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1. What do you envision this work will look like over the course of the school year?

In the spring/summer of 2011:

- Adopt Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, or leverage an existing research-based teaching framework that articulates clear expectations, to serve as the focus for observations and feedback.
- Explore ways to free up time for school leaders to engage in classroom observations and feedback cycles.
- Strategically determine which teachers will implement Common Core-aligned tasks and units to ensure that all students complete at least one literacy and one math task.
- Review curriculum to determine when in the winter of 2011-12 to implement the Common Core-aligned units and culminating tasks.
- Identify process for collecting student work aligned to selected Common Core standards (from spring or fall 2011) and plan for fall study in teacher teams.

By early fall of 2011:

- Begin to engage in regular cycles of observation and feedback linked to the adopted teaching framework (throughout the course of the year).
- Analyze the selected Common Core standards to identify gaps in both curriculum and student knowledge/ability as evidenced by student work. (Schools may choose to select student work from the spring of 2011 and save it to discuss in the fall or use student work from the fall of 2011.)
- Select tasks and plan the integration of the tasks into the curriculum, ensuring that planned instruction will support the success of all students. For both the task and the unit, schools can:
 - Use or adapt the centrally-provided examples; or
 - Develop a unit or align an existing unit and task to the Common Core by using the centrally-provided shells and/or guidelines.

From late fall of 2011 to early spring of 2012:

- Implement the literacy and math culminating tasks embedded in Common Core-aligned units.
- Examine student work resulting from Common Core-aligned tasks. After noting trends and areas for refinement in teacher practice and planning, share lessons learned among school staff and across schools through the network structure.
- Continue observation and feedback cycles.

During the late spring and summer of 2012:

- Leverage lessons learned throughout the year to revise observation and feedback cycles, professional development, and curricula for the following school year. [Back to top](#)

2. *How will accountability tools evolve to align with implementation of the citywide instructional expectations?*

Progress Reports: The Progress Report will integrate new measures designed to recognize and encourage schools that are teaching higher-order skills. The 2010-11 Progress Report will include new metrics for how well high schools prepare students for college and careers, and how well middle school students perform in their core courses. These metrics will be reported but not scored in 2010-11, and will be incorporated as scored metrics for the 2011-12 school year. The Progress Report will be fully aligned to the Common Core standards for the 2014-15 school year, when students will take state tests aligned to the Common Core.

Quality Review: In 2010-11, the Quality Review has emphasized multi-year planning to revise professional development, curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices so that schools are moving toward meeting the expectations of the Common Core for teachers and students. In 2011-12, the Quality Review rubric and process will be revised to align to the 2011-12 instructional expectations. Specifically, schools undergoing a Quality Review, Peer Review, or New School Quality Review will need to show evidence that all students are engaged in Common Core-aligned tasks during the year. Depending on the date of a school's review, this could involve reviewing the analysis of student work from the fall or previous spring to determine areas of need and curricular gaps, and/or the analysis of Common Core-aligned culminating tasks, student work, and related curriculum from the winter. The expectation of teacher teams using student work and data to revise and improve their practices will continue, as will the expectation of school leadership using this information to impact their goals and action planning as full implementation of the Common Core in 2014-15 approaches. Reviewers will also ask questions regarding how the evolving expectations of the Common Core are being integrated into the teacher support and supervision system of the school such that teachers are regularly receiving high-quality formative feedback that improves their instructional practice for students. [Back to top](#)

3. *How do the instructional expectations relate to collaborative inquiry?*

As we've seen in schools across the city, making time for teacher teams to engage in the collaborative inquiry process is a high-leverage practice that can produce both improved results for student

achievement and improvement in teacher practice. The inquiry process should guide teacher teams as they implement Common Core-aligned units and culminating tasks and school leaders as they provide teachers with relevant feedback about their practice. In other words, schools should not think of this work as a replacement for, or an addition to, inquiry. Rather, they should leverage the inquiry process and existing teacher team structures to do this work. [Back to top](#)

4. How do I find the time to do this work and how can I get assistance in this area?

In a difficult budget year, effective use of school time is paramount and challenging. We will continue to work to reduce the burden of administrative tasks on principals that prevent you from spending a significant percentage of their time in classrooms. While most school schedules for 2011-12 are already set, here are some things schools can do in the future: 1) Create blocks of time for teachers to meet through the implementation of innovative programming. For example, with a school-based option (SBO) and considering parental and busing needs, schools can increase the length of the school day for students four days a week in order to reduce the length of the school day one day a week. This early student dismissal creates time for teachers to engage in professional activities for a sustained block of time on a regular basis. 2) Use daily professional periods (circular 6) to provide a menu of professional choices for teachers related to the 2011-12 instructional expectations. 3) Use SBOs to allow teachers to meet in teams and engage in collaborative inquiry during one extended-time session a week. Within every network, there are principals who have figured out how to use time innovatively. Networks can leverage this existing talent to support schools in need of this expertise. We will explore ways in which to provide direct support to networks and schools around use of time throughout the coming year. [Back to top](#)

5. How can schools help all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, successfully engage in rigorous Common Core-aligned tasks?

