

*Alliance for Public Waldorf Education*

***Public Waldorf Schools and the Common Core Standards***

***The Alliance for Public Waldorf Education Recommendations  
for the Appropriate Placement of the Common Core Standards  
into Waldorf-Inspired Programs***

*--Including Introductions to the Common Core Standards, Waldorf Education, and a review document and guidance for Teachers and Schools to engage in the analysis of the Common Core Standards for placement in their classrooms and schools*

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## Table of Contents

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Cover Page.....        | 1 |
| Table of Contents..... | 2 |
| Acknowledgements.....  | 3 |

### Part I: Introduction--Content, Structure, and Context

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction.....  | 5  |
| Child Development and the Waldorf Curriculum: An Overview.....   | 7  |
| Short Introductions to the Common Core State Standards   |    |
| English Language Arts/Literacy.....  | 17 |
| Mathematics.....   | 26 |
| The Common Core Standards and Waldorf Education: Essential Differences.....  | 32 |
| A Proposal for a Waldorf-Inspired Public School Curriculum<br>in Media and Technology in Grades Seven and Eight..... | 35 |
| Resources.....   | 37 |
| Summary Comments.....  | 38 |

### Part II: Common Core Standards Tables for Analysis with Waldorf Curriculum Summaries

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Cover Page.....   | 1   |
| Introductory Notes.....   | 2   |
| Kindergarten.....   | 3   |
| Grade One.....  | 27  |
| Grade Two.....  | 50  |
| Grade Three.....  | 72  |
| Grade Four.....   | 97  |
| Grade Five.....   | 122 |
| Grade Six.....  | 147 |
| Grade Seven.....  | 173 |
| Grade Eight.....  | 199 |
| Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects,<br>Grades Six through Eight..... | 222 |
| College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for English Language Arts.....                          | 231 |

*(Table of Contents continued on the next page)*

**Part III: The Alliance Recommendations For the Grade Level  
Placement Of the Common Core Standards  
in a Waldorf-Inspired Public School Program  
*Kindergarten through Grade Eight***

Introduction to the Alliance Recommendations..... 1

English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies,  
Science, and Technical Subjects..... 5

Mathematics..... 67

**Part IV: A Practical Handbook  
For Reviewing the Common Core Standards  
—and Beyond**

Introduction..... 1

The Process of Analysis and Key Considerations..... 3

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### **Creating the Document: the Process**

Building on the work completed by teachers from the Birchtree Charter School with the guidance of Bonnie River of Rudolf Steiner College, the Alliance requested that its pedagogical committee work with Robert Anderson to engage additional teachers from additional schools in the review of the Common Core Standards for their appropriate use in their Waldorf-inspired Programs.

The primary goal was to create a set of Recommendations from the Alliance for use by its schools and classroom teachers. From the first, it was assumed that schools and their teachers would view the Alliance Recommendations as advisory—and adapt them to meet the needs of the students and communities that they serve.

Several meetings were held with experienced Waldorf class teachers in Northern California public Waldorf-inspired schools to review the Common Core Standards, one by one and across grade levels, and to identify where to place them appropriately into the Waldorf Curriculum. The results of the meetings were analyzed and compared with other resources (including the Birchtree documents and the alignment documents created by the faculty of Alice Birney Waldorf-Inspired K-8 School), to put together the final Alliance recommendations. (See the Resources page for some additional sources, below.)

The Alliance wants to thank all who participated in the standards review process for their hard work, collaborative efforts, and experienced professional judgment. Note: *The final recommendations are those of the Alliance and do not represent the specific recommendations of each participant, contributor, or resource.*

### **List of Participants and Contributors and their Schools:**

Our warmest appreciation to:

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**Host and participant: Kalen Wood, Education Director, SunRidge School**

**Sasha Prosser, SunRidge School**

**Anna Jacopetti, Woodland Star**

**Nikki Lloyd, Novato Charter School**

**Merry McIlroy, Sebastopol Independent Charter School**

**Angela Kindle, SunRidge School**

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**Allegra Alessandri, Ed. D., chair of the Pedagogical Committee of the Alliance**, and Principal of George Washington Carver School of Arts and Science: A Waldorf-Inspired High School--for her assistance in the development and structure of the project--and her guidance and support throughout.

I would like to express my personal thanks to the Board of the **Alliance for Public Waldorf Education** for the opportunity to organize and work on this project. I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with all of the Waldorf educators who contributed, directly or indirectly, to these documents, and I hope that our work together proves valuable to Waldorf-Inspired Public Schools. — *Robert Anderson, Project Director*

## Part I: Introduction

### Document Overview

The purpose of this document: To provide the member schools of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, their classroom teachers, and interested stakeholders, (including parents, school board members and those with an interest in Waldorf public education) with a document comparing the structure and goals of the Waldorf program as enacted in Waldorf-Inspired Public Schools with the academic content and student goals identified in the Common Core Standards (CC).

The document is intended to serve as a handbook for teacher and school decision-making and use. It is designed as a practical tool for Waldorf-Inspired Public Schools as they examine the new Common Core Standards adopted in their states and consider how, where, and when these standards best fit into their Waldorf-Inspired Public School Program. (Part II)

The document also includes *a summary set of Recommendations from the Alliance for the appropriate placement of the Common Core Standards into A Waldorf-Inspired Public School Program.* (Part III)

The document is structured to help teachers and schools clarify and identify the appropriate content of their programs in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics, K-8. Short descriptive notes about some of the key considerations useful in determining where, when, and how the individual Common Core Standards should be implemented in their programs are included throughout Part II and in the introduction to Part III.

The document will also help to clarify for public school stakeholders (parents, districts, school boards, educators and the public) where and when Waldorf-Inspired public schools are addressing the Common Core Standards.

### School and Teacher Freedom of Use

This Alliance document is intended to provide useful information about the Common Core Standards to member schools and their teachers. It has been designed to assist them in their review of the Common Core Standards. The Alliance Recommendations were specifically requested by Alliance member schools. They are intended to be useful to the schools, both as documents for local review and for use with the schools' stakeholders as deemed appropriate.

The recommendations are advisory, and recommendations only. They are not intended in any way to restrict or supersede the freedom of Alliance schools or teachers to address the Common Core Standards and their placement in ways that are harmonious with their vision of Waldorf-Inspired education and their local situations and contexts.

This document is fully available for the public use of Alliance schools and was specifically designed so that Part II could serve as a local review document and be easily adapted and revised to reflect local school and teacher decisions about the placement of the Common Core Standards.

The document, in all of its parts, will be made available in both PDF and Word formats on the Alliance website.

**Structure of the Document:** The document has four parts:

#### Part I: Introduction

The Introduction clarifies the structure of the document, and includes an overview of the Waldorf Curriculum and its' focus on the healthy, balanced development of the whole child/student, summary descriptions of the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts/Literacy, and Mathematics, and an initial comparison of the relationship between the Waldorf Curriculum and the Common Core Standards. It will also preview the structure, content, and uses of the other parts of the document.

#### Part II: Common Core and Waldorf Placement Tables: A Resource for Teachers and Schools, including the Results of the Alliance Review Process

Part II is organized as a set of grade-level documents, K-8, each including a summary overview of that grade's Waldorf curriculum and tables of the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics, providing space for annotating the appropriate grade-level placement of each Common Core standard in the Waldorf program and recording related notes or comments. The results of this Alliance project's review of the Common Core Standards are included in the Tables in Part II.

#### Part III: Alliance Summary Recommendations for the Placement of the Common Core Standards in a Waldorf-Inspired Public School Program

The Recommendations portion of the document has been designed to meet the needs of Waldorf-Inspired Public Schools and their teachers, and to inform interested stakeholders in a clear and transparent format. Part III lists all of the Common Core Standards re-ordered to reflect the grade-level placements which were the outcomes of the Alliance review process. This portion of the document is organized to facilitate multiple uses of the information. (See the Introductory materials at the beginning of Part III).

#### Part IV: Handbook for School and Teacher Review

The short handbook for schools and teachers is designed to foster school and teacher reviews of the Common Core Standards and the Alliance Recommendations for their placement and implementation in Waldorf programs. All of the Common Core Standards are included in Part II, with the Alliance recommendations identified within the review Tables and summarized fully in Part III. Part IV is intended to assist schools and individual teachers in designing their own review process to best meet the needs of their students, teachers, and the school as a whole.

## Child Development and the Waldorf Curriculum: An Overview

*(The Overview that follows was written by Elizabeth Beaven, Ed.D., Dean of Academic Development at Rudolf Steiner College, and summarizes her presentation at the 2013 Conference of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education. The Alliance is grateful to Dr. Beaven for providing us with this Overview for our use here.)*

Waldorf education was founded in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1919 with the establishment of a school for the children of factory workers at the Waldorf Astoria Cigarette Factory. Not long after the end of World War I, the factory's owner, Emil Molt, asked Austrian philosopher and scientist Rudolf Steiner to develop a new form of schooling, one that would help the children grow into adults capable of healing the ravages of the war and contributing to social renewal. In response, Steiner created a curriculum designed to develop the full range of the children's human capacities—intellectual, physical, emotional, social, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual. Radical for its time, the new school was open to all children, educating girls alongside boys; integrating the arts and practical skills with academic subjects; and employing a curriculum and pedagogy carefully designed to support the full development of the child.

