

# **Preparing to Implement the Citywide Instructional Expectations: Ensuring curricula that are appropriate in all subjects *Exploring Expectations for content-area teachers***

If students are to succeed

*In this session, participants will explore the continuing importance of disciplinary content standards and discuss how to support content-area teachers, including social studies, science, the arts, libraries and career and technical education.*

## Participants will:

1. Understand the primary role of content area teachers in developing students' ability meet the learning standards of their discipline, while sharing responsibility for students' literacy and numeracy skills.
2. Discuss opportunities and challenges in the different content areas.
3. Understand distinctions between content area standards, content area reading and disciplinary literacy.
4. Discuss with peers the guidance, systems and structures necessary to meaningfully engage content area teachers in simultaneously advancing both the Common Core and disciplinary standards and practices.

# Summary of 2013-14 Citywide Instructional Expectations

- **Prepare:** Set up to meet higher standards
  - Ensure curricula are aligned to standards in all content areas. (QI 1.1, 2.2)
  - Prepare to implement a new system of teacher evaluation and development. (QI 4.1, 4.2)
  - Organize the school to meet the needs of all students.
    - Establish an instructional focus. (QI 1.2, 3.1, 3.4)
    - Ensure school time is used strategically. (QI 1.3, 4.2)
    - Plan for both short-term and sustained professional learning experiences. (QI 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2)
- **Implement:** Move students toward meeting higher standards
  - *Students:* Experience rigorous instruction. (QI 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 3.4)
  - *Teachers:* Shift classroom practice. (QI 1.2)
  - *School leaders:* Actively support teacher growth. (QI 1.2, 4.1, 4.2)
- **Assess:** Review evidence of meeting higher standards
  - Create systems to look for evidence of growth and gaps and make adjustments. (QI 2.2, 4.2, 5.1)

# PREPARE: SET UP TO MEET HIGHER STANDARDS

**Ensure curricula are aligned to standards in all content areas. (QI 1.1, 2.2)**

- **In PreK–9 ELA and math**, ensure curricula are aligned to the Common Core standards.
- **In other grades and content areas**, ensure curricula are aligned to the applicable content standards.<sup>6</sup>

## What do we mean by “applicable content standards”?

- NYSED has commencement-level learning standards in the following subject areas:
  - ELA; social studies; math, science, and technology;
  - The arts (including visual arts, music, dance and theater);
  - Languages Other Than English; health, physical education, family and consumer sciences; and career development and occupational studies.
- The Common Core standards are the first set of standards NYSED has adopted to align to college and career readiness expectations.
- Looking ahead, the NYSED will consider revisions to standards in:
  - Social Studies (draft NYSED K-12 Framework and Council of Chief State School Officers College, Career, and Civic Life frameworks),
  - Science (Next Generation Science Standards), and
  - The Arts (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards), among others.

# Teachers and teacher teams will:

- **Shift classroom practice.** ([QI 1.2](#))

In the 2013–14 school year, teacher teams should focus on changes to classroom practice. In the first year of the transition to the Common Core (2011–12), teachers embedded a performance task into at least one unit. In the second year (2012–13), they worked to integrate selected shifts into at least two units. This work laid a strong foundation for shifting pedagogy, including the use of performance tasks to assess learning.

- In all grades and content areas, plan and teach lessons and units that integrate the literacy and math Common Core instructional shifts where appropriate. While not every lesson in every content area will include integration of the shifts, students should experience all of the instructional shifts and associated standards over the course of the year. Teachers are responsible for students' content knowledge while at the same time sharing responsibility for students' literacy skills. Identify authentic opportunities for reading, writing, speaking, and listening in service of meeting the content standards of the discipline.

# What do we really expect of content area teachers?

- **In all grades and content areas**, plan and teach lessons and units that integrate the literacy and math Common Core instructional shifts *where appropriate*.
- While *not every lesson in every content area* will include integration of the shifts, students *should experience all of the instructional shifts* and associated standards over the course of the year.
- **Teachers are responsible for students' content knowledge** while at the same time *sharing responsibility for students' literacy skills*.
- Identify authentic opportunities for reading, writing, speaking, and listening *in service of meeting the content standards of the discipline*.

[PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION ]

# Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas

In order to integrate reading and writing instruction successfully into the academic disciplines, district, state, and federal policymakers must ensure that:

1. They define the roles and responsibilities of content area teachers clearly and consistently, stating explicitly that it is not those teachers' job to provide basic reading instruction.
2. Members of every academic discipline define the literacy skills that are essential to their content area and which they *should* be responsible for teaching.
3. All secondary school teachers receive initial and ongoing professional development in teaching the reading and writing skills that are essential to their own content areas.

**Your role as principal is to support teachers in developing and refining these skills.**

# Distinguishing Two Approaches to Secondary Literacy Instruction

- **Content Area Reading**

- Has long history in education (1920s)
- Many secondary teachers have preparation in content area reading
- Lots of books and resources for teachers
- Comes from field of reading education
- Every teacher a teacher of reading
- Major focus is on teaching general reading strategies or skills that can be adapted and applied to distinct reading situations (focus is specifically on learning)
- Has a positive research base, but not a very successful history in schools

- **Disciplinary Literacy**

- Not the hip new name for content area reading
- Each discipline possesses its own language, purposes, and ways of using text that students should be inducted into
- There are special skills and strategies needed for students to make complete sense of texts from the disciplines
- As students begin to confront these kinds of texts (especially in middle school and high school), instruction must facilitate their understanding of what it means to read disciplinary texts

# Jig Saw Activity

- **Group 1 – By Discipline**
  - Break into groups by Arts, Science & Social Studies
  - Facilitators will engage with discipline specific activity
    - Arts: *Cinderella Text Engagement Activity*
    - Social Studies: *Lunchroom Fight* activity
    - Science: *Solids and Holes* probe
- **Group 2 – Across Disciplines**
  - Organize groups across all disciplines
  - Share out learnings from Group 1
    - What is common across disciplines, what is different?
  - Record Opportunities & Challenges
  - What guidance should be provided to teachers?
    - Themes to include in discipline specific letters?
    - Other forms of support that would be helpful?

# Conclusion

- Content teachers will need to emphasize aspects of literacy that they have not often emphasized in the past (these are disciplinary standards—the idea is not teach students general reading skills and strategies, but to teach unique or specialized aspects of literacy use in the disciplines)
- Need to make sure students have opportunities to engage in the challenging reading and writing of the disciplines in ways that are appropriate to the disciplines (text needs to be an important part of the instructional routines of these subjects)

# Appendix

# Instructional Shifts

- The instructional shifts identify the major shifts in curriculum and instruction to align with the Common Core. The six instructional shifts in Mathematics and the six instructional shifts in ELA/Literacy articulated by the [New York State Department of Education](#) and the three instructional shifts in Mathematics and the three instructional shifts in ELA/Literacy outlined by [Student Achievement Partners](#) help educators understand the changes in classroom instruction and curricular materials required to effectively implement the Common Core standards.
- For the 2012-13 school year, teachers were asked to explore ways to focus on these shifts:
  - In math require fluency, application and conceptual understanding; and
  - In ELA, social studies, and science require students to ground reading, writing, and discussion in evidence from text.

## Crosswalk of Common Core Instructional Shifts: ELA/Literacy

Both the 6 instructional shifts articulated by the NY State Department of Education and the 3 instructional shifts outlined by Student Achievement Partners help educators understand the major changes required by the Common Core in terms of curricular materials and classroom instruction in ELA/Literacy and Mathematics.

**6 Shifts:** EngageNY  
www.engageny.org

**3 Shifts:** Student Achievement Partners  
www.achievethecore.org

**1: PK-5, Balancing Informational & Literary Texts:** Students read a true balance of **informational** and **literary** texts. Elementary school classrooms are, therefore, places where students **access the world – science, social studies, the arts and literature** – through text. At least 50% of what students read is **informational**.