These expectations are part of our commitment to supporting students with disabilities through our special education reform. All students will benefit from tasks designed using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. UDL-designed assessments give students the best opportunity to succeed by presenting information in multiple ways (e.g., large-print text), allowing students to process a problem or task using a variety of approaches (e.g., different strategies for learning addition), and engaging students in multiple ways (e.g., providing tasks that pique students' interests). Schools will also need to provide English language learners with the appropriate scaffolds to ensure both language and content knowledge development. These scaffolds might include sentence starters, writing frameworks, semantic maps, and the use of realia and pictures. Network teams can support schools with this work, and staff from the Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners are also working to develop resources. [Back to top](#)

6. Why are we using Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching as the teacher competency framework?

With input from the school leaders and teachers in the 2010-11 Teacher Effectiveness pilot, we selected Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* because it is comprehensive and nationally recognized for accurately and reliably looking at teachers' instructional practice and connecting it to professional development. Other large urban districts that use Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* include Chicago, Cincinnati, Clark County, NV (Las Vegas), Pittsburgh, Prince George's County, MD, and Hillsborough County, FL. Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* is available in ARIS Learn: <https://learn.arisnyc.org/content/Teacher%20Competencies.pdf> [Back to top](#)

7. How can schools get started with Danielson's Framework for Teaching?

Ultimately, Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, like other research-based frameworks is a cohesive whole. However, it is important to choose an entry point. Schools can choose to engage with any

competencies from Danielson’s *Framework* or from another framework, but we recommend the below competencies as a starting point. We selected these six competencies because in the 2010-11 Teacher Effectiveness pilot these competencies generated rich discussion among teachers and school leaders about teacher practice and also capture critical teaching skills and behaviors necessary for preparing students for the demands of the Common Core. We will focus our support on these six competencies in the 2011-12 Talent Management pilot. Visit ARIS Learn (visit <http://www.arisnyc.org/> and click the “Learn” tab) to explore these and other Danielson competencies. [Back to top](#)

Selected Competencies from Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*

Competency	Elements
1e: Designing Coherent Instruction	Learning activities, instructional materials and resources, instructional groups, lesson and unit structure
2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning	Importance of the content, expectations for learning and achievement, student pride in work
2d: Managing Student Behavior	Expectations, monitoring of student behavior, response to student misbehavior
3b: Questioning and Discussion	Quality of questions, discussion techniques, student participation
3c: Engaging Students in Learning	Activities and assignments, grouping of students, instructional materials and resources, structure and pacing
3d: Using Assessment in Instruction	Assessment criteria, monitoring of student learning, feedback to students, student self-assessment and monitoring of progress

8. What does high-quality feedback to teachers look like?

- Specific and evidence-based: gives facts, low inference evidence; analysis and interpretation justified by evidence
- Selective: prioritizes 1-2 important practices to improve student learning; aligned to teaching framework
- Actionable: identifies clear actions to be taken in the next two weeks to improve practice; next steps are developmental and specific
- Timely/time-bound: feedback within 48 hours of observation; follow-up in set timeframe
- Degree of importance: communicates level of concern (via rating and urgency of changes needed)

To learn more about strategies for providing teacher feedback, please visit the Providing Teacher Feedback and Time Management Learning Opportunities in ARIS Learn (visit <http://www.arisnyc.org/> and click the “Learn” tab). [Back to top](#)

9. How many observations should we do?

Research and our Teacher Effectiveness pilot show that frequent observations of each teacher's practice can provide school leaders with a deep understanding of their teachers’ strengths and weaknesses, which enables them to provide more targeted feedback and support, accelerating the pace of improvement and impact on students for all of their teachers.

