



Analysis of Public Input on South Carolina ELA and Math Standards

Submitted to

Education Oversight Committee

By

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October 15, 2014

Project Team

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Introduction

Between July 11 and September 30, 2014, South Carolina citizens were invited to offer their opinions, comments and suggestions regarding existing standards in English language arts and mathematics. A website was made available for interested citizens to provide input. Responses were sought in four categories: English/Language Arts (ELA) standards; Mathematics (Math) standards; appendices containing the text of the standards; and an Exit section for general comments.

The purpose of this report is to present an organized summary of these public comments.

The research team consisted of two persons: one holds an advanced degree in Sociology and had been a professor of Educational Policy until his retirement. He has conducted a similar study of public opinion of standards in Florida. The other holds a degree in History, and was most recently a policy analyst for a quasi-governmental agency in Florida, specializing in children's public policy.

Respondents were asked to comment on each of the standards (over 500 each for ELA and Math). All items were open-ended. Respondents were asked to type their comments in text fields; that is, there were no boxes to check. As a result, the comments needed to be "coded," or categorized for content. Analysts read through a sample of respondents, noting common themes. Once initial themes (codes) were identified, analysts systematically read each comment, assigning a numeric code. Other codes were identified during the process, and some original codes were modified. Once coding was complete, the resulting coded data were used to summarize the results of the survey in tables and figures.

The approach taken by the coding team included the following principles:

- All comments were reviewed and coded; i.e., we did not draw a subsample of the data.
- The analysis is intended to be "lossless," i.e., all comments are retrievable by code number; no information has been lost in the data compilation process.
- A few web respondents commented on a large number of standards, using cut-and-paste techniques to offer the identical comment to hundreds of standards. Although this may appear to be "stuffing the ballot box," these cases were not excluded: the wide distribution of multiple comments per respondent begged the question of where to draw a cut-off point, and would violate the principle of including all comments.

There are five sections of the report:

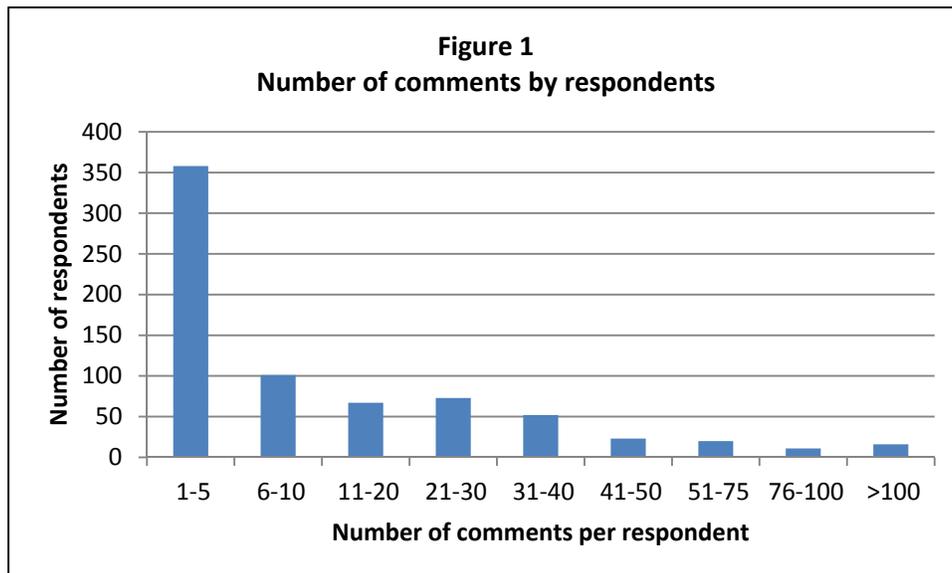
1. Analysis of comments on state standards (this document-pdf)
2. Lists of all ELA recommendations, coded and organized by standard (Microsoft Excel worksheet)
3. Lists of all Math recommendations, coded and organized by standard (Microsoft Excel worksheet)
(For a list of the number of recommendations per standard, see Appendices in this document.)
4. A qualitative summary of general comments offered in the Appendices and Exit section of the survey (this document-pdf)
5. Printable files of all comments, sorted by standard (Microsoft Excel)

