



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Common Core Changes Approved by Regents

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS February 14, 2014

In December 2013, a Work Group of the Board of Regents P-12 Committee was charged with reviewing the feedback the Board of Regents and the State Education Department (“Department”) have received from various constituencies and presenting to the Board additional ideas to continue to improve the implementation of the CommonCore State Standards (“Common Core”) at the State and district level for the Board’s consideration. [Click here to view the full document provided by the New York State Education Department.](#)

### **Common Core Standards**

1. Periodically Review and Update the Common Core Learning Standards. Advocate for the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to convene states periodically to review and update – as appropriate – the Common Core standards. The review should include each state, including New York, gathering feedback from stakeholders including educators, higher education faculty, business leaders, parents, special education advocates, and bilingual education experts.

### **Professional Development**

2. Provide equitable funding for schools including appropriate funding for professional development. Advocate for the Governor and state legislature to adopt the Regents State Aid Proposal recommendation seeking funding for a Core Instructional Development Fund to support Common Core implementation and parent engagement activities (\$125 million in 2014-15, \$200 million in 2015-16, and \$200 million in 2016-17).

## State Assessments

3. Give high school students more time to meet the Common Core standards. Extend the phase-in for Common Core-aligned Regents examinations required for graduation so that the class of 2022 is the first that is required to pass English and mathematics Regents exams at college and career ready levels. In addition, provide flexibility with respect to the Regents Geometry Exam by allowing, similar to the flexibility offered at local discretion for the current school year in Algebra, the higher score to count for students who take the 2005 standards Geometry exam in addition to the Common Core-aligned Geometry exam through the January 2016 administration. Student performance will continue to be reported on a 0-100 scale.
4. Eliminate high stakes for students. Issue guidance indicating that (1) the Department neither requires nor encourages districts to make promotion or placement decisions using student performance on state assessments in grades 3-8; and (2) if districts choose to consider state assessments in grades 3-8 when making promotion or placement decisions, they should make adjustments to ensure students are not negatively impacted by the Common Core transition and should use multiple measures - not grades 3-8 state assessment results alone.
5. Reduce field testing and provide increased access to test questions. Advocate for the Governor and state legislature to adopt the Regents state budget priority request for \$8.4 million in new funding to eliminate multiple-choice stand-alone field testing and to allow the Department to print more versions of state tests so that more test questions may be released to teachers and parents.
6. Offer smarter testing options for students with disabilities. Advocate for a federal ESEA waiver from the United States Education Department (USED) to allow students with severe disabilities who are not eligible for the alternate tests to be assessed based on instructional

level rather than chronological age.

7. Offer smarter testing options for English language learners. Advocate for a federal ESEA waiver from USED to allow English language learners to be assessed via the language acquisition test (NYSESLAT) rather than the English language arts exam for their first two years.

8. Develop Native Language Arts assessments for Spanish-speaking ELLs. Advocate for the Governor and state legislature to adopt the Board of Regents state budget priority request for \$10 million in new funding to develop Native Language Arts assessments to provide districts the option of offering this assessment when it would best measure the progress of Spanish-speaking ELLs.

9. Clarify what new grades 3-8 test scores mean for students. Because student performance on the 2013 grades 3-8 tests was based on more rigorous standards, and therefore proficiency rates cannot be compared to scores from previous years, provide clarification for what Performance Level 2 means when aligned with Common Core Regents exam performance levels. The new Level 2 on the grades 3-8 ELA and math tests aligns to “On Track for Regents Exam Passing for Graduation” on Common Core Regents Exams (until the required passing score is raised to the college and career ready level).

10. Focus extra support on students that need it the most. Extend the Academic Intervention Services “hold harmless” provision applied in 2012-13 to 2013-14 and 2014-15 to better ensure that existing support services for students remain relevant and appropriate as New York implements the Common Core.

### **Local Assessments**

11. Reduce unnecessary tests. Conduct expedited review of Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan amendments where the changes reduce or eliminate unnecessary testing.
12. Eliminate traditional standardized tests in grades K-2. Disapprove APPR plans beginning in 2014-15 that include administration of traditional standardized tests in grades K-2 and remove all grade K-2 traditional standardized tests from the list of approved locally-selected student assessments for APPR purposes. (The state does not administer traditional standardized tests in K-2.)
13. Establish a 1 percent cap on time for locally-selected standardized testing. Limit the time students may spend on standardized tests to comply with districts' locally selected measures as part of APPR. (The federally required State assessments in grades 3-8 English Language Arts and Mathematics account for less than 1% of instructional time.)
14. Offer flexibility to districts to further reduce local testing time required by APPR. Allow the use of school-wide measures for APPR purposes for teachers of middle school social studies (grades 6-8) and science (grades 6-7).

### **Teacher and Principal Evaluation**

15. Prevent unfair negative consequences to teachers and principals. Provide that if a school district seeks to terminate an educator based on an ineffective rating resulting from student performance on Common Core assessments administered in the 2012-13 and/or 2013-14 school years, he or she may raise as a defense an alleged failure by the board of education to timely implement the Common Core by providing adequate professional development, guidance on curriculum, or other necessary supports to the educator during those school years.

### **Curriculum**

16. Provide new curricular resources for teachers of students with disabilities and English language learners. Develop additional companion materials to the modules focused on differentiated instructional practices and supports that may be utilized to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities and English language learners.

17. Create a “Teacher Portal.” Develop an online tool to allow educators from around the state to share curricular resources, including adaptations of modules.

18. Ensure IEPs are appropriate to student needs as Common Core is implemented. Issue guidelines for Committees on Special Education to ensure that Individualized Education Program (IEP) recommendations address key challenges related to a student’s disability and his or her ability to master the Common Core Learning Standards and provide resources and tools to guide lesson planning for teachers to ensure that they have considered and addressed the unique learning needs of students with disabilities in their delivery of instruction.

19. Provide new resources to parents of students with disabilities. Continue collaboration with the Commissioner’s Advisory Panel for Special Education and Special Education Parent Centers to develop a set of guiding questions for parents to use in IEP meetings and to ask teachers about how their children are being supported to progress in curricula that reflect the Common Core.