Today, Waldorf education is a worldwide school movement with more than one thousand schools in over eighty countries. The pedagogy that arose in that first school is founded upon a fully-articulated and detailed vision of human development, one that includes a consideration of a child's past, present, and future and that encompasses all aspects of her being: body, soul, and spirit. Perhaps more than in any other approach to education, an understanding of the developing child informs all aspects of the Waldorf curriculum and methodology. If we understand this model of human development, depicted as a series of stages, we can build a coherent road map of both the developing human being and the corresponding Waldorf educational system.

A developmental approach is not unique to Waldorf education. Within the last century, Piaget, Montessori, and Gesell are just three of a large body of educators who have acknowledged the importance of human development in education. Waldorf education is, however, unique in the comprehensive nature of its view: each child is understood as the bearer of an evolving human spirit with its own past, present, and future. More than a product of heredity or environment, an essential core of human individuality is at work, revealing itself in a child's personality. It is the educator's responsibility to support this growing individuality, allowing it to develop in such a way that the unique gifts of the child can find optimal expression. This is an extraordinary expansion of the usual definition of "teaching"—made visible and practical through the Waldorf curriculum.

Human relationships are central to the support of healthy development, and in Waldorf education attention is given to their fostering and support. Time is allowed both for the gentle unfolding of the development of the child and for the building of relationships between teacher and child, child and child, and parents and teacher. Ideally, the core class teacher remains with a class for up to eight years, a form of extended looping. The curriculum is organized to reflect the



importance of this dimension of time. It is often referred to as a spiral: subjects occur and reoccur as the child matures and his capacities develop. This repetition of subjects, with increasing complexity, allows for continuous review that in turn leads to a strengthening of understanding and independent thinking, a steady acquisition of knowledge, and the formation of living connections between subjects as the child's capacities develop. "Main lesson," an extended period of time devoted to a subject every day over a period of several weeks, makes this spiraling and repetition possible. It eliminates the fragmentation that is common to most school days and allows the child to become fully absorbed in a subject day after day. The main lesson has been a defining characteristic of Waldorf education since its inception. Even in situations of high student transience, coherence between curriculum content and child development fosters a child's interest, engagement, and learning. With the gift of time, the curriculum becomes a journey enrichment and growth traveled together by the child and teacher.

The developmental journey of the individual child is set in a larger context, that of the evolution of consciousness of the human being. Simply put, the individual child's journey is considered to be a microcosm of the human journey, with emerging capacities and an ever-expanding worldview at each step. The very young child dwells in a dreamy, un-self-conscious state with little awareness of time or place. Throughout the school years, the relationship between self and world changes, and the child's consciousness moves from that early, dreamy state, through concrete engagement with the physical world; to imaginative, picture-filled thinking; to the independent critical thinking and self-direction of the young adult.

If we hold a living picture of the developing child, we are empowered to build an active, responsive understanding of the what, how, and when of teaching. The curriculum is not a fixed or rigid document--or a set of student outcomes progressively laid out on a prescribed timeline--but a living instrument for educators, who become engaged in a thoughtful, creative process, fostering the healthy growth of each of their students. An understanding of child development is therefore a non-negotiable requirement for understanding and implementing this concept of curriculum. The Waldorf curriculum can be viewed as a constant interweaving, a call and response between the developmental stage of the child, course content, and methodology. The teacher is entrusted and empowered with enormous creative freedom – and responsibility – to take the core principles of Waldorf education and work with them to best meet the needs of his class, a unique group of developing young individuals located in a specific time and place. The result is an education that is never static, that has creative mobility, and that requires the teacher to be active, creative, and artistic. Yet it is rooted in an insightful, coherent framework that provides a consistent foundation for the teacher's interpretation of the needs of her students. For the teacher, the curriculum comes alive through an understanding of the human development that stands at its core. For the child, there is the experience of being met with material that speaks with immediacy and vitality to his emerging interests and abilities.

## The Seven-Year Stages of Development and the Waldorf Curriculum

Steiner's model of human development is described in a series of stages, each lasting approximately seven years and each with distinctive needs, challenges, and optimal learning styles. During each

stage, the developing child lives in a different relationship with himself and with the surrounding world: this changing relationship dictates the educational activities and content. The ideal learning modality and curriculum content needs to change with each stage in order to work with the developing capacities of the child. The first stage is dominated by physical growth with an emphasis on the development of the will and a need to directly engage with the environment. During the second stage, the focus shifts to the child's imaginative capacities; the child in this stage is primarily a being of feeling and pictorial thinking. In the third stage, the emphasis is on the development of independent thinking as the young person engages in a search for truth and meaning. The broad stages of development overlap as one gently sequences into the next. We see echoes of the previous stage during the early years of each new stage and a foreshadowing of what is to come as it approaches its end. This results in a further subdivision of each stage into thirds (phases within each stage) with an emphasis on the will and physical development and activity in the first third, feeling and imagination in the second, and the development of thinking in the third. These phases and their implications will become evident in the grade level curriculum descriptions that follow.

In order to truly understand the child and our task as educators, we ask educators to hold and understand the “big picture” of development – where the child has come from and where she is bound. Education does not happen in short, discrete snapshots of time but in a continuity; if I am a kindergarten teacher, I best support the young child by understanding his current needs and interests while holding a long-range picture of the developmental tasks that await and the work that will be done by my colleagues in grade school, high school and beyond. I sow seeds for later harvesting, and the spiral curriculum facilitates this. The “whole picture” is equally important for the high school teacher. If I understand the path the adolescent has traveled, the developmental milestones that have been met, and the education that has been experienced, I am able to draw on earlier experiences, reawaken earlier knowledge, and deepen and extend thinking and understanding. Through a shared understanding of child development, teachers across the grades can work in concert and in correspondence with a child's level of maturity and developing capacities.

## The First Stage of Development: Birth to Seven Years

The first seven years are of critical importance, laying a foundation for the rest of life. This truth is increasingly recognized by many and is summarized in the Jesuit dictum: “Give me a child until he is seven, and I will give you the man.” This first stage is dominated by tremendous physical growth, a need for physical activity, and learning through imitation. During the first third of this stage we see physical growth at a pace that will not recur again in a child's life. Limbs elongate, bodily proportions change, and the child masters uprightiness, walking, and talking. Educational work is primarily with the parent or caregiver, and strives to provide as much support as possible for the child's healthy physical development. Work with the very young child emphasizes protection during a time of great vulnerability—supported with security, warmth, love, and rhythm. Imitation is the primary learning modality: this can be observed with infants as they mimic facial gestures and with slightly older children as they begin to acquire spoken language.

A school experience may be part of life for a child in the second third of this stage, from ages approximately two and a half through five. The child of this age unites herself with the world and the gestures and attitudes of those around her through imitation; as a result, she is best educated through appropriate physical activities, nurturing environments and interaction with adults. The Waldorf pre-school responds to the mood, needs, and learning style of the young child by providing a schedule that is strongly rhythmical, the reassuring presence of loving adults, and multiple opportunities for imitation and creative play.

The Waldorf kindergarten includes children from part of the middle phase through most of the third, from ages approximately four and a half to seven. Kindertartens often span two years and are mixed age, allowing children to develop at their own pace and ensuring that there is time for early developmental milestones to be solidly met. Kindergarten teachers enact the curriculum. They create a classroom-learning environment with a secure and embracing feeling through the use of soft colors, natural materials, open-ended play objects, and activities that invite the child's active participation. They strive to model behavior that is worthy of imitation. For the young child, the kindergarten becomes a safe haven, often in contrast to a society that values large volumes of information conveyed at high speed, with resulting nervous energy and a feeling of artificiality: the undoubted gifts of our time are frequently incompatible with the true nature and needs of the young child. The Waldorf kindergarten strives to provide a balance to this through providing a protected space in which the young child can healthfully grow. The child's need for purposeful physical activity is met by multiple opportunities for large and small motor activity, with extended time every day for creative, open-ended play. The class may go outside on nature walks or hikes and the world of nature is brought into the classroom through seasonal verses, songs, and nature table displays, encouraging a strong connection between the child and the natural world and fostering a mood of reverence and wonder.

Traditional "school tools" - desks, pencils, books, or worksheets - are absent from the kindergarten; learning can best be described as pre-academic. Clearly the kindergarten child is capable of formal academic learning; however, the Waldorf approach considers that the young child's energy is better used by direct engagement of the will, imitation of adults who are worthy models, open-ended creative play, and physical activity. In place of academic instruction, the child is immersed in a language-rich program that includes simple fairy and folk tales, nature stories, songs, verses, finger games, and puppet shows. The teacher leads a daily circle that provides a forum for the telling and retelling of stories, recitation, and singing over a period of weeks, in harmony with the young child's need for rhythm. This practice works directly with the child's capacity for imitation; the child follows the lead of the adult and absorbs meaning and language, which is then reflected through play. Stories, songs, and verses are chosen to reflect seasons and local culture or traditions.

