

**REGENTS COMMITTEE ON ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE,
SECONDARY AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Workforce Development System/Career Development and Occupational Studies Learning Standards

The report on New York's Workforce Development System will be released soon by the State Departments of Education and Labor to Governor George E. Pataki. The report provides a foundation for restructuring the many efforts in workforce preparation and training. It also sets new direction towards a customer-driven, demand-side system that responds to the needs of employers and jobseekers. Among jobseekers, the system will focus on emerging workers, current workers and transitional workers. To serve these various groups of workers, the system stresses a continuum of education and training for lifelong learning. This includes an endorsement for providing all workers with employability, academic and occupational skills and knowledge. The centerpiece of this preparation is the Regents learning standards for Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS).

The CDOS learning standards provide support for a variety of initiatives and activities focused on assisting educators to help students reach higher standards and meet more rigorous graduation requirements. National skill standards, developed by representatives from business/industry and education through the National Skill Standards Board, are reflected in the CDOS technical skills. Training to prepare teachers across New York State to pilot the Career Plan will begin in May and will result in a systemic kindergarten-adult documentation process for the achievement of career development skills and individual student career/life plans. Additional tools to assess the universal foundation skills and the achievement of rigorous technical skills are currently being investigated. The proposed, multi-faceted assessment approach will measure the quality of occupational and career development preparation and the success of integrating CDOS standards into the other State learning standards. The content of the CDOS learning standards does not lend itself to a single delivery system, but instead cuts across many disciplines along the K-12 continuum. This unique, yet critical set of skills requires an assessment system that ensures the delivery and attainment by all students.

High quality integrated learning initiatives are being encouraged to allow students to apply academic content in real world situations. These programs encourage students to use essential academic concepts, facts and procedures in applications related to life skills and the world of work. They include New Vision(s) pre-professional programs, the Automotive Youth Educational System initiative, and redesigned occupational education sequence options.

Outreach to the field to help educators in the implementation of the CDOS learning standards is being done in a variety of ways. Along with the learning standards, teacher resource guides and electronically disseminated learning experiences, the Occupational and Career Development Team is developing a field memo to address frequently asked questions regarding occupational education. In May, a teleconference will be broadcast statewide demonstrating the effectiveness of forming interdisciplinary partnerships to deliver both occupational education and

core academic content. A panel of educators will be brought in to explain how they have successfully integrated the knowledge and skills from within these two areas.

A comprehensive report on occupational education and the learning standards will be presented to the Regents EMSC Committee in June.

Legislative Hearing on School Libraries

On March 3, Commissioner Mills and Deputy Commissioners Kadamus and Huxley presented testimony on school library media programs to the Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Educational Technology. They emphasized the important role of school library media programs in realizing the learning standards and in making students effective users of ideas and information in a literacy rich environment. Three of the Regents legislative initiatives were highlighted: the electronic doorway library bill, full funding of Chapter 917 for library systems, and the increase of \$2 million in school library materials aid. Issues facing school library media programs and how the Department works with low-performing and SURR schools to improve their library media program were also discussed.

Regents Visiting Committee on Low-Performing Schools

In February, 10 members of the Regents Visiting Committee visited two former SURR schools that participate in a school-college collaboration with Hunter/Lehman College. Committee members met with representatives from the Chancellor's District and the Pathways to Teaching Program, which is designed to provide support to teachers, particularly uncertified teachers, in low-performing schools. Both PS 123 and PS 154 attribute their success in meeting performance targets and in being removed from SURR school status to the on-going support they receive through the Pathways program.

Task Force on School-Community Collaboration – New York City Judicial District Forums

The Task Force on School-Community Collaboration, under Chapter 402 of the Laws of 1997, authorizes the scheduling of regional forums throughout the 12 New York State judicial districts. To accomplish the scheduling and implementation of the New York City Judicial District Forums, staff worked with a committee of representatives of New York City and New York State agencies and systems that serve children and families in the areas of education, mental health, youth services, health, community development, substance abuse, juvenile justice and child welfare.

Since January 1998, judicial district forums were held in the boroughs of Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan and Staten Island. Each forum provided information on Regents initiatives, the Task Force on School-Community Collaboration legislative initiatives, and "best practices" in school-community collaborations in each borough. The partnerships selected to highlight how our communities can provide for children and families through collaborations with schools included School-Based Health Centers, Beacon Schools, Virtual "Y" Programs, Community Mediation Services, School-Based Mental Health Initiatives, On-Site Mental Health Services, Safe Streets/Safe Cities Anti-Drug Initiative and a Juvenile Justice Initiative. Community representatives that included State legislators, borough presidents, State and municipal government agencies, families, schools, community organizations and businesses have attended each judicial district forum. The Board of Regents was represented by Vice Chancellor McGivern (Brooklyn and Staten Island), Regent Levy (Manhattan) and Regent Sanford (Brooklyn and Queens). The judicial district forum for the borough of the Bronx will be held in the spring.

Artists and Teachers Partnership for Excellence Multiple Intelligences Project

The Office of New York City School and Community Services, in collaboration with the Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), awarded the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) an IDEA Grant. The NYFA, in partnership with the United Federation of Teachers/New York City Teacher Centers Consortium, offers professional development training on the use of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory (M.I.) that "all children have seven intelligences: linguistic, musical, logical, mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and intra and interpersonal."

