

ELA Curriculum Revision – Executive Summary

Performance Standards

The most noticeable difference between the former and the revised *Quality Core Curriculum* (QCC) in English Language Arts is the use of performance standards. When a teacher opens the curriculum document, he or she will begin to see samples of student work. These samples serve to show the teacher how a student, by virtue of his or her work, has met the standards of each strand. The commentaries on each piece of student work will demonstrate to a teacher how he or she can determine whether a student has met a standard by examining what that student has done. A performance standard includes performance tasks, student work, and commentaries.

Essential Changes

In English Language Arts the strand development consists of reading, writing, conventions, and a strand for listening, speaking, and viewing. Although the Phase I process included a strand for research, that strand is incorporated in the reading and writing strands of the new document. The standards for viewing are new for Georgia, and they address the need for students to become discerning viewers of text. These standards are primarily concerned with media literacy.

The standards are presented grade by grade in grades K-8, and there is a description of what a student should be able to do at the beginning of each grade level. In grades 9-12 there is a progression of standards at each grade level in the strands of writing and conventions. The literature standards are written course by course. Although there are 41 current state-funded English courses, the committee of teachers wrote standards specifically for Ninth-Grade Literature and Composition, Tenth-Grade Literature and Composition, American Literature, British Literature, and World Literature. These are the courses most prevalent in Georgia schools.

The revised English Language Arts *Quality Core Curriculum* uses the *Primary Literacy Standards for Kindergarten Through Third Grade* published by the National Center for Education and the Economy and the University of Pittsburgh in the strands for reading, writing, and conventions for those grade levels. In kindergarten through grade 3, the reading standards focus on the results of the National Reading Panel, emphasizing phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The standards for the listening, speaking, and viewing strand were adapted from standards from Kansas.

In grades 4-12, the reading strand was adapted from Massachusetts, and the writing, conventions, and listening, speaking, and viewing strands were adapted from California. The teacher teams constructed the tasks, accumulated the samples of student work to be included, and wrote the commentaries on the student work.

With the aggressive timeline for completion of this document, the current document is still a work in progress. Although there are standards, tasks, student work, and commentaries, additional tasks, student work and commentaries will follow. Members of the teacher teams, particularly in grades 9-12, have struggled to find student work which can be used until they have collected some samples from Georgia teachers. These teachers have struggled to keep this document a Georgia product and one that Georgia teachers can use.

Reading-Across-the-Curriculum

A standard for reading-across-the-curriculum is included in grades 6-12. This standard is intended to meet the requirement that every student read 25 books or one million words per year. Every curriculum area should be involved with this standard because the English language arts teacher cannot meet this standard alone. This standard emphasizes reading in all curriculum areas, discussing books, content vocabulary, and establishing context.

Phase-In

It is conceivable that the entire ELA curriculum could be phased-in in the 2004-05 school year; however, it is questionable whether the Department has enough resources to provide comprehensive professional development on performance standards for all English teachers in Georgia prior to the phase-in.

Textbook Issues

The K-8 language arts adoption occurred last year, and the 9-12 adoption is occurring this year. There are no peculiarities about the ELA curriculum document which would cause any textbook issues in the phase-in process.