A range of home-like activities such as bread baking, cooking, sweeping, digging, washing, tending a garden, and building supports the language and movement work of "circle time." These activities are modeled by the teacher and provide purposeful, rhythmical movement that directly engages the child's will. Like all activities in the kindergarten, they occur in a predictable schedule, allowing the child to relax into the rhythm of the day, week, season, or year. In addition to practical activities, the kindergarten teacher leads the children in a variety of artistic activities including

watercolor painting, crayon drawing, beeswax modeling, and crafts such as finger knitting and simple sewing. Knowledge acquisition is largely a direct process of doing, seeing, imitating, and touching. Activities are conducted in a mood of harmony, order, wonder, and reverence; the kindergarten environment is designed to nourish the child's being and give a basis for the types of inquiry, knowledge, and social engagement that will be vital for later life.

## The Second Stage of Development: Seven to Fourteen Years

As the child approaches the age of seven, a number of signals indicate that the first developmental stage is coming to an end. Commencing at around the age of five, the child becomes able to plan his activities in a way that is beyond the ability of a younger child. He becomes more conscious of his surroundings and his classmates and is able to allow his physical activity to come to rest and to sit still for steadily increasing periods of time. He develops an ability to form inner pictures. Around the age of six or seven, the young child transitions from the kindergarten and commences his journey through the grades.

Echoes of the earlier mode of imitative learning remain during the first part of this new stage and the first and second grade child still needs a great deal of physical movement and healthy engagement of the will. However, a new and powerful learning tool is now available: the capacity for imagination. The young grade school child is strongly a child of feeling. Thinking and knowledge are best developed through living pictures, images, and inner and outer activity. Between about six to nine years, the child experiences the world around her in an artistic way. Children of this age generally love beauty and have a great enthusiasm for learning and an ever-growing curiosity about the world. The teacher's task is to translate intellectual content into the artistic language of picture, using stories to provide imaginative images that convey facts, processes, and the laws of life in an accessible, warm fashion. The rich story curriculum of the lower grades invites the child to be inwardly active, creating her own images for each scene of every story. (In the manner of traditional transmissions of knowledge, stories are told by the teacher, not read, thus leaving each child open to interpret and picture in a free, unique way). The images in the stories help to build language, develop the imagination, encourage creative thinking, and strengthen the child's capacity to learn. Stories arouse and hold the child's interest and engage his feelings. What touches the feelings will be owned and remembered as opposed to mere facts, disconnected information that may be received, briefly retained, tested, and often quickly forgotten. This imaginative approach to learning continues throughout the grades, even as the intellectual capacities of the children are maturing and becoming increasingly powerful.

## The Themes and Stories within the Grades Curriculum

Each year of the grade school has a story motif. Human development provides the map for the story curriculum, and it mirrors the child's unfolding abilities and meets emerging interests. In first grade, children hear a wide variety of fairy tales from many cultures. These, along with nature stories, nourish the imagination of the first grade child. True fairy tales contain archetypes of human existence and have been used throughout history to explain the world around us. The world of the fairy tale is an integrated whole in which animals speak, wrongs are righted, and resolution is

found. This world reflects the child's still somewhat dreamy consciousness and feeling of connection to the world. The stories provide the material for instruction in writing, a process that takes the child from story image to picture to letter to word, and onwards to reading and arithmetic. Stories are told, recalled, acted out, and illustrated. Through this process, the child acquires a fund of knowledge and increasing skill and develops capacities for mobile, creative, image-filled thought.

The mood of the fairy tale shifts in second grade to reflect developing self-awareness in the child. Fairy tales are replaced by short fables that depict various elements of human nature, often expressed by animals, and by legends that tell of the deeds of extraordinary human beings who were able to overcome or work in harmony with nature to bring goodness to the world. The child inwardly feels that our task as human beings is to balance our instincts and drives with our highest ideals. Native American tales are often told; they frequently provide a blending of the mood of fable and legend. More complex nature stories bring the cycle of the seasons alive for the child, still through the medium of imaginative pictures. The child continues to absorb the content of stories that again provide material for the development of knowledge and skills; these become more complex as the child's abilities develop.

Around third grade, or the age of nine, the developing child shows signs of a more awake consciousness and a greater level of self-awareness. The middle phase of the second developmental stage begins, and the child increasingly experiences himself as an individual, separate from the world around him. Questioning, uncertainty, or a loss of confidence often accompanies this growing feeling of separation. The significance of this developmental challenge has been noted in numerous biographies. The third grade curriculum responds with content and activities that strongly engage the child's interest and provide a sense of order and growing capacities in a time of rapid internal change. The stories of the first and second grade are replaced by an ancient mythology, typically that of the Hebrew people. These stories are not told as a religion but as an intact mythology that includes a creation and ordering of a world out of nothing, the departure from paradise (mirroring the child's departure from early childhood), and the need to learn a range of practical skills that will be required to successfully live on the earth. As early childhood becomes a memory and new capacities awaken, the third grade child masters many practical skills through studies of farming, cooking, clothing and housing of the world, and building. Concepts such as measurement, time, and money are mastered as an essential part of these activities.

By fourth grade, the child is solidly in this middle phase and generally feels more comfortable with her growing independence and separateness. She is introduced to a second great mythology through Norse legends. These bring a very different creation myth and offer entirely different explanations of life and human nature. The intact, rather rosy world of early childhood is now a distant memory and the fourth grade child is ready to enter into a world that is no longer whole. Fractions, verb tenses, and parts of speech are introduced, reflecting this new awareness. Local and state geography and history build confidence and help anchor a solid sense of location. The nature stories and activities of the lower grades now transition into first lessons in formal science through studies of animals, the foundation of zoology. Studies are still brought through imaginative pictures, hands-on activities, and artistic renderings, nourishing the rich inner feeling life of this age. They are related

to the human being, giving the child a picture of our unique gifts and responsibilities. The curriculum is brought alive through living concepts and reflects the child's ever-expanding world.

For many children, fifth grade marks the final year of true childhood. The fifth grade child typically shows great energy and enthusiasm for life. Body proportions are harmonious and movement appears coordinated, fluid, and effortless. The child lives deeply in rich inner imaginative pictures. He displays self-confidence and zest for life. The overall mood is more awake than in earlier years and there is a great appetite for learning. Ancient cultures provide the central motif for the fifth grade year. In the early part of the year, these cultures are brought in the form of mythology, relating the great cultures of Ancient India, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. The children see that there are many religions, many cultures, and many, often competing, ways of explaining life on earth that are in part dependent on the geography and circumstances of a particular culture. They are introduced to a variety of religions, including Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism. The Egyptian culture of the Dead brings many questions about life. Through mythology, they study the early development of agriculture and writing. The great variety of myths builds a living picture of the relationship between culture and an environment. The mythology curriculum culminates in the stories of Ancient Greece. Towards the end of the year, mythology transitions to recorded history and ancient civilizations. This transition marks a point in human history at which the Greeks moved from an earlier worldview that was holistic and external to a more philosophical, individual, and questioning approach. It mirrors a change in the child's thinking from picture-based thought to the dawning of formal thought. The fifth grade year concludes with a recapitulation of ancient cultures through the biography and travels of one historical figure, Alexander the Great.

The fifth grade child's expanding consciousness is supported by a study of North American geography with its contrasting environments and terrains. This once again reinforces the child's sense of place and shows how our environment impacts our ways of living. The science curriculum expands into a study of botany, which appeals to the child's love of beauty and requires precise observation, qualities that encourage warm interest and a feeling of connection while providing a strong foundation for future scientific thought and inquiry. Fifth grade studies are rounded out with decimal fractions and freehand geometric drawing. The latter combines artistry and imagination and harnesses the child's newly emerging powers of thought.

The sixth grade child is entering the final third of the second seven-year stage of development, and there is a significant change in how he views the world and himself. The grace and fluidity of the fifth grader are supplanted by the influence of gravity as he begins to experience an increasing body mass and hormonal changes. He may feel earth-bound, and has a keen interest in the physical nature of life. The sixth grader also becomes increasingly capable of causal thinking and the curriculum expands to meet and engage this emerging capacity. The history curriculum encompasses the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, the birth of Christianity and Islam, the descent into the Dark Ages, and the dawning expansion of the Middle Ages. The rather matter of fact, material approach to life that was the hallmark of Rome is a perfect mirror of the developing sixth grader who is interested in mastery of the physical and is less willing to engage in the fanciful or emotional aspects of life – at least externally. The child's inner life may become both deeper and less accessible; the light, sanguine quality of the younger child has now receded as new forces

begin to appear. This turning inward, the foreshadowing of adolescence, is mirrored historically by the European Dark Ages, when knowledge and civilization seemed to disappear. It is reassuring for teacher and parent alike to recall that knowledge and culture had not vanished but were hidden for protection and deepening, waiting to reappear in a flurry of learning and progress in the High Middle Ages. By the end of sixth grade, we see greater mastery of critical thinking or formal operations; the child's world is expanding again.

