



Our Students. Their Moment.

Summary of New York Common Core Task Force Final Report

December 14, 2015

Members of the Governor's Common Core Task Force

- **Richard Parsons**, Senior Advisor, Providence Equity Partners, Inc. and former Chairman of the Board, Citigroup Inc. (Chair of the Task Force)
- **Heather Buskirk**, Mohawk Valley Master Teacher and Science Teacher at Johnstown High School
- **Geoffrey Canada**, President, Harlem Children's Zone
- **Carol Conklin-Spillane**, Principal of Sleepy Hollow High School
- **MaryEllen Elia**, Commissioner of the New York State Education Department
- **Constance Evelyn**, Superintendent of the Valley Stream School District
- **Catalina Fortino**, Vice President of the New York State United Teachers
- **Kishayna Hazlewood**, 3rd Grade Teacher at P.S. 156 in Brooklyn
- **Tim Kremer**, Executive Director of the New York State School Boards Association
- **Carl Marcellino**, Senator and Chair of the Senate Education Committee
- **Cathy Nolan**, Assembly Member and Chair of the Assembly Education Committee
- **Sam Radford III**, President of the District Parent Coordinating Council of Buffalo
- **Carrie Remis**, Rochester Area Parent
- **Randi Weingarten**, President of the American Federation of Teachers
- **Nancy L. Zimpher**, Chancellor of the State University of New York
- **Andreea Musteata**, Junior at Tech Valley High School, Common Core Student Ambassador

Recommendation 1

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>1. Adopt high quality New York education standards with input from local districts, educators, and parents through an open and transparent process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ SED launched AIMHighNY survey in October.➤ The Department received feedback from over 10,500 individuals. Largest percentage of the feedback coming from classroom teachers.➤ Over 71% of the feedback expressed agreement of the standards.➤ The feedback collected from the survey will be reviewed and synthesized with the Content Advisory Panels, practitioners and stakeholders.

Recommendation 2

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>2. Modify early grade standards so they are age-appropriate.</p>	<p>➤ The Department will create a committee of New York State stakeholders to develop guidance and provide recommended suggested revisions based on the AimHighNY feedback. The committee will include educators certified in ELA, mathematics, Elementary Education, Literacy, Special Education, English as a New Language and Bilingual Education, School and District Administration, and representatives of New York State's institutes of higher education will also be included to bring subject content expertise and knowledge of child development.</p>

Recommendation 3

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>3. Ensure that standards accommodate flexibility that allows educators to meet the needs of unique student populations, including Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ SED will provide guidance to reiterate that the Standards are not intended to be rigid or one-size-fits-all but rather serve as goals of instruction.➤ SED will create a committee of stakeholders to develop guidance and provide recommended suggested revisions which will include educators certified in Special Education and English as a New Language and Bilingual Education.➤ SED has and will continue to identify opportunities to provide resources and professional development to assist teachers of SWD and ELL with the skills to assist with the transition to higher standards including curriculum scaffolds to assist with the delivery of instruction.

Recommendation 4

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>4. Ensure standards do not lead to the narrowing of curriculum or diminish the love of reading and joy of learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ SED will provide guidance to reiterate that the Standards are not intended to be rigid or one-size-fits-all but rather serve as goals of instruction➤ The Department has issued and will re-issue guidance to the field regarding the appropriate use and enhancement of the optional curriculum modules developed by the Department.➤ The Department has issued and will re-issue guidance to remind the field that rote test prep instruction is not an effective way to provide instruction. Rather, educators should focus on rich, engaging curriculum.

Recommendation 5

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
5. Establish a transparent and open process by which New York standards are periodically reviewed by educators and content area experts.	➤ In November the Commissioner recommended that the <i>“Department should commit to conducting comprehensive reviews of the state’s learning standards every five years, including a robust public engagement strategy.”</i>

Recommendation 6

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>6. Ensure educators and local school districts have the flexibility to develop and tailor curriculum to the new standards.</p>	<p>➤ This recommendation is consistent with long-standing Department practice and custom, which provides that while the state establishes standards, curriculum decisions have been, are, and should always be determined at the local level.</p>

Recommendation 7

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
7. Release updated and improved sample curriculum resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="807 368 1862 615">➤ The Department has provided a significant number of curricular resources on EngageNY.org, which will be expanded to include additional optional curriculum modules and video exemplars of excellent teaching.<li data-bbox="807 658 1862 1005">➤ In November 2015, the Commissioner recommended to the Board: <i>“Work with the field to provide new, optional curricular resources”</i> integrating new New York State Social Studies Frameworks and the new New York State Science Standards that are currently in development with the work with ELA and math standards and curriculum.<li data-bbox="807 1048 1862 1329">➤ EngageNY.org has been recognized nationally as a premier resource for educators, and it is regularly used by teachers from throughout the country to guide their new curricular practice.

Recommendation 8

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>8. Launch a digital platform that enables teachers, including pre-service teachers and teacher educators, to share resources with other teachers across the state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ In November, the Commissioner recommended: <i>“Create a ‘Teacher Portal’ to provide educators from around the state an online tool to share curricular resources, including adaptations of modules.”</i>➤ In 2016, the Department will pilot EngageNY Communities, a secure online space for educators to communicate, collaborate and share resources and knowledge.