In the pilot, where school leaders observed each teacher on average every 4 to 8 weeks, 82 percent of school leaders indicated their teachers are now receiving feedback that is helping them to improve. Note

that these observations do not have to be formal observations—the goal is to get into the habit of doing quick, short observations with informal, useful feedback. [Back to top](#)

10. Why are so many short observations recommended?

Research on teacher performance shows that feedback on teaching practice is most helpful when it is both frequent and timely. Currently, many teachers receive feedback too rarely and too late—often not until the end of the year—which is of little help to improving practice. In the new model, frequent and shorter observations will lead to the type of timely feedback that will best support teachers in their professional practice. [Back to top](#)

11. What exactly is required: the implementation of a task, or an entire unit?

While the focus is on engaging students in Common Core-aligned culminating tasks, it is imperative that the tasks are embedded in units of study that are also aligned to the new standards. Rather than asking teachers to drop a task into the semester without context, this work is intended to encourage analysis of student and teacher work to understand what alignment looks like. We have learned through this year's Common Core pilots that beginning with rigorous assessments drives significant shifts in curriculum and pedagogy. Resources are available in the Common Core Library, which will continue to be updated as we develop more resources: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/Toolkit/>. [Back to top](#)

12. Why have these particular Common Core standards been selected?

These standards were selected in part because tasks addressing these standards will engage students in the deep reasoning and higher-order thinking required for college and careers. In the terms of Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK), these tasks will often reach DOK Levels 3 or 4 by asking students to develop logical arguments, propose and evaluate solutions to problems, analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources, apply concepts to new situations, and examine and explain alternative perspectives across a variety of sources. Read more about Depth of Knowledge: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/Toolkit/Assessment/Rigor/>. [Back to top](#)

13. How can schools get started on Common Core alignment?

The Common Core Library (CCL) now has a set of resources to help you get started. Go to <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/Work/default.htm> to find a "surfacing gaps" activity, providing for teacher teams a protocol to look at student work and a teacher's task previously distributed to principals. Through comparing the evidence of student thinking in the work to the expectations of the selected Common Core standards you can identify areas for refinement in curriculum and instructional supports for the Common Core-aligned tasks you will implement in the winter/spring.

If you do not have current student work to review, you will also find on the same CCL page sample tasks and student work that can be used as "diagnostic" assessments. These resources (drawn from the Common Core appendices) provide opportunities for your students to attempt reading, writing, or mathematical thinking aligned to the selected standards. Reviewing this work can also serve as a way to surface gaps and/or create a baseline of where different students (and groups of students) are with regard to the Common Core. [Back to top](#)

14. How long should the Common Core-aligned tasks and units be?

The length of the Common Core-aligned culminating task and embedded unit will vary and depends on a number of factors (e.g., developmental appropriateness, number of concepts to be introduced). For teachers involved in the Common Core pilots, it generally took one to three instructional days for students to complete their responses to the culminating task and units typically lasted two to six weeks.

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15. Why have these specific Common Core standards been prioritized in literacy?

The authors of the Common Core have pointed to the issues of text complexity in informational text and making an argument based on those texts as the key challenges in the Common Core. In K-5 classrooms today, less than 10% of what students read is informational; the vast majority of texts are fiction/narrative. However, by 4th grade, students will be expected to be reading at least 50% informational texts when the Common Core standards are fully implemented (which also aligns with the NAEP framework). In addition, today's middle school students often write opinion pieces and reflective personal histories, and secondary students typically learn to master the task of creating a thesis and five-paragraph essay without clear references to informational texts. The Common Core standards, in contrast, expect students to write to inform and argue with evidence, supporting claims and debunking counterclaims in a logical, detailed analytical piece. Thus, we need to begin exposing our students to this type of task, and supporting them accordingly, in a staircase fashion moving up through the grade levels.

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16. For the selected standards, why are there two options for grades 3-8: a written analysis of informational texts to meet a reading standard OR a written opinion or argument based on an analysis of information?

One goal of the 2011-12 citywide instructional expectations is to engage students more frequently in both analyzing informational texts and writing arguments in response to those texts, two skills that are critical for college and career readiness. Analyzing informational texts and developing an argument based upon analysis of those texts within a single task is complex and aspirational. At present, schools can work through this complexity by selecting one of two options for grades 3-8. Through the first option, schools assess student work against the targeted Common Core standards for reading informational texts through a written response. In other words, students show their understanding of an informational text through a written response, but the writing itself is not formally assessed against a specific Common Core standard for writing. Through the second option, both comprehension of the informational text and students' skills in expressing an opinion or argument are assessed against the appropriate Common Core standards in reading informational texts and writing. [Back to top](#)

17. How will the literacy expectations align with curricula my school uses?

In literacy, there will be task samples that can often be incorporated into existing curricula. In some cases, teachers may need to adapt the task by selecting different texts or modifying the prompt to fit these tasks into their existing scope and sequence. However, in doing so, they should take steps to ensure that the cognitive demand of the adapted task matches that of the targeted Common Core standard. Ensuring that students have success with these tasks will often require teachers to upgrade their units of study. [Back to top](#)