Data analysis

Total number of comments and constituents

A total of **13,274** comments were analyzed, from the following sections of the web survey. These comments were made by a total of 716 respondents (see Table 1). In the English/Language Arts and Math sections, respondents were able to comment on more than 500 ELA and/or math standards. However, most respondents commented on fewer than 10 standards. Sixteen respondents commented on over 100 standards (see Figure 1).

Data source	Comments	Constituents
English/Language Arts (ELA) standards	7783	466
Math standards	5197	345
Appendix A (ELA)	24	24
Appendix B (ELA)	12	12
Appendix C (ELA)	13	13
Appendix A (Math)	37	37
Exit comments (General)	208	208
Total (unduplicated count)	13,274	716



Respondents' residence and role/occupation

Tables 2 and 3 present county of residence of survey respondents and their occupation or role. Only 11 respondents were from outside South Carolina. Over 60 percent identified themselves as teachers, and nearly 20 percent were parents.

County	N	Percent	County	N	Percent
Abbeville	5	.7	Horry	37	5.2
Aiken	7	1.0	Kershaw	14	2.0
Anderson	93	13.0	Lancaster	5	.7
Barnwell	3	.4	Laurens	5	.7
Beaufort	7	1.0	Lee	2	.3
Berkeley	29	4.1	Lexington	63	8.8
Calhoun	1	.1	Marion	7	1.0
Charleston	35	4.9	Marlboro	16	2.2
Cherokee	44	6.1	Newberry	5	.7
Chester	5	.7	Oconee	5	.7
Chesterfield	12	1.7	Orangeburg	9	1.3
Clarendon	3	.4	Pickens	7	1.0
Colleton	5	.7	Richland	60	8.4
Darlington	1	.1	Saluda	2	.3
Dorchester	15	2.1	Spartanburg	51	7.1
Edgefield	2	.3	Sumter	8	1.1
Florence	13	1.8	Union	3	.4
Georgetown	8	1.1	Williamsburg	1	.1
Greenville	47	6.6	York	61	8.5
Greenwood	8	1.1	[Out-of-state]	11	1.5
Hampton	1	.1	Total	716	100.0

	N	Percent
Teacher	443	61.9
Parent	139	19.4
Higher Education	15	2.1
School Administrator	14	2.0
Business	12	1.7
District Administrator	11	1.5
Other	82	11.5
Total	716	100

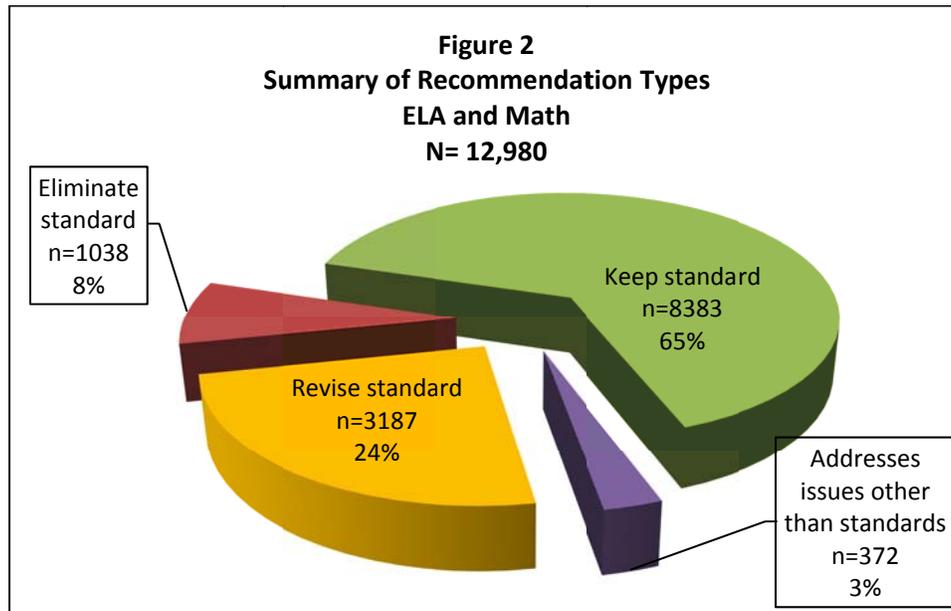
Analysis of comments and recommendations

