



Texas State Reading Association

February 29, 2008

To: Members of the State Board of Education

From: The Texas State Reading Association

RE: English, Language Arts & Reading Standards

As a professional organization of over 2,000 reading educators, researchers, reading supervisors, parents, and pre-service teachers, the Texas State Reading Association does not support the Substitute Amendment 2.13.08 of the English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) Standards, since they would not meet the needs of the diverse students in our state. It is essential that the standards eventually adopted be evidence-based, clearly understood and supported by the educators who will eventually be responsible for implementing them. Thus, it is paramount to meaningfully involve them in the discussions concerning the development of these standards.

In addition, the ELAR standards must acknowledge the rich variety of students coming to our schools. These include students from different linguistic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, including English Language Learners and those with special needs. This is one of the primary reasons why reading selections designed to help students acquire the desired standards must reflect the backgrounds of the students attending our schools. These types of resources have the potential of motivating our students to become avid, lifelong readers.

Furthermore, it is absolutely essential that the standards allow for professional educators who are knowledgeable about best practices in literacy instruction and who have a deep understanding of their students to determine the resources and type of instruction that can best help each student meet the demands of a challenging curriculum. This curriculum needs to help students become successful beginning and eventually advanced readers, who can critically read different types of material for a variety of purposes and effectively communicate their understanding through various means. Because students need to effectively interact with both print and non-print reading materials, it is also vitally important that the standards address the development of students' information literacy.

The children in our state are entitled to reap the benefits of a meaningful and relevant literacy curriculum to help them experience reading success and progress. Adoption of the Substitute Amendment, 2.13.08 to the ELAR Standards will not lead to the accomplishment of this important and laudable goal.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "JLira".

Juan Lira, President

Texas State Reading Association