**2: 6-12, Knowledge in the Disciplines:** **Content area teachers** outside of the ELA classroom **emphasize literacy experiences** in their planning and instruction. Students learn through **domain-specific texts in science and social studies** classrooms – rather than referring to the text, they are expected to learn from what they read.

**4: Text-based Answers:** Students have **rich and rigorous conversations** which are dependent on a common text. Teachers insist that classroom experiences stay **deeply connected to the text** on the page and that students develop habits for making **evidentiary arguments** both in conversation, as well as in writing to **assess comprehension of a text**.

**5: Writing from Sources:** Writing needs to **emphasize use of evidence to inform or make an argument** rather than the personal narrative and other forms of decontextualized prompts. While the narrative still has an important role, students develop skills through **written arguments** that **respond to the ideas, events, facts, and arguments** presented in the texts they read.

**3: Staircase of Complexity:** In order to prepare students for the **complexity of college and career ready texts**, each grade level requires a **"step" of growth on the "staircase"**. Students read the **central, grade appropriate text** around which instruction is centered. Teachers are **patient**, create **more time and space** in the curriculum for this **close and careful reading**, and provide appropriate and necessary **scaffolding and supports** so that it is possible for students reading below grade level.

**6: Academic Vocabulary:** Students constantly **build the vocabulary** they need to **access grade level complex texts**. By focusing strategically on **comprehension of pivotal and commonly found words** (such as "discourse," "generation," "theory," and "principled") and less on esoteric literary terms (such as "onomatopoeia" or "homonym"), teachers **constantly build students' ability to access more complex texts** across the content areas.

**1: Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts**

**2: Reading and writing grounded in evidence from text**

**3: Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary**

# Crosswalk of Common Core Instructional Shifts: Mathematics

**6 Shifts:** EngageNY  
[www.engageny.org](http://www.engageny.org)

**3 Shifts:** Student Achievement Partners  
[www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org)

**1: Focus:** Teachers use the power of the eraser and significantly **narrow and deepen** the **scope** of how time and energy is spent in the math classroom. They do so in order to **focus deeply** on only the **concepts** that are **prioritized in the standards** so that students reach **strong foundational knowledge** and **deep conceptual understanding** and are able to **transfer mathematical skills** and understanding **across concepts and grades**.

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**1: Focus** strongly where the Standards focus

**2: Coherence:** Principals and teachers **carefully connect** the **learning within and across grades** so that, for example, fractions or multiplication spiral across grade levels and **students can build new understanding onto foundations** built in previous years. Teachers can begin to count on **deep conceptual understanding of core content** and build on it. Each standard is not a new event, but an **extension of previous learning**.

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**2: Coherence:** **Think** across grades, and **link** to major topics within grades

**3: Fluency:** Students are expected to have **speed and accuracy** with simple calculations; teachers structure class time and/or homework time for students to **memorize**, through repetition, **core functions** (found in the attached list of fluencies) such as multiplication tables so that they are **more able to understand** and **manipulate more complex concepts**.

**4: Deep Understanding:** Teachers teach more than "how to get the answer" and instead support students' ability to **access concepts** from a **number of perspectives** so that students are able to see math as more than a set of mnemonics or discrete procedures. Students **demonstrate deep conceptual understanding of core math concepts** by **applying** them to **new situations** as well as **writing and speaking about their understanding**.

**5: Application:** Students are expected to use math and **choose the appropriate concept for application** even when they are not prompted to do so. Teachers provide opportunities at all grade levels for students to **apply math concepts in "real world" situations**. Teachers in **content areas** outside of math, particularly science, ensure that students are using math - at all grade levels - to **make meaning of and access content**.

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**3: Rigor:** Require **fluency, application, and deep understanding**

**6: Dual Intensity:** Students are **practicing and understanding**. There is more than a balance between these two things in the classroom - both are occurring with intensity. Teachers create opportunities for students to participate in "drills" and make use of those skills through **extended application of math concepts**. The amount of time and energy spent **practicing and understanding** learning environments is driven by the specific **mathematical concept** and therefore, varies throughout the given school year.