



Executive Summary: McREL Alignment Study

Language Arts

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8/9/2013

Introduction to the Nebraska Standards Alignment Study

The Nebraska State Board of Education's number one goal is to, "Improve achievement outcomes for all students". One way to do this is to ensure that all Nebraska students graduate from high school being fully prepared for college and career. To accomplish this, it is imperative that Nebraska has rigorous K-12 academic standards in place that prepare students for the demands of college and career. In addition, State Statute section 79.760.01 requires that academic content standards be reviewed every five years. It is now time to begin looking at Nebraska's language arts and mathematics standards which were adopted in 2009. Since the development of the Nebraska Standards, the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers released a set of Common Core State Standards in language arts and mathematics. These standards have been adopted by a majority of the states around the country.

As a part of Nebraska's review process the Nebraska State Board of Education authorized an alignment study between the Common Core State Standards and the Nebraska Standards in English language arts and mathematics for each grade level in March of 2013. The results of this study will be used to assist the Board in the review of Nebraska standards as they work to ensure that all students meeting the Nebraska standards are ready for a successful transition to college or career.

The results of the language arts section of this study are listed in the following documents (mathematics will be posted on September 6, 2013):

The Executive Summary – This report highlights the key points in the language arts section of the study. It also gives specific information for each grade level. The report notes the degree of match that exists; strong, partial, or weak. Where a partial match is identified, the nature of the difference is defined; specificity, scope, emphasis, phrasing. These results are exemplified in a series of charts followed by a brief narrative explaining the differences. Note: The Nebraska standards and the Common Core State Standards are organized differently, resulting in a high number of partial matches (i.e., it may take three Common Core Standards to exemplify what is listed in one Nebraska standard or vice versa). The two sets of standards, when compared in their entirety, show a strong alignment.

The McREL Alignment Study – The results of the study are shown in two different ways: Nebraska standards as the anchor showing how the Common Core Standards compare; Common Core Standards as the anchor showing how Nebraska standards compare. The comparisons are done at the "example indicator level" level of specificity in the Nebraska Standards. Again, because the two sets of standards are organized differently, the results will differ between the two.

Nebraska contracted with McREL (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning) to do this study. McREL has conducted previous validation studies on Nebraska's language arts, mathematics and social studies standards. Their work has always been of the highest caliber. McREL provided national experts in the specific content areas for this work. They have conducted similar studies for several other states including North Dakota and Wyoming.

Comparison of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Nebraska's English Language Arts Standards

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (CCSS-ELA) are strongly aligned to the Nebraska English Language Arts Standards (NELAS) in the general concepts and content necessary for students to be college and career ready by the end of their K-12 schooling experience.

While both sets of standards outline the skills and content that should be mastered in reading, writing, and oral communications (speaking, listening, and reciprocal communication), the way the standards are organized differs from the CCSS-ELA to the NELAS. For example, the CCSS-ELA has a section entitled "language" that contains standards that address grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. The NELAS have incorporated these concepts into their

three primary strands- reading, writing, speaking/listening. The NELAS have a separate section, Multiple Literacies, which specifically addresses the skills, knowledge, and implications of communication (oral and written) in the digital age. The CCSS-ELA has integrated these kinds of ideas into all of their various sections, rather than creating a stand-alone section.

The chief differences between the two sets of standards can be categorized in three ways:

- Organization/Placement of concepts or content
- Specificity
- Emphasis on specific genres of writing

The overall alignment of the two sets of standards is comparable with only three percent of the CCSS-ELA not being addressed by comparable Nebraska Standards (Figure 1), and ten percent of the Nebraska Standards not addressed in the Common Core (Figure 2). The greatest differences between the standards being Nebraska’s emphasis on specific reading strategies, handwriting skills, and the skills and knowledge necessary for effective and appropriate digital communication.