Analysts identified 26 general themes in the comments and recommendations. These are listed in Table 4, in the order of their frequency. Table 5 breaks these down by role/occupation

Theme	Frequency	Percent
Good standard, keep standard	7375	56.8
Technical suggestion/comment	1514	11.7
Anti-Common Core	695	5.4
Developmentally inappropriate - too hard	636	4.9
Developmentally appropriate	596	4.6
Standard is vague, badly written	421	3.2
Need more examples/specifics	374	2.9
Disagree with the standard	263	2.0
Similar to old standards/Common Core standards	146	1.1
Promotes reading/writing skills	131	1.0
Prepares student for the real world	120	0.9
Difficult to measure/assess	92	0.7
Content may be inappropriate/offensive	83	0.6
Redundant or unnecessary standard	80	0.6
Need more resources or time [to implement the standard]	77	0.6
Promotes lifelong learning	68	0.5
Assumes student is previously prepared	59	0.5
Promotes critical thinking/problem solving	53	0.4
Need more technology [to implement the standard]	43	0.3
Materials should be more closely scrutinized	34	0.3
Debate is too political - not about education	33	0.3
Promotes college readiness	28	0.2
Developmentally inappropriate - too easy	26	0.2
Assumes that student is already fluent in English	14	0.1
Promotes science readiness	12	0.1
Must allow for diverse opinions/answers	7	0.1
Total	12,980	100

	Business	District Admin	Higher Educ	Parent	School Admin	Teacher	Other	Total
Good standard, keep standard	16	25	79	1701	63	4038	1453	7375
Technical suggestion/comment	25	10	69	189	8	963	250	1514
Anti-Common Core	1	63	0	463	0	45	123	695
Developmentally inappropriate - too hard	41	5	3	89	2	448	48	636
Developmentally appropriate	0	31	0	2	0	273	290	596
Standard is vague, badly written	24	13	18	16	3	304	43	421
Need more examples/specifics	5	2	3	27	4	293	40	374
Disagree with the standard	4	0	1	48	3	179	28	263
Similar to old standards/Common Core standards	12	0	0	7	0	115	12	146
Promotes reading/writing skills	1	0	2	22	1	85	20	131
Prepares student for the real world	2	0	0	3	1	100	14	120
Difficult to measure/assess	0	1	0	5	1	83	2	92
Content may be inappropriate/offensive	0	0	0	2	0	6	75	83
Redundant or unnecessary standard	1	0	4	2	1	70	2	80
Need more resources or time [to implement the standard]	0	0	1	23	0	51	2	77
Promotes lifelong learning	1	0	5	3	0	52	7	68
Assumes student is previously prepared	0	0	0	18	0	36	5	59
Promotes critical thinking/problem solving	2	0	2	1	0	40	8	53
Need more technology [to implement the standard]	0	0	0	3	0	40	0	43
Materials should be more closely scrutinized	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	34
Debate is too political - not about education	0	0	0	27	0	6	0	33
Promotes college readiness	0	0	0	1	0	27	0	28
Developmentally inappropriate - too easy	0	0	0	3	0	23	0	26
Assumes that student is already fluent in English	0	0	0	6	2	6	0	14
Promotes science readiness	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	12
Must allow for diverse opinions/answers	0	0	0	1	0	4	2	7
Total	135	150	187	2662	89	7299	2458	12,980