In addition to history, a range of subjects supports the child's development at this age. Through all of them, she is encouraged to develop living concepts through direct experience. For example, physics is introduced and through an experiential approach, the laws of optics, acoustics, magnetism, static electricity, heat and cold, are explored. In the Waldorf curriculum, physics is an active process of listening, observing, discovering, and exploring that leads to the formation of concepts. The educational impact of this is very different than beginning with a definition or concept, which may be remembered but is likely to remain undigested within the child. The experiential path is very much the approach of the artist, one in which the child initially perceives, wonders, questions, and only conceptualizes fully at the end. Perception and experience unite in ideas and give rise to a range of feelings; the resulting concepts are alive for the child and can live and grow as she develops. This provides a basis for true scientific thinking and discovery and has been identified by many as an essential twenty-first century skill.

The study of geography expands further into the world perhaps to the Pacific Rim or Central America, mirroring the child's expanding worldview. The sixth grade child feels solidly on the earth; therefore, the curriculum includes a study of geology, exploring the formation of the earth's surface. This is balanced with an upward perspective through the study of naked eye astronomy, the astronomy of the Middle Ages. Once again, the child is encouraged to carefully and accurately observe phenomena. Grammar studies are linked to causal thinking with an exploration of the conditional and subjunctive moods. The practical nature of the sixth grader is met through a study of business math; its emphasis on transactions, profit and loss, and interest establish the foundation for algebra that will soon come. It is linked to the historical period of the grade with its rise of towns, trade, and guilds. Practicality is balanced with artistry; the sixth grade child is challenged to complete a series of precise geometric forms using instruments and beautifying with carefully applied color. By the end of sixth grade, we see a greater mastery of critical thinking and formal operations. The child is ready once again to encounter new challenges.

The seventh grade year is one of remarkable growth – for the child and therefore in the curriculum. As the child enters early adolescence, there are increasing signs that the end of the second stage of development is in sight. This transition signals the beginning of a period of intense exploration and new discovery for the young person – in thinking, beliefs, feelings, and relationships. The Waldorf curriculum responds by introducing the Age of Discovery, the Reformation, and the Renaissance. Each of these mirrors aspects of the student's experience. Like explorers of old, the seventh grade student must inch away from the familiar shores of family and childhood and set out for lands unknown. Traditional beliefs will be challenged and tested and the young person must learn to stand firmly in her own thoughts. Perspectives will change dramatically, just as they did for the artists of the Renaissance. Seventh grade teachers often marvel at the flowering of learning,

understanding, and artistic abilities; this can truly be a joyful time of new birth for the student's artistic and thinking capacities.

This period of history is well depicted through the biographies of leading historical figures; these replace the stories of earlier years, but are related with equal care and with rich details that allow the students to have a living experience of the time. The world is viewed anew – captured in the study of perspective drawing, which can be a wonderful anchor for a child at a time in life when inner perspective may be shaky. Bodily changes are marked; this fact is reflected and supported through the study of human physiology, health, and nutrition. The study of physics becomes more complex, extending sixth grade studies and including an examination of mechanics (levers and pulleys), usually linked to the growing adolescent body. The science curriculum expands to include inorganic chemistry: the processes of combustion; the role of acids and bases; and the lime cycle. Scientific study continues to emphasize the careful objective observation of phenomena before concepts are formed. It is linked directly to the young person's experience. A mood of interest and reverence for the natural world is thereby maintained. The study of geography continues to explore an expanding world, and may include Europe and Africa. In line with the historical period, the naked eye astronomy of the sixth grade expands to encompass a heliocentric view, with an examination of the conviction and courage of the pioneering Renaissance astronomers. The student's inner life is now deepening, a process that is supported through creative writing, giving further opportunities for the development of perspective and individual voice through an exploration of wish, wonder, and surprise. Thinking is further supported and challenged through the formal introduction of algebra.

Eighth grade signifies the end of the class teacher years. Reflecting the value placed on the continuity of relationships, the student may have had the same core teacher since first grade. This relationship and the curriculum of the lower school will be brought to a culmination over the course of this final year. A new stage of development is beginning, one in which critical thinking will be the primary learning mode and where the generalist teacher of the grades will give way to the specialized instruction required by the high school student. In many ways eighth grade is a bridge, completing the second seven-year stage and establishing a foundation for the third seven-year stage. Our task with the eighth grade student in this process of completion is therefore nothing less than bringing historical studies right into the modern age and ensuring that we have encompassed the entire globe through a study of such world patterns as weather, ocean currents, and trade.

Eighth grade history begins with a study of revolutions, very much echoing the restless, questioning nature of the adolescent. This leads to a study of the founding of the United States with its high ideals of equality and freedom. Students compare the American and French revolutions, examine the worldwide impact of the Industrial Revolution, and study the great historical events of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Biographies continue to provide a wealth of historical insight and to allow the young person to connect in a lively way with events of earlier times. Science in the eighth grade includes a study of hydraulics, aerodynamics, and motors, reflecting developments of the industrial and post-industrial ages. Meteorology offers another chance to look up at the skies and to examine world patterns. Organic chemistry is introduced with a primary focus on the chemistry of food and manufacturing processes. The seventh grade study of



physiology is expanded to a study of anatomy – providing a framework for understanding the impressive increase in height and muscle seen at this age. We continue to help the student to develop perspective, voice, point of view, and style through a study of American literature and a study of the short story.

The end of the grade school years is generally marked by a series of culminating events that may include individual project reports, a significant drama production, and a class trip. The young person is able to stand before others as a confident individual with independent thoughts and opinions to offer. There are opportunities to review the path that has been traveled over the years. By the end of eighth grade, a stage of growth has come fully to an end. The physical changes of puberty have been accompanied by significant changes in thinking. The young person is now more conscious of herself, of her relationships with others, and of the surrounding world. The process of imitation and education through the will of the first seven years led to learning through imagination and images in the second seven years. Now education must appeal to the increasingly strong capacity to reason, think, analyze, and evaluate. The generalist approach of the grades teacher gives way to the specialized subject knowledge required in the high school. The young person embarks on a search for truth, a journey to find a valued individual pathway for herself and to discover ways to contribute meaningfully to the world she lives in.

Throughout the journey through kindergarten and the grades, a range of subjects that includes international languages, music, handcrafts, woodwork, physical education, and gardening, supplement and enrich the core curriculum. They are also brought in a developmental manner and are connected to the key tasks and interests of each age and grade level. Skills in language arts and mathematics are practiced and reinforced with increasing complexity and depth as the child's abilities grow. Art holds a central role in learning, enlivening lessons, teaching aesthetic skills and discrimination, and appealing to the feeling element of learning that is so essential for a child. Subjects are interconnected, forming a continuous experience for the child. Relationships between child and teacher are placed in a central position, gradually developing from that of gentle guidance and protection of the young child--to loving adult authority in the lower grades--to mutual respect based on the teacher's knowledge and character in the upper grades.

Every aspect of the curriculum is founded in this vision of human development. Over the years, in response to their awakening capacities, children study deeply from the “human story,” tracing a journey that commences in the land of the fairy tale that is without time or place and concluding in the modern age, looking towards the future. At the same time, they study from “the book of nature,” beginning with the home-based activities in the kindergarten, the rhythms of the seasons, the work of their own hands, and eventually a vision encompassing the entire earth and the heavens. The simple activities and experiences of the very young child grow into conceptual reasoning, scientific thinking, sound judgment, practical action and creative expression. In practice, the Waldorf Curriculum is revealed to be a thoughtful, powerful, holistic approach to the education of our children—an education that “fits their needs” beautifully and prepares them to live life well.

## Short Introductions to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics

—*excerpted from California’s adopted versions of the standards. (For links to the full versions of the documents, see the Resources list below at the end of Part I.)*

### *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*

The CCSS for ELA/Literacy are organized around a number of key design considerations. The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards provide the backbone of the standards and define the general, cross-disciplinary literacy expectations for students in preparation for college and the workforce. The standards are divided into strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Connected to these design considerations is the interdisciplinary expectation that the development of every student’s literacy skills is a shared responsibility – English language arts teachers collaborating with teachers in other content areas for an integrated model of literacy across the curriculum.

The standards identify what it means to be a literate person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Students learn to closely and attentively read and analyze critical works of literature and an array of nonfiction text in an exploding print and digital world. They use research and technology to sift through the staggering amount of information available and engage in collaborative conversations, sharing and reforming viewpoints through a variety of written and speaking applications.

The CCSS for ELA/Literacy help build creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, and communication. The standards develop the foundation for creative and purposeful expression in language - fulfilling California’s vision that all students graduating from our public school system be lifelong learners and have the skills and knowledge necessary to be ready to assume their position in our global economy.

#### *From the Introduction*

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (“the Standards”) are the culmination of an extended, broad-based effort to fulfill the charge issued by the states to create the next generation of K–12 standards in order to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school.

The present work, led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA), builds on the foundation laid by states in their decades-long work on crafting high-quality education standards. The Standards also draw on the most important international models as well as research and input from numerous sources, including state departments of education, scholars, assessment developers, professional organizations, educators from kindergarten through college, and parents, students, and other members of the public. In their design and content, refined through successive drafts and numerous rounds of feedback, the

Standards represent a synthesis of the best elements of standards-related work to date and an important advance over that previous work.