CCSS Addressed by NE Standards

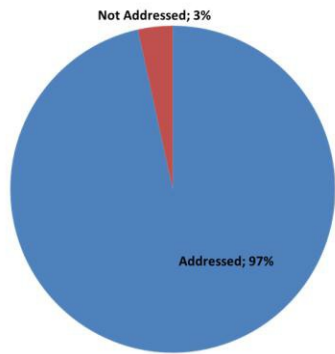


Figure 1

CCSS Addressed by NE Standards

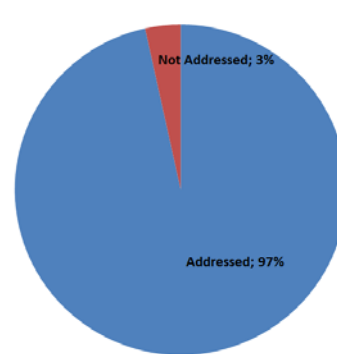


Figure 2

Finally, the NELAS themselves do not include similar supplemental materials included in the CCSS-ELA including the explanation and exemplars for text complexity and writing. These supplemental materials are generally included within a local curriculum, and are often dictated by local school boards of education and district curriculum staff specialists and directors.

Nebraska English Language Arts Standards compared to Common Core State Standards

Kindergarten Overview

A few topics in the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts are not also addressed by the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards. The topics not found in the Common Core are related to understanding the purpose of print, segmenting spoken sentences, imitating language patterns, listening to complete a task, and a few skills related to multiple literacies. Likewise, a few topics in the Nebraska standards are minimally addressed by the Common Core standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In many cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis in the descriptions of reading and writing strategies. In other cases, alignments rated as weak also have a difference in the scope; meaning, the Common Core standards include some, but not all of the content found in the Nebraska indicator. Many Nebraska indicators are fully addressed in Common Core and were rated strong. In particular, Nebraska indicators that address early reading and decoding skills were fully addressed in the Common Core. Many alignments were rated as partial, and many of these partial alignments are due to differences in emphasis and phrasing; some others are due to differences in specificity. In regards to rigor, the Nebraska standards were found to require some expectations at an earlier grade level than the Common Core standards and the Common Core standards sometimes specify that students receive prompting and support to accomplish the described skills, while the Nebraska standards do not. In no cases were the Common Core standards found to be more rigorous than the Nebraska standards.

Of the 60 rated indicators in the Nebraska standards for kindergarten, 53 are addressed and 7 are not addressed by the Common Core. Of those addressed, 23 are strong alignments, 24 are partial alignments, and 6 are weak alignments.

Grade 1 Overview

A few topics in the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts are not also addressed by the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards. Similar to kindergarten, the topics not found in the Common Core are related to understanding the purpose of print, segmenting sentences into words, repeating language patterns when reading aloud, using oral information to complete a task, and a few skills related to multiple literacies. A few topics in the Nebraska standards are minimally addressed by the Common Core standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In many cases, weak alignments are due to differences in emphasis and differences in scope or specificity. Some Nebraska indicators are fully addressed in Common Core and were rated as strong. In particular, Nebraska indicators that address early reading skills were fully addressed in the Common Core. Many alignments were rated as partial, and a majority of these partial alignments are due to differences in emphasis and phrasing; some others are due to differences in specificity. In regards to rigor, the Nebraska standards were found to require a few expectations at an earlier grade level than the Common Core standards and the Common Core. In a very few cases the Common Core standards were found to be more rigorous than the Nebraska standards because they require expectations at an earlier grade level than the Nebraska standards.

Of the 74 rated indicators in the Nebraska standards for grade 1, 66 are addressed and 8 are not addressed by the Common Core. Of those addressed, 23 are strong alignments, 36 are partial alignments, and 7 are weak alignments.

Grade 2 Overview

Very few topics in the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts are not also addressed by the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards. The topics not found in the Common Core are related to making predictions, handwriting, models for writing, discussing plagiarism, and a few skills related to multiple literacies. A few topics in the Nebraska standards are minimally addressed by the Common Core standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In many cases, weak alignments are due to differences in emphasis, along with a difference in scope or specificity. A few Nebraska indicators are fully addressed in Common Core and were rated as strong. Half of the alignments were rated as partial, and a majority of these partial alignments are due to differences in emphasis and phrasing. For example, the Nebraska standards emphasize adapting writing for different purposes and audiences, while the Common Core emphasizes writing within 3 major text types. A few other partial alignments are due to differences in specificity and scope differences. In regards to rigor, the Nebraska standards were found to require a few expectations at an earlier grade level than the Common Core standards. In a very few cases the Common Core standards were found to be more rigorous than the Nebraska standards because they require expectations at an earlier grade level than the Nebraska standards.

