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# Concerns about the Common Core Standards

The following are concerns or perceived weaknesses of the Common Core Standards as of the date of this memo:

- The language “college and career-ready” implies two different “tracks” for students. The research on “tracking” students is clear: you can’t jump the tracks. Therefore, when is a child’s future determined? It is un-American to predict and encourage a particular future for children in public schools. The persistent achievement gap is a troubling reminder of our ability to place particular groups of children on dead-end tracks in school. Highlighting these two groups may exacerbate a sense that these two different groups are naturally-occurring and may, unintentionally, serve as an excuse for teachers to ignore the Common Core Standards when they are teaching students who have been placed in a career track or are perceived to be in a career track.
- Recommended student practices in reading, writing, speaking, and listening do not consider the importance of interpreting and creating texts from different cultural perspectives. For students to communicate across borders, this skill is not just necessary, it is essential.
- Given the rapid growth of the English Learner population in K-12 schools, the Language Arts Standards should address not only the needs and research-based methodologies for teaching English but also the linguistic and cultural resources that should be developed of our multilingual students that are a national treasure, often wasted.
- Given the goal of the standards to be internationally-benchmarked and prepare students to function globally, we need to emphasize and encourage multilingualism. Many colleges require some degree of bilingualism for entry. The Common Core Standards should make standard some level of multilingualism. Multilingualism is necessary in the workplace as well as in college careers.
- Works Cited include many research projects of the work team authors’ companies as well as those listed as Endorsing Partners. This erodes confidence in the research-base of the Standards.
- The research-base should be broader and include rigorous research on reducing the achievement gap and include best practices in multicultural education for the achievement of diverse students (e.g. culturally-relevant pedagogy).

## Strengths of the Common Core Standards

- Integrating Language Arts throughout the curriculum reflects the centrality of language and communication in all disciplines and may help English Learners access content knowledge in all subject areas with an added focus on language.
- The focus on preparing students to become global citizens who can collaborate across national and global borders coincides with our view of multiculturalism as a resource.
- The standard that all students engage in research positions all students as knowledge producers, putting them on equal ground to further their careers, interests, and futures through inquiry, analysis and reporting of research.
- The *Illustrative Texts* are inclusive of diversity in terms of race and gender.