

***PTO Common Core Presentation Follow-Up Q & A
(11/22/13)***

- 1. Module access is limited. Four modules currently available for 5th grade math and they are through 2.5 of them. What is the district's plan if the modules are not available when our teachers need them?**

In the event that our teachers reach a point in the curriculum that they have exhausted the available modules, we will use the curriculum map (which tells which standards are in the next units) and use other resource materials to design units. Teachers have experience doing this, and have done it for many years. We will support collaborative planning at the grade levels to organize existing/create new materials that could be used to teach those standards.

- 2. Staff development. What types of staff development opportunities for teachers and support staff to support the new curriculum?**

We are committed to professional growth opportunities for all of our staff. Both local and regional workshops have and will continue to be offered. These have focused on the standards themselves as well as on the modules and instructional strategies that are aligned. In addition, we have grade level, cross grade level and department meeting times and work sessions built into our routine. These are all in addition to the staff development days that are in our calendar that have focused on these areas.

- 3. Are teachers provided with enough time to learn the modules, come up with lesson plans that suit their students' needs to differentiate the instruction as needed?**

Whenever major curricular changes are made, we always feel like there is not enough time. However, teachers have two planning periods (many that cross over with other teachers that teach the same or similar things) built into our daily schedules. In addition, at the elementary school we have sessions for co-planning and collaboration available ½ day per month (minimum) and have honored additional time as needed. At the MS/HS there are weekly grade level and monthly department meetings. Teachers, as they always have, spend time outside of their regular work day preparing lessons.

4. Can we expect textbooks that correlate with the curriculum any time soon?

Textbook companies have had access to the common core standards for a couple of years now, and are working on development of aligned materials. We do not have a solid timeline on release of textbooks. The schools in the OCM BOCES region are working together to share resources and keep each other informed of any new materials that appear to be aligned. As we said at our meeting, we will continue to evaluate materials to see what best meets DCS needs as they become available.

5. The end point/goal of the curriculum is not available (ex math strategies- items the state will be look for on the exams). How are teachers able to prepare their kids the end point/goal when there is not a clear picture of what it is?

I believe this question is focused on the 'test' as the 'end/point' of the curriculum. With that in mind...There are sample and 'released' questions from last school year that are helping us have a better picture of what the assessment will look like. We also use data that maps student performance back to particular standards and review that alongside those questions. In the next few weeks we will have another resource that will help us further analyze the data to see what parts of questions that students struggled on. We now have curriculum materials and assessments that NYSED is supporting as being aligned (Modules) that provide us with a clearer picture of what we are reaching for.

6. With such a large focus on ELA and math, has it been challenging to 'fit in' other areas for learning (science, social studies, spelling etc)

The focus in elementary school has always been on ELA (includes Reading, writing, listening, speaking and language skills) and math as these are foundational skills that children need to be successful in other areas. These two areas do account for the majority of our instructional minutes, but our teachers work hard to keep the dedicated time in their schedules for science and social studies. In addition, many of the concepts in these areas can be taught using integrated cross curricular content. In MS/HS, the English, Math, Science and Social Studies classes are all currently taught in blocks and are given equitable time periods.

7. Can you please talk about 'student data requirements' :

a) Who our kid's info goes to?

Students testing information is sent to the regional information center and they transfer it to NYSED.

B) What is the info used for?

NYSED uses the student data to track student and district progress/growth and to assess the validity and reliability of test questions.

C) Can we say no don't share our kids info?

NYSED mandates that district maintain a student information system and submit required data on all students.

D) What info/data is given? i.e.: is my child's ID at school their social security number?

Social security numbers are **not used** for anything in our school. We do not collect SS #'s at time of registration and don't keep them on file. SS #'s are **not tied to our student information system in any way**. Each student in NYS has a unique student ID number that is completely separate from the social security number and not tied to it in any way. The unique student ID is what is used in reporting. The number is tied to the student's biographical information such as ethnicity, free/reduced lunch status

E) Do you have to give social security number to state connected to this data?

NO, we do not collect or use social security numbers for any school connected data.

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8. How can we as parents support the transition into this new curriculum?

As always, a parent being involved in their child's education as partners with us increases the child's chance of reaching his/her potential. Reading and talking with them about what they read helps to further comprehension. If your child has an interest, encourage them learn more about it by reading informational text with them. Point out how you use or see math used in everyday life situations brings value to learning math. Have them teach you what they learned in class that day. Have a set time and place for your children do complete homework. Have them sit in a place that you can be (like at the kitchen table while you are cooking) available to answer questions as needed.

Many of the teacher's have classroom web-sites that include assignments and other information about what they are currently doing in the classroom. If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact the teacher and ask. They would be happy to provide you with information.

There are specific resources around the standards and curriculum that can be found at www.engageny.com . They include ways to support your child in both ELA and math.

9. How do the scores on these tests effect a student's overall average and their promotion to the next grade?

In grades 3-8, the State tests do not have any impact on a student's grades or their promotion to the next grade. The scores are only used to identify if a student is in need of extra support (Academic Intervention Services). NYS also uses those scores to determine district performance and growth.

NYS continues to require a student is to pass 5 Regents exams in order to graduate: 1 Math, 1 Science, 1 ELA, Global History and Geography & Us History and Government. Specific information on passing score requirements can be found at www.nysed.gov .

Locally, the score on the regent's exam is counted in an overall course average the same way a local final exam would be (marking period averages (4) + score on regents' exam/5).