Based on the low-performance of students in math and reading, Department staff has identified Schools Under Registration Review (SURR) in need of innovative strategies to improve the achievement of students in these areas. Two SURR schools from Community School District 12 in the Bronx have been selected to participate in the project, PS/MS 66 and PS 44. The targeted grades for this year's project are kindergarten through second grade, including bilingual, special and general education students.

The Artists and Teachers Partnership for Excellence Multiple Intelligences Project aims to improve students' performance in math and reading through the integrated use of the arts. The project offers special education, bilingual education and general education teachers and professional artists the unique opportunity to work collaboratively on curriculum-based projects designed to engage students in active learning. It also helps to develop the capacity of teachers to improve students' math and reading achievement through the use of integrated arts activities grounded in the Multiple Intelligences theory and alternative assessment. The NYFA will provide artists who will work in residence with the teachers and their students in a school art activity project using the MI theory and the curriculum framework in the area of math or reading. In addition, this year's activities will provide the opportunity for teachers to develop and publish a series of lesson plans using the MI theory. The plans will be disseminated to other teachers in the district.

Workshops on the Learning Standards

The third in a series of four full-day workshops on the learning standards was conducted on March 18 in New York City through the School Quality Review Initiative. One hundred and twenty representatives from SURR and low-performing schools participated in presentations from schools and community-based programs involved in applying the English Language Arts learning standards in the classrooms. The next session, scheduled for May 26, 1998, will focus on Career Development and Occupational Studies.

School Library System (SLS) Forums

Four SLS forums were held in March for the school library system's State-funded program. The SLS program connects building-level school media programs to the wider library and education community for resource sharing, staff development, and school library media program improvement. As part of the forums, Department staff made a presentation on *School Library Media Specialists as Facilitators of the New Learning Standards and Curriculum*. Participants were furnished with materials and copies of the program for turnkey training with school library media specialists. This program has the potential to reach all building-level school library media programs. These forums resulted from a collaborative effort between the Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education and the Office of Cultural Education.

Summer Institute on Leadership

The State Education Department, the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS), and the University at Albany will co-sponsor the second annual summer institute for school administrators. This year's event is centered on the theme of "Higher Standards Through Leadership." The response to last year's Institute was so positive that two sites have been chosen for 1998. The Institute will take place at Hudson Valley Community College, Troy, N.Y. on July 19 -21, and at Adelphi University, Garden City, Long Island, on August 2 - 4, 1998. Chancellor Hayden will welcome participants to the Troy institute and Regent Cohen will do the same at the Long Island institute.

The focus of this three-day institute continues to be to help administrators prepare for their role as leaders in improving student achievement in their schools. Updates on State initiatives will be highlighted on the first day. They include exploring the standards in relation to State assessments, universal prekindergarten, students with disabilities, and instructional technology. Hands-on work with sample test items from State assessments will be featured at both sites.

The aim of the institute is to give administrators practical information through demonstrations about standards, assessment, technology and teacher retraining. Therefore, day two and three offer numerous demonstrations of current best practices from school districts and universities throughout the State. These sessions provide practical information on meeting the learning standards through instructional technology, professional development, and restructuring

of schools. They offer strategies on how to use statewide data to support higher learning standards and how to maximize funding to support related programs.

May 1 Teleconference – What the New Thinking on Brain Development Means for Local Collaborations

For the second year in a row, Partners for Children will host a statewide teleconference on May 1, 1998 to highlight collaborative efforts that benefit children. The two-hour teleconference will begin at 9:00 a.m. and run until 11:00 a.m., followed by local forums. The focus will be on the importance of providing very young children with an active and stimulating environment. Several successful programs will be highlighted and a nationally renowned expert will be interviewed about significant research developments on the topic. Teleconference sites will be located across New York State.

New research indicates that appropriate verbal and tactile stimulation at an early age plays an important role in a child's cognitive development. This development is critical in preparing that child for his/her future education. At each of the teleconference sites, interested community leaders and organizations will have the opportunity to interact and learn how they can form collaborative programs in their community to carry out this important work. Several programs have successfully implemented the findings of this research and will be highlighted during the teleconference.

Reading Initiative

On February 11, the Department hosted the New York State Reading Symposium. The purpose of the Symposium was to provide a forum for a scholarly presentation of research on early reading acquisition which would lead to discussion of a statewide reading initiative. Summary materials from the Symposium are being sent to professional development networks, representatives of higher education and professional organizations, district superintendents, and school superintendents. The materials include a report by the Symposium Chair, Dr. P. David Pearson, and an edited videotape of the proceedings.

In the upcoming months, the Department will issue a draft policy statement intended to improve the collective and individual reading achievement of students, especially those in prekindergarten through grade three where early success can make a difference in shaping children's subsequent academic careers. The policy statement will identify elements of a sound early literacy program to guide schools in planning curricula, instruction, resources and services.

Together, the Symposium report and policy statement are designed to stimulate statewide and local conversations about improving programs for the State's youngest readers and to provide a valuable opportunity for each of us to expand our understanding of early reading instruction. The Department will encourage recipients of the Symposium material to provide opportunities for the school community to discuss its content as we continue to seek research-based guidance in improving the quality of early literacy programs.