



SENIOR DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR P-12 EDUCATION

May 12, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Our endeavors across the Regents Reform Agenda and the Race to the Top Assurance Areas (Standards and Assessments, Data Systems, Great Teachers and Leaders, and Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools) and Priorities (STEM and Early Childhood) remain the centerpieces for our work. As we develop tools and resources around these initiatives, I will be corresponding with you to alert you to important updates on our webpage, alert you to learning opportunities and events, make requests, and ask for your feedback and thought partnership.

This week, we are excited to share the following with you:

- The timeline for our phased implementation of the New York State Common Core Learning Standards (Curriculum and Assessments)
- A sample of the Common Core State Standards resources suggested by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
- A link to our “Bringing the Common Core to Life” Webinar featuring a talk with David Coleman, one of the authors of the Common Core State Standards:
<http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/resources/bringing-the-common-core-to-life.html>

To view any and all of these materials, please use the link:

<http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/memos/may122011.html>

Please note that later in the Spring, we will be releasing:

1. Timelines, sample job descriptions, deliverables, and metrics for Network Teams and Network Team Equivalents
2. Tools for use in diagnosing the current state of Common Core alignment in your schools and districts
3. A road map for phased implementation of the Common Core
4. Recommendations for planning and scheduling local professional development on CCSS implementation, School-Based Inquiry, and teacher/ principal evaluation.
5. Guidance for Common Core aligned modules (extended units) in ELA/Literacy and Math

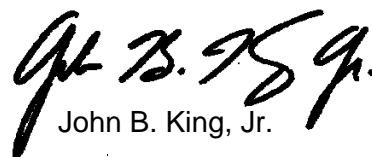
Finally, I'd like to ask, once again, that you share the work you and your colleagues have done to date in aligning your unit and lesson plans with the Common Core. I know that many of you have begun this challenging and exciting transition, and our team will build on the best practice across New York State. We are beginning the process of generating a full menu of Common Core aligned curriculum – across content area and grades. The goal is that our state curriculum reflects the learning, experimentation, creativity, and pilots you have experienced this year. Whether your work

is polished or in draft form, field tested or just an early brainstorm, we are anxious to know what you are thinking and doing as it relates to the Common Core. You are in a position to inform, inspire, and seed the work we are doing in this critical area at the state level. Please gather and send aligned units, lesson plans, materials, samples of student work, and other classroom artifacts produced by your districts and schools no later than close of business on June 1, 2011. These materials should be e-mailed to emscurric@mail.nysed.gov with "Common Core Curriculum Models" in the subject line.

Please note the guidance provided below and include as many of the criteria as possible for alignment with the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

1. Grade level complex text is the subject of the lesson/unit.
2. Lesson/unit focuses on multiple close readings of texts for understanding.
3. The lesson/unit includes instructional scaffolding to enable students at varying skill levels to access the complex text directly (and does *not* preempt or replace the text by translating its contents for students; any needed reading grows out of close reading of the text, rather than being taught separately).
4. A series of text-dependent questions is included in the lesson/unit that requires students to demonstrate that they follow the details of what is explicitly stated but also asks them to make non-trivial inferences.
5. A focus of the lesson/unit is on building students' ability to use relevant textual evidence to support their explanations and inferences about texts.
6. Extensive writing opportunities are included for students to draw evidence from texts (i.e. write to sources) and to present careful analyses, well-defended claims, and clear information. They are regularly asked to respond to questions about texts and verify their answers, write notes about texts, summarize texts, etc.
7. When reading, academic vocabulary prevalent in complex texts is taught by drawing students' attention to specific words and working through word meanings in their context.
8. Lesson/unit invites students to share their preparation, evidence, and research orally with their peers.
9. Lesson/unit explicitly and effectively supports student mastery of the key elements of grammar and conventions in the context of reading and writing, including how to put smaller units together to form longer, more complex sentences and paragraphs.
10. Lesson/unit cultivates independence in students.

As always, I am honored to work alongside you in these efforts.



John B. King, Jr.