Of the 60 rated indicators in the Nebraska standards for grade 2, 53 are addressed and 7 are not addressed by the Common Core. Of those addressed, 15 are strong alignments, 30 are partial alignments, and 8 are weak alignments.

Grade 3 Overview

Very few topics in the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts are not also addressed by the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards. The topics not found in the Common Core are related to making predictions, cursive handwriting, models for writing, discussing plagiarism, and a few skills related to multiple literacies. A few topics in the Nebraska standards are minimally addressed by the Common Core standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In most cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis and phrasing. A few Nebraska indicators are fully addressed in Common Core and were rated strong. A majority of the alignments were rated as partial, and a majority of these partial alignments are due to differences in emphasis and phrasing. For example, the Nebraska standards emphasize the writing process and making connections to personal experiences when reading, while the Common Core standards emphasize qualities of written products and making text-to-text connections. A few other partial alignments are due to differences in specificity and scope differences. In regards to rigor, the Nebraska standards were found to require a few expectations at an earlier grade level than the Common Core standards. In only one case was a Common Core standard found to be more rigorous than a Nebraska indicator. In this case the Nebraska indicator requires the same essential skill as the Common Core, but at a lower level of cognitive difficulty.

Of the 59 rated indicators in the Nebraska standards for grade 3, 51 are addressed and 8 are not addressed by the Common Core. Of those addressed, 8 are strong alignments, 36 are partial alignments, and 7 are weak alignments.

Grade 4 Overview

Very few topics in the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts are not also addressed by the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards. The topics not found in the Common Core are related to models for writing, sensitivity to the use of words, and a few skills related to multiple literacies. A few topics in the Nebraska standards are minimally addressed by the Common Core standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In nearly all cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis and phrasing, and in some cases there is also a difference in scope or specificity. A few Nebraska

indicators across reading, writing, and oral communication standards are fully addressed in Common Core and were rated strong. A majority of the alignments were rated as partial, and a majority of these partial alignments are due to differences in emphasis and phrasing. For example, the Nebraska standards emphasize reading strategies, while the Common Core standards emphasize comparison of multiple texts. An equal number of indicators were rated as partial alignment due to differences in specificity as those rated as partial alignment due to differences in scope. In regards to rigor, the Nebraska standards require the same essential skills as the Common Core, but with higher levels of cognitive difficulty in only one case, and there are no cases of a Common Core standards being more rigorous than Nebraska at this grade level.

Of the 56 rated indicators in the Nebraska standards for grade 4, 50 are addressed and 6 are not addressed by the Common Core. Of those addressed, 11 are strong alignments, 31 are partial alignments, and 8 are weak alignments.

Grade 5 Overview

Very few topics in the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts are not also addressed by the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards. The topics not found in the Common Core are related to developing a global multi-cultural perspective, models for writing, sensitivity to the use of words, and a few skills related to multiple literacies. A few topics in the Nebraska standards are minimally addressed by the Common Core standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In nearly all cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis and phrasing, and in some cases there is also a difference in scope. A few Nebraska indicators across reading, writing, and oral communication standards are fully addressed in Common Core and were rated strong. A majority of the alignments were rated as partial, and half of these partial alignments are due to differences in emphasis and phrasing. For example, the Nebraska standards emphasize adapting writing for different purposes and audiences, while the Common Core emphasizes writing within 3 major text types. A similar number of indicators were rated as partial alignment due to differences in specificity as those rated as partial alignment due to differences in scope. In regards to rigor, there is one case in which the Nebraska standards require the same essential skills as the Common Core, but with higher levels of difficulty. There are no cases of a Common Core standards being more rigorous than Nebraska at this grade level.