As specified by CCSSO and NGA, the Standards are (1) research and evidence based, (2) aligned with college and work expectations, (3) rigorous, and (4) internationally benchmarked. A particular standard was included in the document only when the best available evidence indicated that its mastery was essential for college and career readiness in a twenty-first-century, globally competitive society. The Standards are intended to be a living work: as new and better evidence emerges, the Standards will be revised accordingly.

The Standards are an extension of a prior initiative led by CCSSO and NGA to develop College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language as well as in mathematics. The CCR Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening Standards, released in draft form in September 2009, serve, in revised form, as the backbone for the present document. Grade-specific K–12 standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language translate the broad (and, for the earliest grades, seemingly distant) aims of the CCR standards into age- and attainment-appropriate terms.

The Standards set requirements not only for English language arts (ELA) but also for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Just as students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, so too must the Standards specify the literacy skills and understandings required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines. Literacy standards for grade 6 and above are predicated on teachers of ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects using their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields. It is important to note that the 6–12 literacy standards in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are not meant to replace content standards in those areas but rather to supplement them. States may incorporate these standards into their standards for those subjects or adopt them as content area literacy standards.

As a natural outgrowth of meeting the charge to define college and career readiness, the Standards also lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century. Indeed, the skills and understandings students are expected to demonstrate have wide applicability outside the classroom or workplace. Students who meet the Standards readily undertake the close, attentive reading that is at the heart of understanding and enjoying complex works of literature. They habitually perform the critical reading necessary to pick carefully through the staggering amount of information available today in print and digitally. They actively seek the wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with high-quality literary and informational texts that builds knowledge, enlarges experience, and broadens worldviews. They reflexively demonstrate the cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic. In short, students who meet the Standards develop the skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening that are the foundation for any creative and purposeful expression in language.

*June 2, 2010*

## Key Design Considerations

### CCR (anchor) and grade-specific standards

The CCR (Common Core Readiness) standards anchor the document and define general, cross-disciplinary literacy expectations that must be met for students to be prepared to enter college and workforce training programs ready to succeed. (These CCR standards are often referred to as the ELA Anchor Standards.) The K–12 grade-specific standards define end-of-year expectations and a cumulative progression designed to enable students to meet college and career readiness expectations no later than the end of high school. The CCR and high school (grades 9–12) standards work in tandem to define the college and career readiness line—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity. Hence, both should be considered when developing college and career readiness assessments.

Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year’s grade specific standards, retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades, and work steadily toward meeting the more general expectations described by the CCR standards.

### Grade levels for K–8; grade bands for 9–10 and 11–12

The Standards use individual grade levels in kindergarten through grade 8 to provide useful specificity; the Standards use two-year bands in grades 9–12 to allow schools, districts, and states flexibility in high school course design.

### A focus on results rather than means

By emphasizing required achievements, the Standards leave room for teachers, curriculum developers, and states to determine how those goals should be reached and what additional topics should be addressed. Thus, the Standards do not mandate such things as a particular writing process or the full range of metacognitive strategies that students may need to monitor and direct their thinking and learning. Teachers are thus free to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge their professional judgment and experience identify as most helpful for meeting the goals set out in the Standards.

### An integrated model of literacy

Although the Standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands for conceptual clarity, the processes of communication are closely connected, as reflected throughout this document. For example, Writing standard 9 requires that students be able to write about what they read. Likewise, Speaking and Listening standard 4 sets the expectation that students will share findings from their research.

### Research and media skills blended into the Standards as a whole

To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to

conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of today's curriculum. In like fashion, research and media skills and understandings are embedded throughout the Standards rather than treated in a separate section.

### **Shared responsibility for students' literacy development**

The Standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared responsibility within the school. The K–5 standards include expectations for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language applicable to a range of subjects, including but not limited to ELA. The grades 6–12 standards are divided into two sections, one for ELA and the other for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. This division reflects the unique, time-honored place of ELA teachers in developing students' literacy skills while at the same time recognizing that teachers in other areas must have a role in this development as well.

Part of the motivation behind the interdisciplinary approach to literacy promulgated by the Standards is extensive research establishing the need for college and career ready students to be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas. Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content; postsecondary education programs typically provide students with both a higher volume of such reading than is generally required in K–12 schools and comparatively little scaffolding.

### **Focus and coherence in instruction and assessment**

While the Standards delineate specific expectations in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, each standard need not be a separate focus for instruction and assessment. Often, several standards can be addressed by a single rich task. For example, when editing writing, students address Writing standard 5 (“Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach”) as well as Language standards 1–3 (which deal with conventions of standard English and knowledge of language). When drawing evidence from literary and informational texts per Writing standard 9, students are also demonstrating their comprehension skill in relation to specific standards in Reading. When discussing something they have read or written, students are also demonstrating their speaking and listening skills. The CCR anchor standards themselves provide another source of focus and coherence.

The same ten CCR anchor standards for Reading apply to both literary and informational texts, including texts in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. The ten CCR anchor standards for Writing cover numerous text types and subject areas. This means that students can develop mutually reinforcing skills and exhibit mastery of standards for reading and writing across a range of texts and classrooms.

## What is Not Covered by the Standards

The Standards should be recognized for what they are not as well as what they are. The most important intentional design limitations are as follows:

1. The Standards define what all students are expected to know and be able to do, not how teachers should teach. For instance, the use of play with young children is not specified by the Standards, but it is welcome as a valuable activity in its own right and as a way to help students meet the expectations in this document. Furthermore, while the Standards make references to some particular forms of content, including mythology, foundational U.S. documents, and Shakespeare, they do not—indeed, cannot—enumerate all or even most of the content that students should learn. The Standards must therefore be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum consistent with the expectations laid out in this document.
2. While the Standards focus on what is most essential, they do not describe all that can or should be taught. A great deal is left to the discretion of teachers and curriculum developers. The aim of the Standards is to articulate the fundamentals, not to set out an exhaustive list or a set of restrictions that limits what can be taught beyond what is specified herein.
3. The Standards do not define the nature of advanced work for students who meet the Standards prior to the end of high school. For those students, advanced work in such areas as literature, composition, language, and journalism should be available. This work should provide the next logical step up from the college and career readiness baseline established here.
4. The Standards set grade-specific standards but do not define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are well below or well above grade-level expectations. No set of grade-specific standards can fully reflect the great variety in abilities, needs, learning rates, and achievement levels of students in any given classroom. However, the Standards do provide clear signposts along the way to the goal of college and career readiness for all students.
5. It is also beyond the scope of the Standards to define the full range of supports appropriate for English language learners and for students with special needs. At the same time, all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards if they are to access the knowledge and skills necessary in their post-high school lives.

Each grade will include students who are still acquiring English. For those students, it is possible to meet the standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening without displaying native-like control of conventions and vocabulary.

The Standards should also be read as allowing for the widest possible range of students to participate fully from the outset and as permitting appropriate accommodations to ensure maximum participation of students with special education needs. For example, for students with disabilities *reading* should allow for the use of Braille, screen-reader technology, or

other assistive devices, while *writing* should include the use of a scribe, computer, or speech-to-text technology. In a similar vein, *speaking* and *listening* should be interpreted broadly to include sign language.

6. While the ELA and content area literacy components described herein are critical to college and career readiness, they do not define the whole of such readiness. Students require a wide-ranging, rigorous academic preparation and, particularly in the early grades, attention to such matters as social, emotional, and physical development and approaches to learning. Similarly, the Standards define literacy expectations in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects, but literacy standards in other areas, such as mathematics and health education, modeled on those in this document are strongly encouraged to facilitate a comprehensive, school-wide literacy program.

## Students Who are College and Career Ready in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening, and Language

The descriptions that follow are not standards themselves but instead offer a portrait of students who meet the standards set out in this document. As students advance through the grades and master the standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, they are able to exhibit with increasing fullness and regularity these capacities of the literate individual.

### They demonstrate independence.

Students can, without significant scaffolding, comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of types and disciplines, and they can construct effective arguments and convey intricate or multifaceted information. Likewise, students are able independently to discern a speaker's key points, request clarification, and ask relevant questions. They build on others' ideas, articulate their own ideas, and confirm they have been understood. Without prompting, they demonstrate command of standard English and acquire and use a wide-ranging vocabulary. More broadly, they become self-directed learners, effectively seeking out and using resources to assist them, including teachers, peers, and print and digital reference materials.

### They build strong content knowledge.

Students establish a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter by engaging with works of quality and substance. They become proficient in new areas through research and study. They read purposefully and listen attentively to gain both general knowledge and discipline-specific expertise. They refine and share their knowledge through writing and speaking.

### They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.

Students adapt their communication in relation to audience, task, purpose, and discipline. They set and adjust purpose for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use as warranted by the task. They appreciate nuances, such as how the composition of an audience should affect tone when speaking and how the connotations of words affect meaning. They also know that different disciplines call for different types of evidence (e.g., documentary evidence in history, experimental evidence in science).

### **They comprehend as well as critique.**

Students are engaged and open-minded—but discerning—readers and listeners. They work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, but they also question an author’s or speaker’s assumptions and premises and assess the veracity of claims and the soundness of reasoning.

### **They value evidence.**

Students cite specific evidence when offering an oral or written interpretation of a text. They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener, and they constructively evaluate others’ use of evidence.