Recommendation 9

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>9. Create ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers, teacher educators, and administrators on the revised State standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The Regents and the Department have consistently recommended that the state make meaningful and significant investments to provide high-quality professional development opportunities.➤ Request for \$45 million investment in professional development in 2016-2017.➤ It is critical that the governor and legislature follow through on this recommendation in the upcoming state budget.

Recommendation 10

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>10. Involve educators, parents, and other education stakeholders in the creation and periodic review of all State standards-aligned exams and other State assessments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The Department recently contracted with a new vendor to develop the grade 3-8 English language arts and mathematics tests. As part of this new contract, with Questar, the vendor will be required to engage hundreds of educators throughout the test development process.➤ The commencement-level Regents exams are fully developed by educators.

Recommendation 11

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
11. Gather student feedback on the quality of the new tests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The Department is interested in hearing recommendations from parents and stakeholders about how to best gather feedback from students, particularly how to address the challenge of receiving feedback from students in the lowest grades of test administration (i.e., grades 3 and 4).

Recommendation 12

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>12. Provide ongoing transparency to parents, educators, and local districts on the quality and content of all tests, including but not limited to publishing the test questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Last June, after years of advocacy by the Regents and the Department, \$8.4 million was secured to reduce field testing. This is a necessary component to the Department's ongoing plans to eventually release all test questions that contribute to students' scores in some future year.➤ Even without the requested funding, the Department has over the past few years released 50 percent of questions from the grades 3-8 tests.

Recommendation 13

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>13. Reduce the number of days and shorten the duration for standards-aligned State standardized tests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The Commissioner has announced that the Department will decrease the number of test questions on the grades 3-8 English language arts (ELA) and mathematics tests.➤ The Department will explore whether reducing the number of days spent testing as recommended by the Governor's Task Force (in addition to shortening the duration of the exams) is feasible, being mindful of any unintended consequence such as requiring students to spend a greater portion of any single day in testing.

Recommendation 14

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
14. Provide teachers with the flexibility and support to use authentic formative assessments to measure student learning.	<p>➤ This is consistent with the Commissioner’s recommendation presented to the Board at the November 2015 meeting, which recommended: <i>“Convene a Next Generation Assessments Commissioner Advisory Council to advise and provide recommendations on implementation of adaptive testing and embedded performance-based tasks.”</i></p>

Recommendation 15

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>15. Undertake a formal review to determine whether to transition to untimed tests for existing and new State standardized tests aligned to the standards.</p>	<p>➤ The Commissioner recommended at the November 2015 Board meeting: <i>“Gather input from the field regarding whether to allow students who are meaningfully engaged in the task to continue working on the ELA and mathematics tests as long as they need beyond the standard administration window.”</i></p>

Recommendation 16

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
16. Provide flexibility for assessments of Students with Disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="975 365 1862 796">➤ The Regents and Department have submitted multiple waivers to USED for flexibility from the federal testing requirements for students with disabilities. Our flexibility waiver requests have been denied.<li data-bbox="975 875 1831 1239">➤ With the recent enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Department will review new provisions which may extend new assessment options for students with disabilities.

Recommendation 17

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
17. Protect and enforce testing accommodations for Students with Disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The Department will work with the field to identify cases where testing accommodations have not been enforced and will issue guidance as necessary to ensure school districts and educators are properly enforcing these accommodations.

Recommendation 18

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>18. Explore alternative options to assess the most severely disabled students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ In October 2015, the Regents adopted a \$2.9 million budget request to improve the assessment of students with disabilities.➤ It is critical that the governor and legislature follow through with this recommendation and provide necessary funding in the 2016-2017 state budget so that advancements in assessments for students with disabilities are not jeopardized.

Recommendation 19

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>19. Prevent students from being mandated into Academic Intervention Services based on a single test.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ In September 2015, the Department moved forward a regulation to not require a district to significantly increase the number of students to whom they would be required to provide AIS as a consequence of the implementation of the more rigorous higher learning standards.➤ The Department will establish a committee during the 2015-16 school year to examine the effectiveness of AIS and to make recommendations about revisions to AIS regulations for 2016-17.

Recommendation 20

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
20. Eliminate double testing for English language learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="993 365 1870 694">➤ The Regents and Department have been fighting for flexibility from the federal testing requirements for English language learners, but SED federal flexibility waiver requests have been denied.<li data-bbox="993 768 1870 1150">➤ With the recent enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Department will review new provisions which we believe will extend new conditions related to assessments for English language learners.

Recommendation 21

Task Force Recommendation	Regents/SED Action
<p>21. Until the new system is fully phased in (or until the start of the 2019-2020 school year), the results from assessments aligned to the current Common Core Standards, as well as the updated standards, shall only be advisory and not be used to evaluate the performance of individual teachers or students.</p>	<p>➤ The Commissioner and Regents will review a proposed emergency regulatory action to implement Transition Ratings for Teachers and Principals.</p>