



**August 3, 2012**

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you are having a restful and productive summer. As you prepare for the upcoming school year, I am writing to explain some of the supports available for you to advance this year's [citywide instructional expectations](#).

**Instructional Leads:** Many of you have already begun to leverage the knowledge and influence of key staff leading the instructional work in your schools. In 2012-13, we are asking all schools to formally designate school-based Instructional Leads for the implementation of the citywide instructional expectations.

With the help of network teams, Instructional Leads will develop expertise in the Common Core standards, the implementation of the special education reform, and the use of a common framework for teaching, as well as in how to integrate these elements to support school leadership in moving the school's instructional agenda forward. Identifying these educators recognizes their leadership and positions them as additional supports for teachers in your school. Depending on each school's needs, network teams may offer Instructional Leads training sessions or in-school support, or identify additional external supports as appropriate.

Instructional Leads may be grade-level team leaders, department chairs, or other teacher team leaders; they may be teachers, school-based coaches, or administrators. In some cases Instructional Leads may also be involved in more intensive initiatives, such as the Common Core Fellows, or play a critical role in programs ranging from the iZone to the Expanded Success Initiative. Some Instructional Leads might also apply for the teacher leadership program, a new initiative that we will share more information about later this month.

Please work with your network to designate two to eight school-based educators as Instructional Leads, including a special education Instructional Lead (who will also sit on your [School Implementation Team](#)), for the 2012-13 school year. You will be able to designate Instructional Leads in Galaxy starting the week of August 13 and should do so by the end of September. All schools received funding for the implementation of the citywide instructional expectations that can be used in support of Instructional Leads; please refer to the [funding allocation \(SAM 40\)](#) for additional details and parameters associated with this funding source.

**Instructional Resources:** A coherent curriculum that teachers know well is critical to student success. We encourage schools to maintain continuity with curriculum as teachers shift their instruction to transition to the Common Core and implement the 2012-13 citywide instructional expectations; schools may choose to modify existing units of study—engaging in cycles of



inquiry and looking closely at student work to make adjustments to curriculum, assessment, and instruction—or use units from the [Common Core Library](#) or other sources.

Educators may access the [Common Core Library](#) for new [instructional bundles](#), [curriculum guidance for mathematics](#), [professional development materials](#) that can be used with teacher teams, and [videos of teacher practice](#). Continue to visit the [Common Core Library](#), as new resources will be added throughout the summer and fall.

In addition, New York State has posted [curriculum maps in math and ELA for grades PK-5](#) on their Web site, [EngageNY](#), and will be releasing Common Core-aligned PK-12 curriculum maps. Over the course of the [upcoming school year](#), New York State is also expected to release accompanying curricular modules in math and ELA every few months. Each curricular module will include units that cover 25 percent of the school year as well as day-to-day lesson plans that include student- and teacher-facing materials. Schools are welcome to use these modules to support implementation of the citywide instructional expectations, in consultation with network teams. Please note that accompanying texts and student-facing materials for modules may need to be purchased separately and/or downloaded and copied when schools do not have the specified resources.

Our students count on us to ensure they are on track—at every grade level—to graduate from high school ready to face the challenges of higher education, the workplace, and life. This work is demanding, and I appreciate that you and your school teams are working relentlessly on behalf of your students. I encourage you to reach out to your network team, or to me, with any additional questions or concerns.

Best,

Shael Polakow-Suransky  
Chief Academic Officer