### **They use technology and digital media strategically and capably.**

Students employ technology thoughtfully to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use. They tailor their searches online to acquire useful information efficiently, and they integrate what they learn using technology with what they learn offline. They are familiar with the strengths and limitations of various technological tools and mediums and can select and use those best suited to their communication goals.

### **They come to understand other perspectives and cultures.**

Students appreciate that the twenty-first-century classroom and workplace are settings in which people from often widely divergent cultures and who represent diverse experiences and perspectives must learn and work together. Students actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures through reading and listening, and they are able to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. They evaluate other points of view critically and constructively. Through reading great classic and contemporary works of literature representative of a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews, students can vicariously inhabit worlds and have experiences much different than their own.

## **Note on the Structure and Organization of the Common Core Standards in ELA/Literacy**

Each section of the standards is divided into strands. K–5 and 6–12 ELA have Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands; the 6–12 history/ social studies, science, and technical subjects section focuses on Reading and Writing. Each strand is headed by a strand-specific set of College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards that is identical across all grades and content areas.

Standards for each grade within K–8 and for grades 9–10 and 11–12 follow the CCR anchor standards in each strand. Each grade-specific standard (as these standards are collectively referred to) corresponds to the same-numbered CCR anchor standard. Put another way, each CCR anchor standard has an accompanying grade-specific standard translating the broader CCR statement into grade-appropriate end-of-year expectations. (The CCR anchor standards for ELA/Literacy can be found below at the end of Part II of this document.)



A number of California-specific additions to the standards (identified in bolded text followed by the “CA” state acronym) have been incorporated into the grade-specific standards. These additions are included in the Tables in Part II, below.

## Who is responsible for teaching the Standards

A single K–5 section lists standards for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language across the curriculum, reflecting the fact that most or all of the instruction students in these grades receive comes from one teacher. Grades 6–12 are covered in two content area–specific sections, the first for the English language arts teacher and the second for teachers of history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Each section uses the same CCR anchor standards but also includes grade-specific standards tuned to the literacy requirements of the particular discipline(s).

## Key Features of the Standards

### Reading: Text complexity and the growth of comprehension

The Reading standards place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read. Standard 10 defines a grade-by-grade “staircase” of increasing text complexity that rises from beginning reading to the college and career readiness level. Whatever they are reading, students must also show a steadily growing ability to discern more from and make fuller use of text, including making an increasing number of connections among ideas and between texts, considering a wider range of textual evidence, and becoming more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts.

### Writing: Text types, responding to reading, and research

The Standards acknowledge the fact that whereas some writing skills, such as the ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish, are applicable to many types of writing, other skills are more properly defined in terms of specific writing types: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. Standard 9 stresses the importance of the writing-reading connection by requiring students to draw upon and write about evidence from literary and informational texts. Because of the centrality of writing to most forms of inquiry, research standards are prominently included in this strand, though skills important to research are infused throughout the document.

### Speaking and Listening: Flexible communication and collaboration

Including but not limited to skills necessary for formal presentations, the Speaking and Listening standards require students to develop a range of broadly useful oral communication and interpersonal skills. Students must learn to work together, express and listen carefully to ideas, integrate information from oral, visual, quantitative, and media sources, evaluate what they hear, use media and visual displays strategically to help achieve communicative purposes, and adapt speech to context and task.

### Language: Conventions, effective use, and vocabulary

The Language standards include the essential “rules” of standard written and spoken English, but they also approach language as a matter of craft and informed choice among alternatives. The vocabulary standards focus on understanding words and phrases, their relationships, and their

nuances and on acquiring new vocabulary, particularly general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

*Note on Resources: See the Resources List at the end of Part I of this Alliance document for links to the Common Core Standards and related documents.*

**Note on the ELA/Literacy Anchor Standards:** The Alliance document that follows focuses on the ELA/Literacy standards and the standards in Mathematics for grades K-8. The College and Career readiness (CCR) Anchor standards for ELA/Literacy are included below (in Part II) as a resource document, following the grade-specific Common Core Standards tables for K-8 in both content areas. The Common Core Standards for Mathematics are not organized around CCR Anchor standards.

## *The Common Core Standards in Mathematics*

*From the Introduction to The Common Core State Standards for Mathematics*, (adopted by the California State Board of Education, as updated in January 2013).

The Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSSM) are designed to be robust, linked within and across grades, and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With California's students fully prepared for the future, our students will be positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

The development of these standards began as a voluntary, state-led effort coordinated by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) committed to developing a set of standards that would help prepare students for success in career and college. The CCSSM are based on evidence of the skills and knowledge needed for college and career readiness and an expectation that students be able to both know and do mathematics by solving a range of problems and engaging in key mathematical practices.

The development of these standards was informed by international benchmarking and began with research-based learning progressions detailing what is known about how students' mathematical knowledge, skills, and understanding develop over time.

The first principle, *focus*, implies that instruction should focus deeply on only those concepts that are emphasized in the standards so that students can gain strong foundational conceptual understanding, a high degree of procedural skill and fluency, and the ability to apply the mathematics they know to solve problems inside and outside the mathematics classroom. *Coherence* arises from mathematical connections. Some of the connections in the standards knit topics together at a single grade level. Most connections are vertical, as the standards support a progression of increasing knowledge, skill, and sophistication across the grades. Finally, *rigor* requires that conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application be approached with equal intensity.

### Two Types of Standards

The CCSSM include two types of standards: Eight Mathematical Practice Standards (the same at each grade level) and Mathematical Content Standards (different at each grade level). Together these standards address both "habits of mind" that students should develop to foster mathematical understanding and expertise and skills and knowledge – what students need to know and be able to do. The mathematical content standards were built on progressions of topics across a number of grade levels, informed both by research on children's cognitive development and by the logical structure of mathematics.

The CCSSM call for mathematical practices and mathematical content to be connected as students engage in mathematical tasks. These connections are essential to support the development of students' broader mathematical understanding – students who lack understanding of a topic may rely on procedures too heavily. The MP standards must be taught as carefully and practiced as intentionally as the Mathematical Content Standards. Ideally, several MP standards will be evident in each lesson as they interact and overlap with each other and the mathematical content in the lesson. Neither should be isolated from the other; effective mathematics instruction occurs when these two halves of the CCSSM come together in a powerful whole.

## The Structure of the Mathematical Content Standards Kindergarten–Grade 8

In kindergarten through grade eight the CCSSM are organized by

- 1) grade level and then by
- 2) domains (clusters of standards that address “big ideas” and support connections of topics across the grades),
- 3) clusters (groups of related standards inside domains) and finally by the
- 4) standards (what students should understand and be able to do).

Each specific content standard is nested hierarchically in this format. For example:

- Grade Level: 1) Grade Three  
Domain: 2) Number and Operations—Fractions  
Cluster: 3) Develop understanding of fractions as numbers.  
Standard: 4) Express whole numbers as fractions, and recognize fractions that are equivalent to whole numbers.

## The Standards for Mathematical Practice

The Standards for Mathematical Practice describe varieties of expertise that mathematics educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students. These practices rest on important “processes and proficiencies” with longstanding importance in mathematics education. The first of these are the NCTM process standards of problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, representation, and connections. The second are the strands of mathematical proficiency specified in the National Research Council’s report *Adding It Up*: adaptive reasoning, strategic competence, conceptual understanding (comprehension of mathematical concepts, operations and relations), procedural fluency (skill in carrying out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently and appropriately), and productive disposition (habitual inclination to see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile, coupled with a belief in diligence and one’s own efficacy).

## 1 Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

Mathematically proficient students start by explaining to themselves the meaning of a problem and looking for entry points to its solution. They analyze givens, constraints, relationships, and goals. They make conjectures about the form and meaning of the solution and plan a solution pathway rather than simply jumping into a solution attempt. They consider analogous problems, and try special cases and simpler forms of the original problem in order to gain insight into its solution. They monitor and evaluate their progress and change course if necessary. Older students might, depending on the context of the problem, transform algebraic expressions or change the viewing window on their graphing calculator to get the information they need. Mathematically proficient students can explain correspondences between equations, verbal descriptions, tables, and graphs or draw diagrams of important features and relationships, graph data, and search for regularity or trends. Younger students might rely on using concrete objects or pictures to help conceptualize and solve a problem. Mathematically proficient students check their answers to problems using a different method, and they continually ask themselves, “Does this make sense?” They can understand the approaches of others to solving complex problems and identify correspondences between different approaches.

## 2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

Mathematically proficient students make sense of quantities and their relationships in problem situations. They bring two complementary abilities to bear on problems involving quantitative relationships: the ability to *decontextualize*—to abstract a given situation and represent it symbolically and manipulate the representing symbols as if they have a life of their own, without necessarily attending to their referents—and the ability to *contextualize*, to pause as needed during the manipulation process in order to probe into the referents for the symbols involved. Quantitative reasoning entails habits of creating a coherent representation of the problem at hand; considering the units involved; attending to the meaning of quantities, not just how to compute them; and knowing and flexibly using different properties of operations and objects.

