**Summary of major themes in response to the public comment draft of**

**the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy*,**

**December 1, 2016 – February 17, 2017**

Sources:

* Online public comment survey (997 full or partial responses, of which 520 responded to questions about ELA/literacy; 78% pre-K–12 teachers, 10% pre-K–12 administrators)
* Additional correspondence related to the draft ELA/literacy Framework
* Notes from 10 public regional meetings hosted by the Department (473 participants)
* Notes from Student Advisory Council meeting (60 participants)
* Notes from 4 public conference calls hosted by the Department (162 participants)

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| **Responses to Online Public Comment Survey Questions about the Overall Impact of the ELA/Literacy Revisions** | | |
| **Question** | **% Agree or**  **Somewhat Agree** | **% Disagree or**  **Somewhat Disagree** |
| Do the revisions improve or maintain the clarity of the Framework? | 91.5% | 8.5% |
| Do the revisions improve or maintain the coherence of the Framework? | 90.8% | 9.2% |
| Do the revisions improve or maintain the rigor of the Framework? | 89.5% | 10.5% |

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| **Summary of major themes from all public comment sources** | |
| **Major Themes** | **Department Response and Rationale** |
| **Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language**  Inclusion of cross-references among standards  *Multiple pages; for example, page 12, RL.K.4* | * **Additional cross-referencing among standards was added.** * Respondents believed these cross-references were a very positive change that increased the coherence of the Framework. |
| **Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language**  Inclusion of the phrase, “with guidance and support,” in selected pre-K–2 standards  *Multiple pages; for example,*  *Page 29, W.1.5, W.1.6, W.2.5, W.2.6* | * **The phrase, “with guidance and support,” deleted in pre-K*–*8 standards in the public comment draft, was restored for the pre-K*–*2 standards in the final revisions.** * Many respondents pointed out that young children still learning to read and write often need support and that the phrase was crucial in setting realistic expectations for them; others noted that their district standards-based report cards included that phrase. |
| **Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language**  Inclusion of instructional scenarios  *Multiple pages; for example, lists of examples on pages 51, 90, and 114; examples on page 14, RL.1.5; pages 28–29, W.2.4; page 62, RL.6.3; page 72, W.8.2; pages 107–108, WCA.11–12.7* | * **More examples of authentic student writing and instructional scenarios for English language arts and literacy across the curriculum were added.** * In the online survey, 92.3% of those responding to the ELA/literacy questions “agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that “the instructional scenarios helped clarify the standards.” |
| **Reading**  Balance of attention to literature and informational texts  *Pre-K–5, pages 11–20; ELA 6–12, pages 61–69, Literacy in the Content Areas, pages 98–102; see also Guiding Principle 11 , page 7* | * **Equal distribution of Standards for Reading Literature and Reading Informational Text retained for ELA/literacy, pre-K*–*5 and ELA, 6*–*12** * **Standards for Reading Informational Texts in the Content Areas, 6*–*12 (separate standards for history/social studies and science/technical subjects).** * In the online survey, 89.6% of those responding to the ELA/literacy questions “agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that “the standards pay adequate attention to literature;” 93.4% of the ELA/literacy respondents “agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that “the standards pay adequate attention to informational texts.” |
| **Reading**  Multiple measures of text complexity  *Pages 54, 91* | * **The Framework retains the concept that there are three dimensions of text complexity: 1) qualitative measures, 2) quantitative measures, and**   **3) measures matching the reader, text, purpose of reading, and task.**  Dimensions 1 and 3 are best measured by a knowledgeable human reader; dimension 2 is typically measured by a computer program. |
| **Reading**  Qualitative measures of text complexity  *Pages 55–58, 92–95, 115–116* | * **Charts on assessing qualitative dimensions of text complexity were simplified** for pre-K*–*5, 6*–*12 ELA, and 6*–*12 Literacy in the Content Areas. * In the online survey, 88.7% of those responding to the ELA/literacy items “agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that “the text complexity materials helped clarify the standards.” |
| **Reading**  Quantitative measures of text complexity  *Pages 54, 91, 115* | * **Quantitative ranges are not provided;** some respondents recommended the addition of quantitative ranges (e.g., Lexile bands) by grade. * **A clarification was added that many companies produce software for quantitative analysis;** areference to research on using these programs is included. * **Text was added to explain that** quantitative readability formulas can be misleading when used alone, without qualitative measures, for determining the appropriateness of a text for an individual or class. |