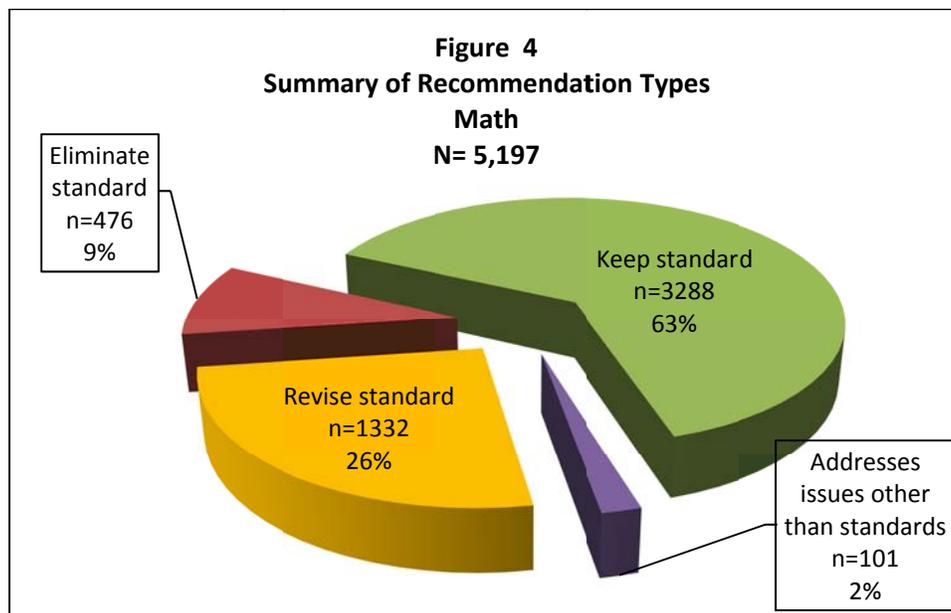
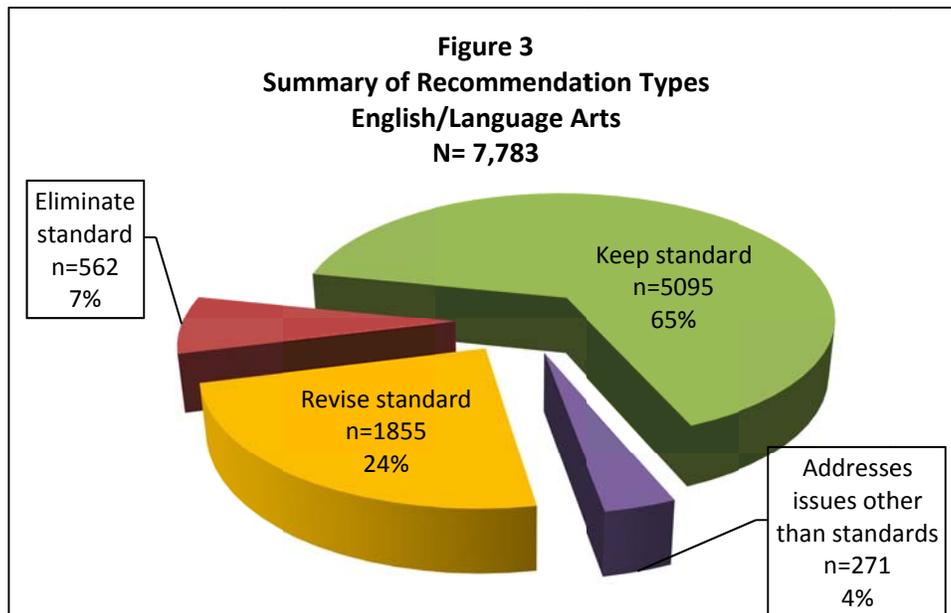
Most of these are comments on specific standards, many others recommended changes to standards, and some were about the common core standards in general. A summary of these is presented in Figure 2. About two thirds (65%) of the comments expressed approval of the standards. One in four comments (24%) were recommendations for changes in the standards. Eight percent recommended elimination of given standards; only three percent addressed other issues.