## 3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

Mathematically proficient students understand and use stated assumptions, definitions, and previously established results in constructing arguments. They make conjectures and build a logical progression of statements to explore the truth of their conjectures. They are able to analyze situations by breaking them into cases, and can recognize and use counterexamples. They justify their conclusions, communicate them to others, and respond to the arguments of others. They reason inductively about data, making plausible arguments that take into account the context from which the data arose. Mathematically proficient students are also able to compare the effectiveness of two plausible arguments, distinguish correct logic or reasoning from that which is flawed, and—if there is a flaw in an argument—explain what it is. Elementary students can construct arguments using concrete referents such as objects, drawings, diagrams, and actions. Such arguments can make sense and be correct, even though they are not generalized or made formal until later

grades. Later, students learn to determine domains to which an argument applies. Students at all grades can listen or read the arguments of others, decide whether they make sense, and ask useful questions to clarify or improve the arguments. Students build proofs by induction and proofs by contradiction. CA 3.1 (for higher mathematics only).

#### 4 Model with mathematics.

Mathematically proficient students can apply the mathematics they know to solve problems arising in everyday life, society, and the workplace. In early grades, this might be as simple as writing an addition equation to describe a situation. In middle grades, a student might apply proportional reasoning to plan a school event or analyze a problem in the community. By high school, a student might use geometry to solve a design problem or use a function to describe how one quantity of interest depends on another. Mathematically proficient students who can apply what they know are comfortable making assumptions and approximations to simplify a complicated situation, realizing that these may need revision later. They are able to identify important quantities in a practical situation and map their relationships using such tools as diagrams, two-way tables, graphs, flowcharts and formulas. They can analyze those relationships mathematically to draw conclusions. They routinely interpret their mathematical results in the context of the situation and reflect on whether the results make sense, possibly improving the model if it has not served its purpose.

#### 5 Use appropriate tools strategically.

Mathematically proficient students consider the available tools when solving a mathematical problem. These tools might include pencil and paper, concrete models, a ruler, a protractor, a calculator, a spreadsheet, a computer algebra system, a statistical package, or dynamic geometry software. Proficient students are sufficiently familiar with tools appropriate for their grade or course to make sound decisions about when each of these tools might be helpful, recognizing both the insight to be gained and their limitations. For example, mathematically proficient high school students analyze graphs of functions and solutions generated using a graphing calculator. They detect possible errors by strategically using estimation and other mathematical knowledge. When making mathematical models, they know that technology can enable them to visualize the results of varying assumptions, explore consequences, and compare predictions with data. Mathematically proficient students at various grade levels are able to identify relevant external mathematical resources, such as digital content located on a website, and use them to pose or solve problems. They are able to use technological tools to explore and deepen their understanding of concepts.

#### 6 Attend to precision.

Mathematically proficient students try to communicate precisely to others. They try to use clear definitions in discussion with others and in their own reasoning. They state the meaning of the symbols they choose, including using the equal sign consistently and

appropriately. They are careful about specifying units of measure, and labeling axes to clarify the correspondence with quantities in a problem. They calculate accurately and efficiently, express numerical answers with a degree of precision appropriate for the problem context. In the elementary grades, students give carefully formulated explanations to each other. By the time they reach high school they have learned to examine claims and make explicit use of definitions.

## 7 Look for and make use of structure.

Mathematically proficient students look closely to discern a pattern or structure. Young students, for example, might notice that three and seven more is the same amount as seven and three more, or they may sort a collection of shapes according to how many sides the shapes have. Later, students will see  $7 \times 8$  equals the well-remembered  $7 \times 5 + 7 \times 3$ , in preparation for learning about the distributive property. In the expression  $x^2 + 9x + 14$ , older students can see the 14 as  $2 \times 7$  and the 9 as  $2 + 7$ . They recognize the significance of an existing line in a geometric figure and can use the strategy of drawing an auxiliary line for solving problems. They also can step back for an overview and shift perspective. They can see complicated things, such as some algebraic expressions, as single objects or as being composed of several objects. For example, they can see  $5 - 3(x - y)^2$  as 5 minus a positive number times a square and use that to realize that its value cannot be more than 5 for any real numbers  $x$  and  $y$ .

## 8 Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

Mathematically proficient students notice if calculations are repeated, and look both for general methods and for shortcuts. Upper elementary students might notice when dividing 25 by 11 that they are repeating the same calculations over and over again, and conclude they have a repeating decimal. By paying attention to the calculation of slope as they repeatedly check whether points are on the line through (1, 2) with slope 3, middle school students might abstract the equation  $(y - 2)/(x - 1) = 3$ . Noticing the regularity in the way terms cancel when expanding  $(x - 1)(x + 1)$ ,  $(x - 1)(x^2 + x + 1)$ , and  $(x - 1)(x^3 + x^2 + x + 1)$  might lead them to the general formula for the sum of a geometric series. As they work to solve a problem, mathematically proficient students maintain oversight of the process, while attending to the details. They continually evaluate the reasonableness of their intermediate results.

## Connecting the Standards for Mathematical Practice to the Standards for Mathematical Content

The Standards for Mathematical Practice describe ways in which developing student practitioners of the discipline of mathematics increasingly ought to engage with the subject matter as they grow in mathematical maturity and expertise throughout the elementary, middle and high school years. Designers of curricula, assessments, and professional development should all attend to the need to connect the mathematical practices to

mathematical content in mathematics instruction.

The Standards for Mathematical Content are a balanced combination of procedure and understanding. Expectations that begin with the word “understand” are often especially good opportunities to connect the practices to the content. Students who lack understanding of a topic may rely on procedures too heavily. Without a flexible base from which to work, they may be less likely to consider analogous problems, represent problems coherently, justify conclusions, apply the mathematics to practical situations, use technology mindfully to work with the mathematics, explain the mathematics accurately to other students, step back for an overview, or deviate from a known procedure to find a shortcut. In short, a lack of understanding effectively prevents a student from engaging in the mathematical practices.

In this respect, those content standards which set an expectation of understanding are potential “points of intersection” between the Standards for Mathematical Content and the Standards for Mathematical Practice. These points of intersection are intended to be weighted toward central and generative concepts in the school mathematics curriculum that most merit the time, resources, innovative energies, and focus necessary to qualitatively improve the curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, and student achievement in mathematics.

*Note: The Tables which follow in Part 2 of this document are composed of all of the CCSSM Content Standards at the grade levels identified in the CCSSM. The Mathematical Practices are not specified separately in the Tables since the practices are to be integrated with all of the content standards at every grade level as appropriate.*



## The Common Core Standards and Waldorf Education: *Essential Differences*

In making any comparison between the Common Core Standards and Waldorf education it is important to note several fundamental differences in values and goals between these two approaches to education.

The Common Core Standards have specific, well-defined goals, namely: to provide an assurance of “what is expected of students at each grade level,” to “establish individualized benchmarks for them . . . starting in the early grades.” This strategy is intended to ensure that all public high school graduates have reached levels of academic achievement that reflect “the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers . . . [to be] best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.” “The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them.” (*from the Common Core Mission Statement*)

The purpose of the Common Core Standards is thus clearly and narrowly defined, focusing on educational success for all students through the attainment of a discrete (and partial) set of knowledge and skills (the “Core”) that are intended to support personal and national educational and economic success. With this goal in mind, the Common Core Standards identified key skills, competencies, and knowledge sought for all students at twelfth grade graduation, the point of transition to college or career. Once these end goals were defined, strands of these skills and competencies were back-mapped down through the grades to their beginnings in kindergarten. (In English Language Arts, each standard can be traced backwards throughout the grades, while in Mathematics, new strands of content are added periodically as the student moves through the grades to ensure the breadth of student mastery by high school graduation.)

### *Educating the Whole Human Being*

Waldorf education diverges radically from the Common Core view of education in at least four significant areas. First, although Waldorf education includes the mastery of Common Core academic skills and knowledge needed for career or college success, this set of cognitive, academic attainments is part of a much more comprehensive educational goal that explicitly includes and fosters the emotional, physical, social, ecological, and ethical development of each student. Quite simply, the core of Waldorf education is support of the development of the “whole child.” In addition to academic instruction, adequate time is allocated for a range of activities that allow the growing child to explore multiple aspects of the human condition and that foster character development, healthy physical growth, social consciousness, relationships, imagination and creativity, environmental awareness, and the capacity to make informed decisions and to act upon them responsibly. In Waldorf education, these are considered to be essential aptitudes for twenty-first century learners – for success in college, careers--and life.

### *Changes in Student Development, Changes in Curriculum and Instruction*

This breadth of purpose leads to a second significant difference that determines when and how a subject is introduced and taught. Unlike the Common Core's top-down approach (identify the desired final outcome and map backwards to its earliest stages in kindergarten), Waldorf education is founded on a model of the healthy physical, emotional, and psychological development of the child. The kindergarten child is perceived to have a substantively different consciousness, worldview, and learning style than the twelfth grader; our five year-old students are not viewed as miniature (or deficient) eighteen year-olds. Learning is therefore developed in stages that reflect and are designed to support the child's developing interests and capacities. For example, young children are given ample time to encounter and explore the world through play and direct experience. These are considered key, even "core," components of the curriculum and to be essential to the healthy development of the whole child. Abstract intellectual activities such as "analyze," "explain," "compare" or "interpret" are reserved for a later age when these cognitive capacities have more fully developed and students are "ready" to employ them. Subjects gradually become both more distinctly defined and broader in scope as children's capacities develop and their world expands. This can be described as a "bottom up" approach in which subjects are introduced at a developmentally appropriate time in a developmentally appropriate manner and brought back in ever more complex form as the child grows. Foundations are continuously laid for successive stages of learning and understanding through a curriculum designed to alter in both content and pedagogy as it addresses the richness and breadth of student development.