Of the 55 rated indicators in the Nebraska standards for grade 5, 49 are addressed and 6 are not addressed by the Common Core. Of those addressed, 10 are strong alignments, 30 are partial alignments, and 9 are weak alignments

Grade 6 Overview

A few topics in the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts are not also addressed by the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards. The topics not found in the Common Core are related to developing a global multi-cultural perspective, models for writing, and a few skills related to multiple literacies. A few topics in the Nebraska standards are minimally addressed by the Common Core standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. For example, the Nebraska indicators for reading fluency were rated as weak alignments because the Common Core does not address fluency in middle school grades, and so related content within the Common Core has significant differences in emphasis and phrasing. A few Nebraska indicators across reading, writing, and oral communication standards are fully addressed in Common Core and were rated strong. In many of these cases of strong ratings, the Nebraska indicators are more generally stated and subsume many specific standards in the Common Core. For example, Nebraska addresses grammar and usage in a more general way than does the Common Core. A majority of the alignments were rated as partial, and a majority of these partial alignments are due to differences in emphasis and phrasing. A few indicators were rated as partial alignment because the Nebraska standards include specifics not

found in the Common Core. In regards to rigor, there are very few cases in which the Nebraska standards are more rigorous, and very few cases in which the Common Core is more rigorous, based on the grade that skills are first introduced and relative cognitive difficulty.

Of the 53 rated indicators in the Nebraska standards for grade 6, 48 are addressed and 5 are not addressed by the Common Core. Of those addressed, 10 are strong alignments, 29 are partial alignments, and 9 are weak alignments

Grade 7 Overview

Very few topics in the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts are not also addressed by the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards. The topics not found in the Common Core are related to developing a global multi-cultural perspective, models for writing, and skills related to multiple literacies. A few topics in the Nebraska standards are minimally addressed by the Common Core standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. For example, the Nebraska indicators for reading fluency were rated as weak alignments because the Common Core does not address fluency in middle school grades, and so related content within the Common Core has significant differences in emphasis and phrasing. A few Nebraska indicators are fully addressed in Common Core and were rated strong. For some strong ratings, the Nebraska indicators are more generally stated and subsume several specific standards in the Common Core. For example, Nebraska addresses the characteristics of student writing in a more general way than does the Common Core. A majority of the alignments were rated as partial, and a majority of these partial alignments are due to differences in emphasis and phrasing. An equal number of indicators were rated as partially aligned due to differences in specificity as those rated as partially aligned due to differences in scope. In regards to rigor, there are very few cases in which the Nebraska standards are more rigorous, and there are no cases in which the Common Core is more rigorous, based on the grade that skills are first introduced.

Of the 51 rated indicators in the Nebraska standards for grade 7, 47 are addressed and 4 are not addressed by the Common Core. Of those addressed, 9 are strong alignments, 28 are partial alignments, and 10 are weak alignments.

Grade 8 Overview

A few topics in the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts are not also addressed by the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards. The topics not found in the Common Core are related to oral reading that reflects the author's tone and style, developing a global multi-cultural perspective, models for writing, and skills related to multiple literacies, such as safe online behaviors. A few topics in the Nebraska standards are minimally addressed by the Common Core standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. For example, the Nebraska indicators for reading fluency were rated as not addressed or weakly aligned because the Common Core does not address fluency in middle school grades. A few Nebraska indicators are fully addressed in Common Core and were rated strong. For some strong ratings, the Nebraska indicators are more generally stated and subsume several specific standards in the Common Core. For example, Nebraska addresses the characteristics of student writing in a more general way than does the Common Core. A majority of the alignments were rated as partial, and a majority of these partial alignments are due to differences in emphasis and phrasing. An equal number of indicators were rated as partially aligned due to differences in specificity as those rated as partial alignment due to differences in scope. In regards to rigor, there are very few cases in which the Nebraska standards are more rigorous, and there are no cases in which the Common Core is more rigorous, based on the grade that skills are first introduced.

Of the 50 rated indicators in the Nebraska standards for grade 8, 45 are addressed and 5 are not addressed by the Common Core. Of those addressed, 5 are strong alignments, 32 are partial alignments, and 8 are weak alignments.

Grade 12 Overview

A few topics in the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts are not also addressed by the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards. The topics not found in the Common Core are related to oral reading that reflects the author's tone and style, models for writing, and skills related to multiple literacies. A few topics in the Nebraska standards are minimally addressed by the Common Core standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. A few Nebraska indicators are fully addressed in Common Core and were rated strong. For some strong ratings, the Nebraska indicators are more generally stated and subsume several specific standards in the Common Core. A majority of the alignments were rated as partial, and a majority of these partial alignments are due to differences in emphasis and phrasing. For example, the Nebraska standards emphasize adapting writing for different purposes and audiences, while the Common Core emphasizes writing within 3 major text types and stresses argumentation within writing. A similar number of indicators were rated as partially aligned due to differences in specificity as were rated as a partially aligned due to differences in scope. In regards to rigor, there are very few cases in which the Nebraska or Common Core standards are more rigorous, based on the grade that skills are first introduced.

