

English Language Arts (ELA)

The English Language Arts (ELA) State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) is composed of member states from across the country that come together to leverage their collective expertise to support effective implementation of college- and career-ready ELA/literacy standards. The ELA SCASS member states share best practices and create high-quality tools and resources. In 2013, the ELA SCASS launched [Navigating Text Complexity](#), a web-based collection of resources to help educators in all states navigate the text complexity demands critical to college- and career-ready standards. The website content has been recently updated, and usability of the site continues to be a focus for the ELA SCASS.

Engagement with leading experts in the field of literacy is also a consistent part of ELA SCASS meetings. In the 2016-2017 membership year, the SCASS engaged in professional learning with Nell Duke of University of Michigan, David Liben of Student Achievement Partners, Rick Stiggins of the Assessment Training Institute, Peter Johnson of the University of Albany-SUNY, Donna Scanlon of the University of Albany, and Tim and Cynthia Shanahan of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Discussions centered around a range of issues, including the following:

- Research-informed, essential practices for raising literacy achievement in PreK through grade 3
- Balanced literacy and teacher practices
- Implications of content knowledge and vocabulary on literacy
- Balanced assessment systems with a focus on early assessments and formative assessments
- Implementation of intervention policies, strategies, and instruction to support essential instructional practices
- Disciplinary literacy

Collaboration with these experts has resulted in several follow-up actions:

- Developing a list of state-based education researchers that members can call on as they move forward with education policies and professional development
- Developing a set of research-based hiring guidelines to support state members (and other educators) select effective professional development providers
- Conducting an assessment audit of member states

In addition, as a result of the SCASS professional learning, member states often build wonderfully relevant and effective professional development for administrators and teachers in their home jurisdictions.

Looking forward, member states have expressed interest in focusing on the following topics during the 2017-2018 year:

- Fostering disciplinary literacy
- Exploring the "career side" of college- and career-readiness
- Advocating for quality professional learning in literacy
- Educating ELLs including strategies and policies needed to support their achievement of high academic demands
- Promoting engagement with the Navigating Text Complexity website
- Organizing school visits to observe innovative approaches to literacy instruction and improving student outcomes

Advisor: Sue Pimentel

Sue Pimentel specializes in standards-driven school reform and works as an education writer, analyst and consultant, with established credentials in building consensus among diverse constituents. For the

past two decades, Susan has worked around the country on standards development, standards implementation and assessment in K-12 and adult education systems. Susan was a lead writer of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects.

