, transparent process that allows all Tennesseans an opportunity to participate. These standards shall be adopted and fully implemented in Tennessee public schools in the 2017-2018 school year.

(b) The state board of education or the department of education shall cancel any memorandum of understanding concerning the Common Core State Standards entered into with the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

T.C.A. § 49-1-311. Appointment of standards review and development committees and advisory teams -- Web site for public comment -- Recommendations.

As required by the current established process:

(1) The state board shall appoint two (2) standards review and development committees. One (1) committee shall be an English language arts standards review and development committee, and one (1) committee shall be a mathematics standards review and development committee. Each committee shall be composed of two (2) representatives from institutions of higher education located in the state and six (6) educators who reside in the state and work in grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12);

(2) The state board shall also appoint six (6) advisory teams. Three (3) advisory teams shall advise and assist the English language arts standards review and development committee, and three (3) advisory teams shall advise and assist the mathematics standards review and development committee. The advisory teams shall be structured by grade levels, so that one (1) advisory team reviews standards for kindergarten through grade five (K-5), one (1) for grades six through eight (6-8), and one (1) for grades nine through twelve (9-12) in each subject.

Each advisory team shall be composed of one (1) representative from an institution of higher education located in the state and six (6) educators who reside in the state and work in the appropriate grade levels and subject;

(3) The public's assistance in reviewing the current standards and suggesting changes to the current standards shall be elicited through a web site that shall allow comment by the public, as well as by educators, on the current standards. A third-party, independent educational resource, selected by the state board, shall collect all of the data and transmit all of the information gathered to the state board for dissemination to the appropriate advisory team for review and consideration;

(4) Each advisory team shall review the current standards for its subject matter and grade level together with the comments and suggestions gathered from the public and educators. After an advisory team has conducted its review, the team shall make recommendations for changes to the current standards to the appropriate standards review and development committee; and

(5) Each standards review and development committee shall review its advisory teams' reports and make recommendations for the new set of standards to the standards recommendation committee created in 49-1-312(a).

T.C.A. § 49-1-312. Standards recommendation committee -- English language arts and mathematics -- Confirmation of appointments.

(a) There is created a standards recommendation committee. The committee shall be composed of ten (10) members. The governor shall appoint four (4) members, the speaker of the senate shall appoint three (3) members, and the speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint three (3) members. The standards recommendation committee shall review and evaluate the recommendations of the two (2) standards review and development committees and post the recommendations to the web site created pursuant to 49-1-311(3) for the purpose of gathering additional feedback from the public. The standards recommendation committee shall make the final recommendations as to the new set of standards to the state board, which shall adopt sets of standards in English language arts and mathematics that fit the needs of Tennessee students in kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12).

(b) All appointments made pursuant to subsection (a) for the standards recommendation committee shall be subject to confirmation by the senate and the house of representatives, but appointments shall be effective until adversely acted upon by the senate and the house of representatives.

T.C.A. § 49-1-313. Standards recommendation committee -- Science and social studies.

Prior to the next adoption of academic standards in the subjects of science and social studies, the state board of education shall establish a process whereby the board shall receive recommendations from a standards recommendation committee appointed in the same manner as the standards recommendation committee created in 49-1-312. The standards recommendation committee shall make the final recommendations as to the revision and replacement of the current sets of standards in these subject areas to the state board, which shall adopt sets of standards in science and social studies that fit the needs of Tennessee students in kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12).



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