Comments specific to English/Language Arts and Mathematics

Content-specific analysis is presented in two formats. First, we briefly summarize comments according to recommended changes, as above. Second, we provide a separate Excel workbook that organizes constructive and specific recommendations for revising individual standards. These are provided as separate files.

Overall comments related to ELA and Math followed the same pattern as described above: Most comments approved of the standard. About one fourth recommended technical revisions. Few comments recommended elimination of standards or were off-topic (see Figures 3 and 4).



Summary of Exit Comments

At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were solicited for general comments about the core standards. 208 comments were submitted, many of which were either overwhelmingly in favor of, or sternly against, Common Core. There were other repeated themes, such as concerns over excessive testing and college readiness. Several respondents were concerned that the standards did not take into account that some students are not properly prepared in previous grades. Additionally, there were commenters who felt the survey was too specific and complex for non-educators.

Theme 1: Many commenters were extremely positive about the Common Core standards.

"I believe Common Core has been a positive change to SC! I think many Common Core critics do not understand that Common Core is especially beneficial to students who come to school unprepared to be successful. Unfortunately, we have many students that fall in this category. I know when Common Core first came out many teachers were upset that time and money were not taught in kindergarten. I teach in a school that has almost 80% of its students below the poverty level. Many of these students come to kindergarten not knowing what a number is. Expecting them to tell time by the end of the year is a challenge! We use RTI in our school to remediate students who "don't get it" and to challenge students who already understand it."

"Regarding the ELA standard for grades 6-12: After extensive training from Lexington School District One, I have a profound appreciation for these Common Core Standards. They are excellent. I have worked passionately for the past 26 years in language arts education in South Carolina as a high school English teacher, a high school literacy coach, a middle school literacy coach, a language arts department head in 3 different schools, and now as a middle school media specialist. The common core standards are, without any doubt, the best standards SC has ever had, and they should be reinstated! They are not easy; they are the most challenging standards we have ever had. They require passionate, smart teachers to work hard every day and to make their students work hard every day, but the effort is worth it! Please don't "wimp out" when we are so close to making a giant leap forward in SC education."

"I cannot be helpful on the details as I come from the business world. I am very disappointed that SC no longer will be supporting the CCSS. The CCSS are globally competitive which will be critical to our students' future success in an interdependent world. I support the need to have all our students graduate both college and career ready but lowering our academic standards - to appease various constituencies - is not to the benefit of our students, their parents, educators nor businesses."

"I am a 7th grade math teacher in ASD1. I urge you to consider the Common Core standards as a starting point when you are rewriting the math standards. These standards are rigorous and have required both me and my students to think outside of the box. While it has been a challenging first year with these standards, the rewards have far outweighed the challenges. My students became better thinkers and problem solvers. I think going back to "homegrown" standards would be detrimental to our state's progress in the classroom. "

"Math standards: I have been involved with curriculum work in my district in SC for most of my teaching career. These standards are excellent! I have seen several standards adoptions occur and these by far correlate with best teaching practices. I like the way that the scope and sequence truly develops concepts and skills over time, rather than teaching bits and pieces each year, which results in students never developing a deep understanding of mathematical concepts. If these are fully allowed to be

implemented, I am excited to see the positive results from the Kindergarten students that will be able to follow these for their K-12 school years.”

Theme 2: Others were critical of the standards, or felt that they were inappropriate:

“You are no longer using Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development in planning the standards in math. You are asking children in elementary schools to do things that the majority are not developmentally capable of doing. When Bloom's Taxonomy began being used in education, those who define what students will do and know threw out memorization because it is defined as the lowest form of learning. Therefore, Piaget's Theory, is no longer recognized in the planning of math education. For example, asking a 4th grade child to use algebra to find the missing length of a rectangle given the area. Since, you no longer expect students to memorize multiplication tables, for most 4th graders the task is almost impossible. You are not developing a concrete knowledge of math before asking student to do the abstract.”