### *Timing, the Common Core, and the Waldorf Curriculum*

A third difference is suggested above: the important role of time in education. The time factor shows itself in three major ways:

- when a subject or learning activity is introduced;
- in the appropriate allocation of time within the curriculum for a full range of subjects and appropriate opportunities for a variety of student learning activities; and
- an acknowledgement that learning takes place in different ways in distinct stages over time and that curriculum and instruction should reflect this reality.

In many instances, concepts or subjects are introduced later in Waldorf education than in the Common Core Standards. This follows the core developmental pedagogical principle of "the right material at the right time in the right way". Although evidence clearly illustrates that young children can engage in abstract conceptual activities, Waldorf educators argue that this is not an effective or appropriate use of the young child's time or energy, and that early introduction of abstract academics is actually working against the child's natural inclinations, abilities and needs. As such, the early introduction of formal academics creates stress and anxiety for children and is likely to lead to an early experience of excessive and unnecessary challenge or failure. Waldorf educators assert that precious instructional time is better spent on activities that are natural to the child's stage of development. In this approach, the educator has confidence in the process of child development and believes that, if a subject is introduced at a developmentally appropriate time and in the right way, mastery is more likely to be efficient, economical in the use of time, and empowering and enjoyable for the student. By considering the appropriate time for the introduction of specific concepts, and content, and academic learning activities, time is freed up

for a broad range of additional subjects and activities essential to the developing human being, including: academics, the arts, practical activities, physical development through movement, social and emotional education, and the exploration of and interaction with the world of nature.

*Fostering Healthy Student Learning: Standards, Assessment, and Accountability*

A fourth key difference relates to questions of educational purposes, practices, results, and accountability. There are radical differences between the Common Core and Waldorf education in their approaches to and understanding of standards, benchmarks, and assessment. The Common Core Standards establish benchmarks for every stage of development; assessment measures are designed to ensure each child and teacher is on track, standard by standard, year by year—assuming that each child should be reaching the same academic goals at the same time. This is fundamentally a deficit model of education in which a child’s academic progress is measured and evaluated for what is mastered and not mastered, leaving little room for individual variability. (In this sense, the accountability focus of the standards and assessments distorts the educational process, by imposing external goals and judgments on schools, teachers, and students, attempting to motivate the educational enterprise through fear of failure, ever-increasing anxiety, ranking, labeling, and punitive consequences (for students, teachers, and schools). Although Waldorf education agrees with the principle of accountability for student growth, including the academic, its approach is radically different, focusing on monitoring and documenting individual progress through a range of assessments used formatively to assist students in their learning. These assessment processes encompass both the full range of subjects and a comprehensive view of the developing child, the constant frame of reference for all aspects of Waldorf education. Although there are guidelines for achievement at each stage, the teacher is charged and entrusted with the essential task of observing the progress of each child and adjusting student learning experiences accordingly to best support healthy student growth and success. There is an absence of rigid standards and absolute time-based student outcomes: rather than a closed-system of required assessment results, the concept of readiness becomes central. Rather than summary judgments at identified times on standardized content, or ranking at performance levels, the teacher checks to see whether the child (and the class) is ready to proceed (or what assistance will help students to become ready)--and how to motivate and provide opportunities for new student growth. This gives the education a forward motion rather than one of looking back to see what has been done on time and up to standard--or not done.

These four areas demonstrate the degree of difference between the path of education defined by the Common Core Standards and the pathway embodied in Waldorf education. These must be kept in mind as the two are compared and the appropriate interactions of the two are explored.

## A Proposal for a Waldorf-Inspired Public School Curriculum In Media and Technology in Grades Six, Seven, and Eight

As part of its developmental approach to education, Waldorf education emphasizes the need for a solid foundation of direct and hands-on experience for younger children. The introduction of technology is postponed to allow for an extended period of kinesthetic, concrete, and somatic learning and direct experience. Screens, electronic media, and digital tools are not generally introduced until the sixth grade.

To align the Waldorf program with this principle, all components of the Common Core Standards that include digital or technological elements have been delayed until sixth grade. (Much of the content of the related standards will have been introduced, with the use of traditional, non-electronic media, at the appropriate earlier age.) This placement of media and technology is reflected in the Alliance Recommendations and was made following discussions with teachers and administrators from several Waldorf-inspired charter schools. These discussions clarified that technology was in common use by seventh and eighth grades; however, there does not yet appear to be a curriculum for its introduction and development. Many schools expect the use of technology in reports and presentations, but assume the required learning is occurring outside of school. This presents issues of equity and access and does not ensure that all of the students in Grade Eight are adequately prepared for the media and technology use required of them as they enter high school.

A curriculum for technology education in Waldorf-inspired charter and public schools at grades 6, 7, and 8 is urgently needed. The Alliance suggests that a process be established for the cooperative development, among Alliance schools, of such a curriculum. Much of the learning would, of course, take place in the context of student learning activities and assignments throughout the curriculum, but some focused, direct instruction will probably be needed as well. Such a media and technology curriculum could include components, such as the following, drawn from throughout the Common Core Standards:

### Sixth Grade

- Introduction to keyboarding
- Basic online search and research methods
- Use of computers for basic research and word processing

### Seventh Grade

Continued use of skills and capacities

- Develop skills in online search and research methods
- Use of mathematical tools (software, calculators) for analysis and presentation of results
- Introduction to publishing and presentation software, including the use of multimedia elements

- Use of computers for research, word processing, and publishing (includes documents, research papers, individual and group projects, presentations, power point, simple tables, charts and graphs)
- Learn computer etiquette, and how to protect safety and ensure privacy

## Eighth Grade

Continued development and use of the capacities introduced in Grade 7, and

- Use advanced internet search and research tools effectively and with discrimination
- Validate and evaluate the quality of online sources
- Avoid plagiarism, citing online sources appropriately and linking to them, when possible
- Use mathematical and scientific modeling with media tools and software to solve problems and display results
- Prepare and deliver multimedia presentations, using communication technology
- Compare written and filmed versions of a variety of materials, including analysis of the impact of technique and medium
- Participate in interactive and collaborative online discussions and writing projects with peers
- Critique and evaluate media--its social impact, its value, its dangers, and the media and technology revolutions of the last 100 years
- Explore the variety of forms and uses of electronic media and the creative uses of media (i.e., digital photography, audio recording, video)

## Resources

The resources available for both understanding and implementing the Common Core Standards are expanding at an extraordinary pace. The Resources listed below are the online links or addresses for the “core” source documents for the Common Core State Standards. Each state that has adopted them will have its own version and posting of the standards as well. All states will have adopted all of the Common Core standards in full, but they also have the option to add a small number of additional standards as well—as California has done.

### Key Common Core Documents

Of essential importance are the ELA/Literacy Standards and the ELA Appendices, A, B, and C., at <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>

and the standards in mathematics, K-12, at <http://www.corestandards.org/Math>.

In addition, both sets of the Common Core standards are available, as adopted by the State of California, at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/>.

### Selected Waldorf Resources

Waldorf education, throughout its ninety-five year history, has also been written about extensively and in detail, particularly in recent years. The following short list of valuable sources may serve as initial guides into the world of Waldorf education. Much, much more is available in print and online.

Rudolf Steiner’s work with the original group of teachers continues to inform and guide Waldorf education to this day. It was recorded in three basic books. *The Study of Man* provides a description and exploration of Steiner’s developmental view of the human being.

Curriculum and methodology were addressed in *Practical Advice to Teachers*.

Teachers’ seminars with Steiner were recorded in *Discussions with Teachers*.

*The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*, edited by Martyn Rawson and Tobias Richter: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, 2000.

*Towards Creative Teaching*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. edited by Martyn Rawson and Kevin Avison: Floris Books, 2013.

*A Handbook for Waldorf Class Teachers*, compiled by Kevin Avison: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, 2004.

*Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the Inside Out*. Jack Petrash: Gryphon House, Inc., 2002.

## Part I Summary Comments

This document has been developed by the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education for school and teacher use and to facilitate discussion and understanding with educational stakeholders at the school and school district and throughout public education. We hope that it will serve those purposes well and that it provides the tools and information needed to meet the needs of Alliance schools.

This document will be successful if it is seen as an initial attempt to indicate the placement of the Common Core Standards in a Waldorf Public School Program and to place that effort in a larger educational context. We anticipate and look forward to discussions of the contents of this document within schools and throughout the Alliance, and it is assumed that new insights will lead to revision of the document and its Recommendations.

We want to emphasize that the Alliance Recommendations are just that: recommendations. They are advisory to schools and teachers, and we hope that they will be received as a practical gift to Waldorf schools and teachers and put to use in that spirit.