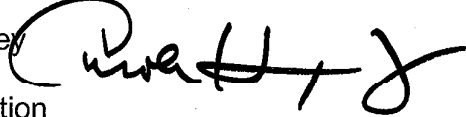




THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: Carole F. Huxley 

COMMITTEE: Cultural Education


TITLE OF ITEM: Deputy Commissioner's Report

DATE OF SUBMISSION: January 21, 2003

PROPOSED HANDLING: Information

RATIONALE FOR ITEM: Review of recent accomplishments

STRATEGIC GOAL: Goals 1-5

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY: Despite the constraints of the past year and the greater ones of the coming year, the Office of Cultural Education has made progress in realizing the Regents goals for OCE within their strategic plan for the Education Department. To maintain the gains already achieved and to continue to move forward will require us to tighten our focus on these major objectives and to develop additional strategies to support the efforts.

New Century Libraries:

- ◆ Using federal funding from the Library Services and Technology Act, funding that can sustain it for only one more year, **NOVEL** is now being used by more than 4,000 libraries of all types in New York. *Novel* has logged 7 million searches this year, up from 2 million the year before. This online electronic collection of library materials experienced a surge in use once it added a large collection designed expressly for young students, as well as many popular magazines and journals.
- ◆ **Public Library Districts** were created this year in 17 communities and an additional 25 libraries have expanded their service areas, giving 140,000 New Yorkers tax-supported local library service for the first time. These districts provide for direct voting on library budgets and library trustees, as well as making the service areas coterminous with school districts. Experience has shown that it takes about three years of hard work and education in the community before a successful vote to create a district. Legal and political complications are different in each situation, and in some districts school officials are concerned that the vote might draw funding away from schools. That fear has not been realized in existing public library districts; however, without the incentive funding of *New Century Libraries*, progress will be slow.

- ◆ **Education:** The Summer Reading Program for K-12 students increased participation by 39% this past year, from 577,000 to over 800,000, the second year in a row of substantial growth. The goal for this coming year is 1 million. The program is funded temporarily with federal funds.
- ◆ **Preservation and Access:** The New York Newspaper Project microfilmed its 3 millionth page of historical newspaper copy, a massive effort to preserve for future research all known newspaper editions in New York State dating back to the earliest extant number. The State Library's work has been supported for many years by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and is now deeply into its penultimate three-year effort, microfilming New York City and other Metropolitan New York newspapers. It is part of the United States Newspaper Program and forms a major contribution to the study of American history.

Renewal of the State Museum:

- ◆ **Exhibits:** An increase of about 55% in attendance this year has resulted from a series of new long-term exhibits and several short-term exhibits of high interest. The November 2001 installation of *"Windows on New York"* in November 2001, with its tribute to those lost in the World Trade Center, its overview of the regions of New York State and its working antique carousel, has continued to draw large numbers. Some 100,000 people have ridden the carousel. The *Fleet Great Art Series* continued with exhibits from the Metropolitan Museum and currently from the Whitney Museum. The installation of the first stage of the permanent *"World Trade Center: Rescue, Recovery, Response"* in September and the second stage, about to open, will continue to draw many somber and reflective visitors. A traveling exhibit on recovery from the disaster will begin its tour in the spring.
- ◆ The breadth of temporary exhibits in the Museum this past year reflect both the richness of New York's history and natural history and the depth of curators' expertise and abilities. *"Eye of the Storm,"* a remarkable watercolor chronicle of one Union soldier's experience of the Civil War; *"The Great American Circus,"* highlighting the Museum's great circus collection; *"Burgess Shale"* an absorbing look at our geologic past; and *"Magnum Photographers 9/11"* illustrate that variety.
- ◆ Upgrades of current long-term exhibits have included installation of additional interactive components, new painting and wall murals, signage and other infrastructure improvements. New plasma monitors will soon be installed for the video presentations. While major progress on new updated halls may take a good deal longer than originally planned, work that will support renewal will continue as funding becomes available.
- ◆ **Collection Care:** Improvements to the collection storage of the Museum's 6 million items included a "dry room" for fossils and other collections needing very low humidity and re-housing much of the history collection in new cabinets.

- ◆ **Research:** Over the past two years and before the staffing freeze began, the Museum was able to hire several new scientists to work on areas of particular importance and need. They, with their colleagues already on board, have secured more than \$2.5 million in grants and contracts and an additional \$4 million in interagency agreements to support our research. Staff authored or co-authored more than 63 peer-reviewed publications, including 8 books, 23 journal articles and 32 book chapters.
- ◆ **K-12 Education:** Geologists in the Museum hosted a second residential summer institute for earth science teachers. The summer teacher workshops, based on the Iroquois Long House and archeological fieldwork, were also a successful effort.
- ◆ New standards-based teachers' guides for the educational programs of the Museum are now completed and ready to supplement onsite classes with preparation and follow-up materials for teachers and students.

Renovation of the State Archives

- ◆ **Facilities:** The \$7.5 million renovation of the State Archives facilities, that will also house the State Library Special Collections, is on track to open late in 2004. The project involves the total gutting of the 79,000 square foot space, installation of an independent system to control temperature and humidity and creation of state-of-the-art research and classroom spaces, including interactive remote access.
- ◆ **Access:** The Archives' Website has been completely renovated, as well. It is a very rich site with materials for teachers, students, researchers and anyone interested in history. The most recent addition to the site is a set of digitized images of the evidence of Benedict Arnold's traitorous activity, discovered with the arrest of the British officer to whom he had entrusted detailed information about the American army's strength and location of their armaments.
- ◆ The Archives publication, *New York Archives*, has won several awards in its young life – not yet two years old. The most recent of these is the Gold CASE Award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, Northeast Regions I and II. The award is its highest award for magazine design.
- ◆ **Preservation:** The State Archives and the National Archives are co-chairing a documentation task force of over 30 cultural organizations from New York City in The World Trade Center Documentation Project, the purpose of which is to ensure that records relating to the disaster and its aftermath are identified and saved. To that end, the Archives has obtained a \$287,000 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, with a \$200,000 matching challenge before the Archives can accept the award.
- ◆ **Education:** The Verizon Foundation awarded the Archives a grant to expand its Liberty High School project that uses government records and archival documents to

support the teaching of English as a second language. Students and teachers in Yonkers, Albany, Syracuse and Buffalo will now participate. The records, teacher-training modules, web site and classroom materials have been developed for Spanish and for Chinese speaking students. The students, new immigrants, will study records that typically provide documentation of the history of their own ethnic group in New York and in the community and neighborhood in which they are now living. The inherent interest in learning about their new home and material in both their own language and in English produced strong motivation and learning results at Liberty High School in lower Manhattan, and we hope to see similar outcomes in the other cities.

Public Broadcasting

- ◆ **Access:** WNET in New York City and WLIW on Long Island have executed a merger that will maintain variety in programming while consolidating operations and administration. Elsewhere, station managers and their staffs are cooperating in developing joint "back room operations" and a statewide menu of educational programming, as well as exploring additional areas for consolidation of activities.
- ◆ **Education:** The stations together have acquired a "Video on Demand" capacity with access to over 1,400 videos and over 15,000 video clips online. Each of the video clips has related printed material for teachers and students. Individuals can access the new resource by subject and grade, State standard, or key word. The service is free through their local station's web site.