“It is imperative that a committee of Early Childhood Development specialist approve of the k-3 standards! It is imperative that the Math Standards not encourage "fuzzy math" teaching techniques (k-3). It is imperative that the suggested text exemplars NOT be pornographic literature and that they should be approved reading that doesn't "indoctrinate" students into a specific political ideology. (k-12). Cursive writing should be brought back beginning with grade 3. It is imperative that the fiction and non-fiction reading requirements NOT be balanced in a way that prevents classic literature to be skipped over to reach a set quota of 75% being non fiction! It should be the other way around! Classical fiction reading by well known acclaimed writers should still be the main focus!”

“All of the Common Core standards MUST go. They are inappropriate for early childhood learning, will NOT prepare our students for college and STEM careers, and were forced upon our local school boards by the federal government. Education should be a state responsibility, and MOST of all, should include PARENTAL INPUT!! As a parent, I had no voice in the ridiculous standards that caused my 3rd grader to spend hours trying to figure out how to "explain" her math answers. I've got your explanation- she did it in her head, by rote memorization of basic addition/subtraction and multiplication/division, the way it SHOULD be done! No, she didn't need to draw a million circles, color them in, mark some out, then rearranged them.”

Theme 3: Another concern related to how the standards would be assessed. Some respondents, particularly parents, were also concerned with excessive testing:

“We have students that will be assessed using a "mystery" test, and parents and teachers do not know what to expect. I feel that this is unfair for all stakeholders and it is very difficult to explain to my child that she and her school will be graded based upon a "mystery" test. We have excellent teachers, but they need to know what to expect so that they can incorporate that information into their daily lessons. I am not saying that they should teach the test, I am just saying that the test may include various features that the students need to be comfortable with. If the students are allowed to use calculators, we need to make sure that the students are exposed to the calculators. Many Middle Schools do not allow students to use calculators unless they have special accommodations in their IEPs. If my child will be able to use a calculator on the test, I want her to be familiar with all of the features so that she can be successful. I know that I am supposed to comment concerning the Standards, but our schools are frowned upon if we are not successful on the Standardized Test(s). (All grade levels.)”

“In the area of ELA or mathematics, the question is how will this be assessed? Research and many business models tell us to begin with the end in mind, what is the end?”

“I have no problem with the standards, and what they are asking our Kindergartners to do. I do not feel the standards are the problem. The rigor and complexity of state testing however I do have a problem with. Performance tasks are important for the children to be exposed to, but asking them to do it independently without guidance or support from the teacher on state testing I feel will set them up for failure. I do not know what the answer is regarding state testing, but I feel standardized testing places too much pressure on our children to "show what they know" on one test and takes no account into what they have accomplished during the year especially when not every child comes in on the same playing field. Educators are constantly told we need to differentiate instruction in our classrooms, but when it comes down to state testing, every child takes the same test regardless of their needs.”

“The objective of the testing is good but what terms are being required to solve the problems. If Common Core terms are used then other teaching methods are useless. The test should be written in such a way that the correct answer is reached, not the method used to get the answer.”

Theme 4: Some respondents noted that the standards could increase students' readiness for college.

“These standards are very comprehensive and appropriate for all children. We need to keep them and not try to change what the teacher and other expert brain trusts that developed them came up with. These standards, in both ELA and math, WILL prepare our children for college or career at the highest levels!”

“I cannot be helpful on the details as I come from the business world. I am very disappointed that SC no longer will be supporting the CCSS. The CCSS are globally competitive which will be critical to our students' future success in an interdependent world. I support the need to have all our students graduate both college and career ready but lowering our academic standards - to appease various constituencies - is not to the benefit of our students, their parents, educators nor businesses.”