Of the 50 rated indicators in the Nebraska standards for grades 12, 46 are addressed and 4 are not addressed by the Common Core. Of those addressed, 6 are strong alignments, 32 are partial alignments, and 8 are weak alignments.

Common Core State Standards compared to Nebraska English Language Arts Standards

Kindergarten Overview

Only one topic in the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards is not also addressed by the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts. The topic not found in the Nebraska standards relates to knowing that words are separated by spaces in print. Very few topics in the Common Core are minimally addressed in the Nebraska standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In most cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis in the descriptions of reading and writing strategies.

Some Common Core standards are fully addressed in Nebraska and were rated strong. The majority of strong alignments are related to reading skills. Most of the partial alignments are due to differences in specificity or emphasis and phrasing. Nebraska emphasizes the writing process and making connections to personal experiences when reading, while the Common Core emphasizes the qualities of written products and comparing texts. In other cases, the Common Core standard is more specific than the Nebraska indicator, and so it was unclear whether students must address the same details as specified in the Common Core. For example, the Common Core standards are more specific about the particular grammar skills students must acquire and for what purposes they should write. In regards to rigor, the Common Core standards were found to require a few expectations at an earlier grade level than the Nebraska standards; however, the Nebraska standards were found to be more rigorous in a nearly equal number of instances because the Nebraska standards don't specify that students receive prompting and support to accomplish the described skills, while the Common Core does.

Of the 64 rated standards in the Common Core for kindergarten, 63 are addressed and only 1 is not addressed by the Nebraska Standards. Of those addressed, 22 are strong alignments, 36 are partial alignments, and 5 are weak alignments.

Grade 1 Overview

Only one topic in the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards is not also addressed by the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts. The topic not found in the Nebraska standards relates to reading grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words. Very few topics in the Common Core are minimally addressed in the Nebraska standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In most cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis in the descriptions of reading and writing strategies.

Some Common Core standards are fully addressed in Nebraska and were rated strong. Strong alignments were found in both the reading and writing strands. Most of the partial alignments are due to differences in specificity or emphasis and phrasing. Nebraska emphasizes the writing process and making connections to personal experiences when reading, while the Common Core emphasizes text comparisons and the qualities of written products. In other cases, the Common Core standard is more specific than the Nebraska indicator, and so it was unclear whether students must address the same details as specified in the Common Core. For example, the Common Core standards are more specific about the particular grammar skills students must acquire and for what purposes they should write. In regards to rigor, the Common Core standards were found to require very few expectations at an earlier grade level than the Nebraska standards, and the Nebraska standards were found to be more rigorous in slightly more instances due to differences in the grade that skills are first introduced and because the Nebraska standards don't specify that students receive prompting and support to accomplish the described skills, while the Common Core does.

Of the 70 rated standards in the Common Core for grade 1, 69 are addressed and only 1 is not addressed by the Nebraska Standards. Of those addressed, 20 are strong alignments, 44 are partial alignments, and 5 are weak alignments.

Grade 2 Overview

Only one topic in the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards is not also addressed by the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts. The topic not found in the Nebraska standards relates to reading grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words. Very few topics in the Common Core are minimally addressed in the Nebraska standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In most cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis in the descriptions of reading and writing strategies.

Some Common Core standards are fully addressed in Nebraska and were rated strong. Strong alignments were found primarily in the reading and writing strands, with many also found in the language strand related to vocabulary. Most of the partial alignments are due to differences in specificity or emphasis and phrasing. Nebraska emphasizes the writing process and reading strategies, while the Common Core emphasizes the qualities of written products and comparing complex texts. In other cases, the Common Core standard is more specific than the Nebraska indicator, and so it was unclear whether students must address the same details as specified in the Common Core. For example, the Common Core standards are more specific about the particular grammar skills students must acquire and for what purposes they should write. In regards to rigor, the Common Core standards were found to require very few expectations at an earlier grade level than the Nebraska standards, and the Nebraska standards were found to be more rigorous in slightly more instances due to differences in the grade level that skills are first introduced and because the Nebraska standards don't specify that students receive prompting and support to accomplish a few described skills, while the Common Core does.