18. Why have these specific Common Core standards of practice been prioritized in math?

The standards for mathematical practices are one of the most distinct portions of the Common Core standards. Together, they paint a picture of a mathematically proficient student. We understand that the standards for mathematical practice are interconnected and a rich task may require students to demonstrate many of the practices. However, for the winter task, schools can focus on one or both of the selected high-leverage practices: model with mathematics (#4) and construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others (#3). Modeling is what real mathematicians do: using mathematics to represent and solve authentic problems in our world. Important in this process of problem solving is the ability to clearly construct and analyze mathematical arguments, evaluating and articulating the reasoning behind claims. Facility with these two practices will enable students to use mathematics to successfully analyze authentic problems and construct and defend logical solutions paths to problems,

demonstrating their mathematical thinking. Visit <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/mathematics/introduction/standards-for-mathematical-practice> for more detail on all of the mathematical practices. [Back to top](#)

19. How will the math expectations align with curricula my school uses?

In math, the task samples will be designed to align with core curriculum packages, but will also work with other programs. Because the selected mathematical practices and domains focus on core concepts fundamental to mathematics, we are confident that teachers can integrate rigorous tasks designed to assess these concepts into existing curricula sometime during the winter months. [Back to top](#)

20. What about social studies, science, art, and foreign language teachers?

The literacy task, by virtue of focusing on informational text and argument writing, can cut across disciplines. While the involvement of a school's literacy coaches and ELA teachers will be important, the literacy task can be grounded in other coursework. Programs such as Teaching American History, Math Science Partnerships, the I-3 Arts Achieve Assessment pilots, and Library Services are opportunities to connect the literacy task across curricula. [Back to top](#)

21. What happens in schools where students have the same teacher for math and literacy across the disciplines (for example, most elementary school teachers)?

Schools will have flexibility. Out-of-classroom teachers may implement the task and unit for math or literacy, if appropriate. If a teacher of a self-contained classroom will implement both the math and literacy tasks, only one task and unit must be completed during the winter; the second task and unit can be completed anytime before the end of the school year. [Back to top](#)

22. How will the Periodic Assessment (PA) portfolio change to support the implementation of the Common Core?

As schools transition to full implementation of the Common Core and prepare for the changes to NYS tests, the PA portfolio is also evolving to help meet schools' data and assessment needs. The Common Core-aligned task will replace one formative assessment for students in grades 3-12 in the 2011-12 school year. Schools will still be expected to administer one predictive assessment (that aligns to the NYS standards and tests) and at least one additional formative assessment (the formative assessment can be Common Core- or NYS standards-aligned) to students in those grades. K-2 students will still experience the K-2 literacy assessments they have been administered previously. Additional information about the PA portfolio will be available in the PA Guide and on the PA Resources page on the Intranet: <http://intranet.nycoe.net/Accountability/Assessment/PeriodicAssessments/>. [Back to top](#)

23. Why is pre-K included? How will you ensure tasks and instructional supports for pre-K are developmentally appropriate?

The New York State Board of Regents demonstrated a commitment to building a P-12 continuum by passing the Common Core Standards for Pre-K ELA & Literacy and Math in January 2011. These standards also align to the NYS Pre-kindergarten Learning Standards. Read more on the NYSED website at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/. [Back to top](#)

State approval of these standards is an opportunity for NYC to develop a path for students toward college and career readiness that begins with high-quality early childhood education. The Office of Early Childhood Education is working to create tasks and instructional supports that reflect the developmental needs of young learners. For more information visit: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/EarlyChildhood>. [Back to top](#)

24. How do I know if a curricular program is Common Core-aligned?

As the national conversation around the Common Core continues, the design of aligned assessments and curricula is at an early stage. We are working with our external partners as well as those in the publishing community to ensure that resources and professional development opportunities are aligned with the Common Core. It is premature to rely on publishers' assertions that resources are "Common Core ready," as the work of reaching these higher standards begins in classrooms through the examination of student work. Support will be available over time; at present two documents from the Common Core authors, originally written to provide guidance to publishers, may be helpful to educators working on curriculum development and alignment in schools (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/Why/NYSStandards/default.htm>). [Back to top](#)

25. What other resources are available and where can I find them?

In addition to the instructional resources that are available through the Common Core Library (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/>), monthly Children First Intensive (CFI) professional development will focus cluster and network instructional teams on how to support schools in embedding tasks into units. The Periodic Assessment (PA) portfolio will also include sample tasks and related instructional resources.

ARIS Learn offers resources (videos, interactive modules, articles) that build understanding of prioritized Danielson *Framework for Teaching* competencies and support school leaders in providing effective feedback (visit <http://www.arisnyc.org/> and click the "Learn" tab).

We will post samples of instructional bundles aligned to the selected Common Core standards in literacy and mathematics on the Common Core Library (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/>) over the course of the summer. A sample at each grade band (i.e. K-2, 3-5, etc.) in literacy and math will be available by the beginning of July. A sample at each grade in literacy and math will be available in August. [Back to top](#)