Theme 5: Finally, some respondents were positive about the standards, but worried that students could be unprepared from previous grades:

“Our students are being taught 8th grade standards without the prerequisites needed to even begin the standard. We are not holding students accountable in the lower grades and retaining them in grades K-3 until they are able to master the grade appropriate standards. By the time, they arrive at middle school they are behind. This leads to frustration for both teacher and student. Inability to read and write on grade level and to perform simple mathematical practices like measuring and multiplying is halting the efforts of well-meaning and dedicated teachers.”

“Society does not support such a rigorous curriculum for the average student. This is a wonderful math curriculum for a GT student with supportive parents who value education. Otherwise we are exposing students to higher standards with mastery or fluency of fewer standards. CC standards are designed to prepare students for college. Unfortunately, not all students have that same aspiration. In our struggle to raise the expectations too many students are being lost in the cracks. I am a seasoned 30 yr vet that supports high expectations, but this curriculum doesn't allow students time to acquire skills before moving on.”

“In Math, students need to be exposed to counting changer earlier than 2nd grade. There is not enough time in the year to teach all the math standards and this would help with the pacing. In Math, the state needs to set strategies these students must learn for every school district. I had three different students move into my classroom from schools in South Carolina and none of them were doing any of the strategies we were doing at my school!”

Appendix A-1
Number of Technical Suggestions per Standard-ELA
Sorted by standard number

	Standard	Suggestions
K12-L	Language Standards	261
K12-R	Reading	264
K12-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	132
K12-W	Writing Standards	180
K-L	Language Standards	64
K-RF	Reading Standards: Foundational Skills (K-5)	26
K-RI	Reading Standards for Informational Text	39
K-RL	Reading Standards for Literature	32
K-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	22
K-W	Writing Standards	49
1-L	Language Standards	36
1-RF	Reading Standards: Foundational Skills (K-5)	15
1-RI	Reading Standards for Informational Text	36
1-RL	Reading Standards for Literature	33
1-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	16
1-W	Writing Standards	25
2-L	Language Standards	20
2-RF	Reading Standards: Foundational Skills (K-5)	9
2-RI	Reading Standards for Informational Text	18
2-RL	Reading Standards for Literature	18
2-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	13
2-W	Writing Standards	13
3-L	Language Standards	70
3-RF	Reading Standards: Foundational Skills (K-5)	16
3-RI	Reading Standards for Informational Text	48
3-RL	Reading Standards for Literature	41
3-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	24
3-W	Writing Standards	45
4-L	Language Standards	46
4-RF	Reading Standards: Foundational Skills (K-5)	5
4-RI	Reading Standards for Informational Text	32
4-RL	Reading Standards for Literature	39
4-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	23
4-W	Writing Standards	40
5-L	Language Standards	46
5-RF	Reading Standards: Foundational Skills (K-5)	6
5-I	Reading Standards for Informational Text	18
5-RL	Reading Standards for Literature	25
5-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	9
5-W	Writing Standards	17

Appendix A-1
Number of Technical Suggestions per Standard-ELA
Sorted by standard number (cont.)

	Standard	Suggestions
68-RH	Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12	5
68-RST	Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects 6-12	1
68-WHST	Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects	3
6-L	Language Standards	10
6-RI	Reading Standards for Informational Text	1
6-RL	Reading Standards for Literature	1
6-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	2
6-W	Writing Standards	8
7-L	Language Standards	21
7-RI	Reading Standards for Informational Text	7
7-RL	Reading Standards for Literature	7
7-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	2
7-W	Writing Standards	13
8-L	Language Standards	25
8-RI	Reading Standards for Informational Text	6
8-RL	Reading Standards for Literature	1
8-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	2
8-W	Writing Standards	9
910-L	Language Standards	52
910-RH	Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12	18
910-RI	Reading Standards for Informational Text	25
910-RL	Reading Standards for Literature	39
910-RST	Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects 6-12	4
910-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	19
910-W	Writing Standards	19
910-WHST	Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects	10
1112-L	Language Standards	25
1112-RH	Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12	13
1112-RI	Reading Standards for Informational Text	14
1112-RL	Reading Standards for Literature	25
1112-RST	Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects 6-12	2
1112-SL	Standards for Speaking and Listening	8
1112-W	Writing Standards	15
1112-WHST	Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects	12