Of the 63 rated standards in the Common Core for grade 2, 62 are addressed and only 1 is not addressed by the Nebraska Standards. Of those addressed, 22 are strong alignments, 36 are partial alignments, and 4 are weak alignments.

Grade 3 Overview

Very few topics in the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards are not also addressed by the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts. The topics not found in the Nebraska standards relate to students' distinguishing their own point of view from that of an author, reading grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words, understanding the function of basic parts of speech in sentences, and recognizing the difference between conventions of spoken and written English. Only two topics in the Common Core are minimally addressed in the Nebraska standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. A few Common Core standards are fully addressed in Nebraska and were rated strong. Strong alignments were found primarily in the reading domains. Most of the partial alignments are due to differences in specificity. In these cases, the Common Core standard is more specific than the Nebraska indicator, and so it was unclear whether students must address the same details as specified in the Common Core. For example, the Common Core standards are more specific about the types of connections that students should make when reading and comprehending texts, and they are much more specific about conventions of grammar and usage. In regards to rigor, both the Common Core standards and the Nebraska standards were found to require very few expectations at an earlier grade level or at a higher degree of cognitive difficulty.

Of the 79 rated standards in the Common Core for grade 3, 75 are addressed and 4 are not addressed by the Nebraska Standards. Of those addressed, 22 are strong alignments, 51 are partial alignments, and 2 are weak alignments.

Grade 4 Overview

All topics in the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards are also addressed by the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts. Very few topics in the Common Core are minimally addressed in the Nebraska standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In most cases, weak alignments are due to significant

differences in emphasis in the descriptions of reading and writing strategies. A few Common Core standards are fully addressed in Nebraska and were rated strong. Strong alignments were found throughout the standards. Most of the partial alignments are due to differences in specificity or emphasis and phrasing. In some cases, the Common Core standard is more specific than the Nebraska indicator, and so it was unclear whether students must address the same details as specified in the Common Core. For example, the Common Core standards are more specific about how student writing should be developed and organized when writing arguments, writing about information, and writing stories. In regards to rigor, the Common Core standards were found to require very few expectations at an earlier grade level than the Nebraska standards.

Nebraska standards were found to be more rigorous in slightly fewer instances.

Of the 75 rated standards in the Common Core for grade 4, all 75 are addressed by the Nebraska Standards. 18 are strong alignments, 52 are partial alignments, and 5 are weak alignments.

Grade 5 Overview

Very few topics in the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards are not also addressed by the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts. The topics not found in the Nebraska standards relate to comparing varieties of English and understanding the function of the parts of speech in sentences. Very few topics in the Common Core are minimally addressed in the Nebraska standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In most cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis in the descriptions of reading and writing strategies. A few Common Core standards are fully addressed in Nebraska and were rated strong. Strong alignments were found primarily in the reading and writing strands. A majority of the partial alignments are due to differences in specificity. In these cases, the Common Core standard is more specific than the Nebraska indicator, and so it was unclear whether students must address the same details as specified in the Common Core. For example, the Common Core standards are more specific about conventions of grammar and usage than the Nebraska standards. Other partial alignments reflect differences between the standards documents in their emphasis and phrasing. For example, the Common Core emphasizes evaluating and writing arguments, while the Nebraska standards emphasize the writing process. In regards to rigor, the Common Core standards were found to require very few expectations at an earlier grade level than the Nebraska standards, and the Nebraska standards were found to be more rigorous in slightly fewer instances due to differences in the grade level that skills are first introduced.

Of the 73 rated standards in the Common Core for grade 5, 71 are addressed and only 2 are not addressed by the Nebraska Standards. Of those addressed, 16 are strong alignments, 50 are partial alignments, and 5 are weak alignments.

