A Summary Report: Key Recommendations from the
Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (TCTELA) TEKS Forum 2.0

Created for the State Board of Education (SBOE) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA)

TCTELA TEKS Forum 2.0

In May 2016, the SBOE Chair requested that TCTELA host a second forum where comments could be posted regarding the third draft of the ELAR TEKS. TCTELA leadership approved support for the second forum and petitioned participation from literacy leaders and teachers across the state. With Victoria Young serving as moderator, the TCTELA TEKS Forum 2.0 opened for public comment in July 2016.

Abbreviated Description of TCTELA TEKS Forum 2.0 Users

The 472 users reported the following data regarding their work in public school settings and in English language arts and reading education for the 2016-2017 school year:

- 64% (300) are teachers, and 26% (125) are administrators.
- 87% (412) work in public school settings.
- 81% (382) primarily teach ELA or reading.
- 25% (118) teach early childhood (EC)–grade 5, and 50% (236) teach grades 6–12.
- 64% (304) have 11 or more years of experience teaching ELAR.
- 64% (301) are solely responsible for or work in teams for lesson planning.

Summary of Recommendations

Utilizing the feedback from the forum participants and guidance from Victoria Young, TCTELA produced 243 recommended changes to the third draft of the ELAR TEKS. Of more than 300 responses across all forum questions, most were related to three distinct categories and none were extensive suggestions for revision that would suggest changes to the structure or intent of the current drafts of the ELAR TEKS. Overwhelmingly, 62% (151) of the recommended changes focused on the need for clarity. There were 65 recommended changes related to alignment, and 21 recommended changes related to developmental appropriateness. Six recommendations came from a fourth category that simply had to do with grammatical or mechanical changes.

Three major areas of consideration represented in the TCTELA TEKS Forum 2.0 Report on responses to the third draft of the ELAR TEKS:

1. Clarity: Respondents noted confusion about wording regarding consistency, accuracy, and intent.
   a. Areas of vocabulary are unclear, inconsistent, or inappropriate.
   b. Some wording does not support the intent of the student expectation.
   c. Other wording is limiting or inaccurate.

2. Alignment: Respondents noted some remaining alignment issues.
a. Various student expectations are not listed in the same order across grade levels, disrupting the ease with which readers can note vertical alignment.

b. A few romanettes are present at one grade level, absent at the next, and/or appear again later. These omissions cause inconsistency in the vertical progression in difficulty of a skill across grade levels.

c. Certain student expectations vary in specificity, sometimes causing higher grade levels to be less specific than earlier grade levels and/or adjacent grade levels to be so far apart in specificity that difficulty progression across grade levels is unreasonable or unclear.

3. Developmental Appropriateness: Respondents noted a few areas where the student expectations did not match the developmental level of the students.

a. Particular student expectations appear to be too difficult, even with adult assistance.

b. Several student expectations could be made developmentally appropriate by adding adult assistance.

c. A few student expectations appear to be too easy.

**Importance of Forum 2.0 Responses and Recommendations:**

The survey conducted through the Texas A&M Education Research Center (ERC) allowed TCTELA to hear the voices of 1128 teachers on the subject of the current ELAR TEKS. In reviewing the TCTELA TEKS Forum 2.0 responses to the most recent version of the revised TEKS, two findings of the ERC study guide our thinking:

1. TCTELA learned that teachers find the current ELAR TEKS to be inaccessible because they are “jargon-laden, requiring extensive teacher training in order to understand what certain standards are asking students to be able to do” (p. 32). The survey even revealed that there are differences in interpretation at their school and district levels. “With this in mind, the current revisions should yield clear and concise standards that are readily accessible and easily interpreted by teachers for the purpose of planning and delivering meaningful instruction.

2. Furthermore, professional development should be offered to scaffold teachers' interpretation and implementation of the revised standards…” (p. 37).

Education Research Center (ERC). (2015). *Voices of Texas teachers in English language arts and reading TEKS revisions*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University.