Appendix A-2
Number of Technical Suggestions per Standard-Math
Sorted by standard number

	Standard	Suggestions
K12-MP	Mathematical Practice	171
K-CC	Counting and Cardinality	35
K-G	Geometry	39
K-MD	Measurement and Data	8
K-NBT	Number and Operations in Base Ten	37
K-OA	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	19
1-G	Geometry	20
1-MD	Measurement and Data	28
1-NBT	Number and Operations in Base Ten	37
1-OA	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	58
2-G	Geometry	18
2-MD	Measurement and Data	49
2-NBT	Number and Operations in Base Ten	29
2-OA	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	16
3-G	Geometry	9
3-MD	Measurement and Data	49
3-NBT	Number and Operations in Base Ten	25
3-NF	Number and Operations - Fractions	16
3-OA	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	32
4-G	Geometry	11
4-MD	Measurement and Data	40
4-NBT	Number and Operations in Base Ten	32
4-NF	Number and Operations - Fractions	23
4-OA	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	12
5-G	Geometry	8
5-MD	Measurement and Data	17
5-NBT	Number and Operations in Base Ten	29
5-NF	Number and Operations - Fractions	32
5-OA	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	3
6-EE	Expressions & Equations	56
6-G	Geometry	24
6-NS	The Number System	51
6-RP	Ratios & Proportional Relationships	18
6-SP	Statistics & Probability	30
7-EE	Expressions & Equations	25
7-G	Geometry	30
7-NS	The Number System	15
7-RP	Ratios & Proportional Relationships	11
7-SP	Statistics & Probability	24

Appendix A-2 (cont.)
 Number of Technical Suggestions per Strand-Math
 Sorted by standard number

	Standard	Suggestions
8-EE	Expressions & Equations	51
8-F	Functions	18
8-G	Geometry	50
8-NS	The Number System	11
8-SP	Statistics & Probability	14
912-A-APR	Algebra: Arithmetic with Polynomials & Rational Expressions	80
912-A-CED	Algebra: Creating Equations	30
912-A-REI	Algebra: Reasoning with Equations & Inequalities	95
912-1-SSE	Algebra: Seeing Structure in Expressions	35
912-F-BF	Functions: Building Functions	17
912-F-IF	Functions: Building Functions	21
912-F-LE	Functions: Linear, Quadratic, & Exponential Models	13
912-F-TF	Functions: Trigonometric Functions	41
912-G-C	Geometry: Circles	14
912-G-CO	Geometry: Congruence	25
912-G-GMD	Geometry: Geometric Measurement & Dimension	14
912-G-GPE	Geometry: Expressing Geometric Properties with Equations	21
912-G-MG1	Geometry: Modeling with Geometry	10
912-G-SRT	Geometry: Similarity, Right Triangles, & Trigonometry	22
912-N-CN	Number & Quantity: The Complex Number System	15
912-N-Q	Number & Quantity: Quantities	9
912-N-RN	Number & Quantity: The Real Number System	3
912-N-VM	Number & Quantity: Vector & Matrix Quantities	22
912-S-CP	Statistics & Probability: Conditional Probability & the Rules of Probability	9
912-S-IC	Statistics & Probability: Making Inferences & Justifying Conclusions	13
912-S-ID	Statistics & Probability: Interpreting Categorical & Quantitative Data	11
912-S-MD	Statistics & Probability: Using Probability to Make Decisions	18

**Evaluation of the Draft South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards
submitted by the South Carolina Department of Education on October 21 and 22, 2014**

**Prepared by the Math and ELA Standards Evaluation Teams
for the SC Education Oversight Committee and the SCDE ELA and Math Writing Teams**

December 15, 2014

