

Gap Analysis of the Common Core Standards and the Colorado Revised Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts

The Assessment and Standards Development Services (ASDS) program at WestEd conducted a gap analysis for the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), comparing the Colorado Academic Standards (CO) and the national Common Core State Standards (CCS). This summary provides an overview of the methodology and results for English language arts; detailed notes pertaining to the analysis are included in an annotated version of the CO standards document.

Materials and Methodology

WestEd analysts familiar with English language arts content, standards, assessment, and alignment reviewed each set of standards by grade, as described below. The two sets of standards are organized and referenced in the annotations as follows:

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

K–8 (individual grade standards), High School (grade bands 9–10 and 11–12)

Domain (letter abbreviation)

Cluster (group of standards)

Standards (numbered and lettered)

Sample References (see CCS p. 5): **SL.4.1b; RL.11-12.6**

Colorado Academic Standards

P–12 (individual grade standards)

Content Area (RWC)

Prepared Graduate Competencies

Standard (numbered)

Grade Level Expectation (numbered)

Evidence Outcomes (lettered)

21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies (numbered)

Sample References: **RWC.6.1.1.b** (Reading, Writing, and Communicating/GR.6/S.1/GLE.1/EO.b);

RWC.6.1.1.IQ.1 (Reading, Writing, and Communicating /GR.6/S.1/GLE.2/IQ.1)

The analysis and annotations focused on the five possible outcomes described below for overlap between the two sets of standards, using the CO standards as the referent. All annotations are in track changes in the Word version of the CO standards document. All CCS content is accounted for somewhere in the CO standards document.

1. The CCS covers content that CO covers at the same grade level (that is, the *intent* of the content is sufficiently overlapping): No notes are provided in the CO template.
2. CO covers content that the CCS does *not* cover at any grade level: “(CO only)” is inserted at the end of the relevant Evidence Outcome.

3. The CCS covers content that CO covers *only partially* at the same grade level: A note in the CCS Notes column indicates what would need to be added to CO to cover the CCS content fully.
4. The CCS covers content that CO covers at a *different grade level*: Cross-referenced notes in the CCS Notes column at both the target (CCS) and current (CO) grade levels indicate cross-grade overlap of content.
5. The CCS covers content that CO does *not* cover at any grade level: A note in the CCS Notes column indicates the CCS content missing from the CO standards; the CCS standard is inserted in the CO Evidence Outcomes column at the grade level where it appears in the CCS.

Summary of Results

This section summarizes the overall results of the gap analysis for English Language Arts/Reading, Writing, and Communicating. Details of the analysis for each standard at each grade level are provided in the annotated CO document.

The CCS for Speaking and Listening (SL) are grouped by (1) Comprehension and Collaboration, and (2) Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas across all grades. The CO standard (1) for Oral Expression and Listening is less consistent in the focus of skills across grades. The number of GLEs in Standard 1 varies across grades from one GLE at grades 4 and 6 to three GLEs at grades K and 1.

- GLEs in grades K-4, 6-7, 10, and 12 include some skills related to collaborative conversations/discussions, but no GLEs in grades 5, 8-9, and 11 address collaborative conversations/discussions.
- There are three GLEs in Standard 1 at grades K and 1, with one of the GLEs addressing phonemic awareness. This GLE overlaps with the CCS in Reading Foundational Skills and in Language.
- There is only one GLE in Standard 1 at grade 4 and at grade 6. The GLE at each grade addresses collaborative conversations/discussions, but very little attention is given to individual presentation. All other grade levels, except K and 1, have two GLEs, one of which specifies presentation.

The CCS has Language standards (L.1-6) that are separate from the Reading standards at all grades, K through 11-12. Included in the Language standards is vocabulary. Vocabulary skills are incorporated into the CO Reading for All Purposes standard 2, but not in a consistent way across the grades. Other language skills are incorporated into the third GLE in the CO Writing and Composition standard 3 for grades 3-12, but the coverage is not as broad as it is in the CCS.

- The third GLE in Standard 2 from grades 1-8 is specific to word meaning, structure, and relationships.

- The Standard 2 GLE specific to word meaning, structure, and relationships drops out after grades 8; therefore, grades 9-12 do not address vocabulary and word usage to the extent that the CCS do.
- CO Standard 3 Writing and Composition GLE 3 specifies grammar, usage, and conventions to be addressed; however, the Language Progressive Skills Chart in the CCS indicate that many of these skills need to be continued in higher grades as they are applied to more complex and sophisticated writing.

Both the CCS for Reading and the CO standard Reading for All Purposes differentiate skills specific to comprehension of literary texts and skills specific to comprehension of informational texts; however, not all skills in the CCS are included in the CO standard. The CCS have a greater emphasis on multimedia presentations of information. Following are some examples of these differences:

- CCS Reading Standard for Literary Text (RL.7) addresses the use of illustrations in a literary text (grades K-3) or the comparison of a literary text with the oral, visual, or multimedia version of the story (grades 4-12). Only grade K addresses this skill in the CO standards.
- CCS Reading Standards for Literary Text (RL.10) and Informational Text (RI.10) address the range of reading and the complexity of the text read at each grade level. This is not addressed in the CO Reading standards at any grade.

CO Writing and Composition standard 3 and the CCS for Writing cover the same text types and purposes. CO has a separate standard for Research and Reasoning (4), whereas the CCS classifies a group of writing standards (7-9) as Research to Build and Present Knowledge. CCS addresses some areas that are not addressed to any real extent in the CO Writing and Composition standard.

- Beginning at grade 3, the CCS address the use of technology to produce and distribute writing, but this is not addressed at any grade level in the CO Writing and Composition standard.
- Beginning at grade 3, the CCS address the range of writing over short and long time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, but this is not addressed at any grade level in the CO Writing and Composition standard.

While there is considerable overlap between the CCS for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects and the CO Reading, Writing, and Communicating Standards, there is limited or vague overlap between the CCS Literacy Standards and the CO Social Studies and Science Standards. Following are some examples of the overlap:

- Analyzing the extent to which reasoning and evidence in text support an author's claims (RH.9-10.8) is implied in RWC.4.1.c and is alluded to in SS.1.1.d at the high

school level; however, it should probably be more clearly stated in the social studies standards.

- Students are required to use information presented in text and information expressed visually (e.g., S.6.3.1.b, S.8.2.1.e, etc.), but they are not specifically required to integrate the same information presented visually and in text (RST.6-8.7).

Recommended Next Steps

WestEd recommends that the CDE consider whether adding a separate standard for Language and Vocabulary might be advisable. In many instances, individual GLE statements can be refined to include elements that are in the related CCS. Refining existing standards to include more use of technology and multimedia materials should also be considered. CDE should also consider ensuring that the CCS for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects are covered in their Social Studies, Science, and technical content area standards.