Grade 6 Overview

Very few topics in the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards are not also addressed by the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts. The topics not found in the Nebraska standards relate to the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a literary text, establishing and maintaining a formal writing style, collegial discussions with goals and roles, and knowing variations from standard English. Few topics in the Common Core are minimally addressed in the Nebraska standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In most cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis in the descriptions of reading and writing strategies. Some Common Core standards are fully addressed in Nebraska and were rated strong. Strong alignments were found throughout the grade, but particularly within the Language strand, which addresses vocabulary and grammar and convention skills. In many of these cases, the Common Core standard is more specific than the Nebraska indicator, and so it was unclear whether students must address the

same details as specified in the Common Core. Other partial alignments reflect differences between the standards documents in their emphasis and phrasing. For example, the Common Core emphasizes evaluating and writing arguments, while the Nebraska standards emphasize the writing process. In regards to rigor, neither the Common Core nor the Nebraska standards were found to have differences in relative difficulty or grade placement.

Of the 69 rated standards in the Common Core for grade 6, 63 are addressed and only 6 are not addressed by the Nebraska Standards. Of those addressed, 13 are strong alignments, 43 are partial alignments, and 7 are weak alignments.

Grade 7 Overview

Very few topics in the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards are not also addressed by the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts. The topics not found in the Nebraska relate to comparing the portrayal of a subject in different media, collegial discussions with goals and roles, and the functions of phrases and clauses in sentences. Few topics in the Common Core are minimally addressed in the Nebraska standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In most cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis in the descriptions of reading strategies. Some Common Core standards are fully addressed in Nebraska and were rated strong. Strong alignments were found across all strands. In many of these cases, the Common Core standard is more specific than the Nebraska indicator, and so it was unclear whether students must address the same details as specified in the Common Core. Other partial alignments reflect differences between the standards documents in their emphasis and phrasing. For example, the Common Core emphasizes evaluating and writing arguments, while the Nebraska standards emphasize the writing process. In regards to rigor, the Common Core standards were found to require only one expectation at an earlier grade level than the Nebraska standards, and in no cases where the Nebraska standards found to be more rigorous.

Of the 66 rated standards in the Common Core for grade 7, 61 are addressed and only 5 are not addressed by the Nebraska Standards. Of those addressed, 8 are strong alignments, 43 are partial alignments, and 10 are weak alignments.

Grade 8 Overview

Very few topics in the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards are not also addressed by the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts. The topics not found in the Nebraska standards relate to establishing and maintaining a formal writing style, and the functions of verbals in sentences. Few topics in the Common Core are minimally addressed in the Nebraska standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In most cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis in the descriptions of reading and writing strategies. Some Common Core standards are fully addressed in Nebraska and were rated strong. Strong alignments were found throughout the grade, but particularly within the Language strand, which addresses vocabulary and grammar and convention skills. In many of these cases, the Common Core standard is more specific than the Nebraska indicator, and so it was unclear whether students must address the same details as specified in the Common Core.

Other partial alignments reflect differences between the standards documents in their emphasis and phrasing. For example, the Common Core emphasizes evaluating and writing arguments, while the Nebraska standards emphasize the writing process. In regards to rigor, neither the Common Core nor the Nebraska standards were found to have differences in relative difficulty or grade placement.

Of the 67 rated standards in the Common Core for grade 8, 63 are addressed and only 4 are not addressed by the Nebraska Standards. Of those addressed, 8 are strong alignments, 44 are partial alignments, and 11 are weak alignments.

Grade 9-10 Overview

All topics in the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards are addressed by the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts. Few topics in the Common Core are minimally addressed in the Nebraska standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In most cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis in the descriptions of reading and writing strategies. Some Common Core standards are fully addressed in Nebraska and were rated strong. Strong alignments were found primarily in the Writing and Language strands. In many of these cases, the Common Core standard is more specific than the Nebraska indicator, and so it was unclear whether students must address the same details as specified in the Common Core. Other partial alignments reflect differences between the standards documents in their emphasis and phrasing. For example, the Nebraska standards emphasize the writing process, while the Common Core standards emphasize the characteristics of student writing within three major types: argument, expository, and narratives. In regards to rigor, neither the Common Core nor the Nebraska standards were found to have differences in relative difficulty or grade placement.

Of the 65 rated standards in the Common Core for grades 9–10, all are addressed by the Nebraska Standards. 7 are strong alignments, 50 are partial alignments, and 8 are weak alignments.