| **Reading**  Wording of Reading Standard 10: “Independently and proficiently read and comprehend … texts exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade xx”  *Multiple pages; for example, page 15, RL.4.10, RL.5.10, and page 63, RI.6.10, RI.7.10, RI.8.10;*  *see also Introduction, page 4, and Guiding Principle 4, page 7* | * **The wording of the standard was retained, applied to both literary and informational texts,** in order to indicate that students should be able to read progressively more complex texts as they move from grade to grade. See “multiple measures of text complexity” above. * **The phrase “appropriate for *at least* grade…”was maintained to indicate that there should be high expectations for all students and that** **the reading growth of students should not be limited or restricted.** * Response was mixed to the wording of this standard. Some respondents found that the wording added a needed level of rigor and challenge; others said that wording of the standard resulted in a goal that was not measureable. |
| **Writing**  Range of writing types in the standards  *Multiple pages; for example, addition of progression for poetry, page 28, W.1.3.a, W.2.3.a, W.3.3.f; see also Guiding Principle 8, page 7* | * **A note has been added to the Writing Standards that explains that effective writing often blends different kinds of writing: opinion/argument, explanation, and narrative**, the three major types of writing for which there are progressions in the standards. * **A new progression for writing poetry was added at the elementary level** because of 1) research linking foundational reading skills of identifying letter/sound correspondence with repeated sounds (rhyme, alliteration) and syllables with rhythms (meter, regular beat) and 2) the importance of poetry in building awareness of figurative language and metaphor. * **Some respondents pointed out the importance of standards for creative writing** – original stories, poems, and scripts– as a means of helping students gain a broader understanding of literary genres. |
| **Writing**  Research: Wording of Writing standards 7 and 8  *Multiple pages; for example, page 74, W.6.7, W.6.8, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.8.7, W.8.8; page 90* | * **The phrase “short as well as more sustained research projects” has been restored in the upper grades;** it had been replaced with “research” in the public comment draft. * Respondents said that eliminating the word “projects” implied that students would not have to turn their research into a final paper or presentation. * **The phrase “when conducting research” was added to standard 8** to clarify the steps in verifying and citing authoritative sources. * **References to Digital Literacy standards were added** to support the standards for collaboration and research. |
| **Language**  Writing by hand  *Page 44, L.1.2a, L.2.2a, L.3.2a, and page 47, L.4.2a, L.5.2a* | * **The standards on writing by hand, either by printing or by using cursive handwriting, were retained for pre-K*–*5.** * Some respondents recommended greater emphasis on keyboarding beginning in grade 2. The standards on writing by hand were retained because of the research connecting handwriting with reading and other writing skills. |
| **Language**  Inclusion of literary terms in Language Standard 6  *Multiple pages; for example page 49, L.4.6, L.5.6* | * **Literary terms added in the public comment draft were removed in pre-K*–*12** in response to comments that including these terms in the Language standards was redundant when they were already in the Reading standards. * **A cross-reference was from Language standard 6 to the Reading Literature and Reading Informational Text standards was maintained.** * Some readers said there was no research supporting the idea that knowledge of literary terminology is essential to college and career readiness. * Readers pointed out that students should be able to apply the terms when discussing or writing about literature, not simply define them as vocabulary terms. * Some readers, on the other hand, requested more extensive lists of terms. |
| **Language**  Importance of developing general academic vocabulary  *Page 6; multiple pages for Language Standard 6, for example page 49, L.4.6, L.5.6* | * **A section was added to the Introduction to emphasize the development of general academic vocabulary, also known as Tier II vocabulary.** Correspondents pointed to the importance, particularly for English learners, of understanding and being able to use high-frequency words used across academic areas. * General academic vocabulary and domain-specific vocabulary are addressed in Language Standard 6, pre-K*–*12. |
| **Literacy in the Content Areas**  Specific connections to other frameworks  *Pages 51–53, 115* | * **New text in resource sections for pre-K*–*5 and for Literacy in the Content Areas connects literacy with math and science;** it describes the correspondences between literacy standards, selected Standards for Mathematical Practice, and selected Science Practices. |