Grade 11-12 Overview

Very few topics in the Common Core ELA-Literacy Standards are not also addressed by the Nebraska Standards for Language Arts. The topics not found in the Nebraska standards relate to evaluating author's point of view in an informational text and knowing that language usage changes over time and is contested. Few topics in the Common Core are minimally addressed in the Nebraska standards, receiving a weak alignment rating. In most cases, weak alignments are due to significant differences in emphasis in the descriptions of reading and writing strategies. Some Common Core standards are fully addressed in Nebraska and were rated strong. Strong alignments were found primarily in the Writing and Language strands. In many of these cases, the Common Core standard is more specific than the Nebraska indicator, and so it was unclear whether students must address the same details as specified in the Common Core. Other partial alignments reflect differences between the standards documents in their emphasis and phrasing. For example, the Nebraska standards emphasize the writing process, while the Common Core standards emphasize the characteristics of student writing within three major types: argument, expository, and narratives. In regards to rigor, neither the Common Core nor the Nebraska standards were found to have differences in relative difficulty or grade placement.

Of the 64 rated standards in the Common Core for grades 11–12, 62 are addressed and only 2 are not addressed by the Nebraska Standards. Of those addressed, 5 are strong alignments, 49 are partial alignments, and 8 are weak alignments.

Common Core State Standards compared to Nebraska State Standards

GR	Common Core (CCSS)	Nebraska
K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on qualities of written products* and comparing texts. Specific grammar skills are listed* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on writing process and making connections to personal experiences when reading* Don't specify that students are to receive "prompting and support" as do the CCSS*
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on reading grade-appropriate words that don't follow a set spelling pattern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NE LA Standard 1.1.3.c <i>Read at least 100 high-frequency words from a commonly used list</i> (1.1.4.b uses them in writing) ** would cover this based upon district curriculum
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on specific grammar skills to be taught* 	(See above)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish own point of view from that of the author Understand the function of the basic parts of speech* (e.g. an adverb describes a verb) Understanding that written and spoken language are sometimes different 	Third bullet at left moves students toward an understanding of using punctuation for effect knowing that we speak and write differently for different situations, though this isn't spelled out until 4 th grade in the CCSS.**
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More detailed standards about development and organization of the three main types of writing (argumentative, informational, and narrative)* 	The 6+1 Traits writing process emphasized by the NE Standards and employed in most districts covers this specificity.**
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on the different types of language used in formal vs. informal settings* Emphasis on evaluating and writing arguments* 	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on point of view of narrator/speaker in literature Maintaining a formal writing style* "Collegial" discussions with goals and roles* 	NE standards emphasize discussions in learning situations—arguably a parallel to "collegial" discussions as peers are colleagues in the business of school and learning.**
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portrayal of subject in different media (movie vs. book) Function of phrases and clauses in sentences 	
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Function of verbs in sentences 	
9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characteristics of writing (argument, expository, and narrative) 	
11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating author's point of view in informational text Language usage changes over time and is contested 	

*Appears across multiple grade levels

**NDE reviewer note

Common Core State Standards are:

-**more rigorous** than the Nebraska Standards **2.82%** of the time

-**less rigorous** than the Nebraska Standards **2.91%** of the time

Nebraska State Standards compared to Common Core State Standards

GR	Nebraska	Common Core (CCSS)
K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of print* 	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking sentences into individual words • Emphasis on repeating language patterns (during read-alouds) • Using oral information to complete a task • Multiple literacy (computer-related) skills* 	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making predictions* • Handwriting (printing) • Models for writing* • Discussing plagiarism* • Writing for different audiences and purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on writing in the 3 major text types*
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwriting (cursive) • Emphasis on writing process • Making connections to personal experiences when reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on qualities of written products and making text-to-text connections (Note: Nebraska also specifically spells out text-to-text connections, but doesn't necessarily require comparison of one text to another)**
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitivity to the use of words • Emphasis on reading strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on comparison of multiple texts
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a global multi-cultural perspective • Adapting writing for different purposes and audiences 	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"In many cases of strong ratings, the Nebraska indicators are more generally stated and subsume many specific standards in the Common Core."* p.116</i> 	
7		
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral reading that reflects the author's tone and style* • Fluency addressed in middle grades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency not mentioned at all in the middle grades in CC
HS		

*Appears across multiple grade levels

**NDE reviewer note

Nebraska State Standards are:

-**more rigorous** than the Common Core State Standards **10%** of the time

-**less rigorous** than the Nebraska Standards **1.7%** of the time