



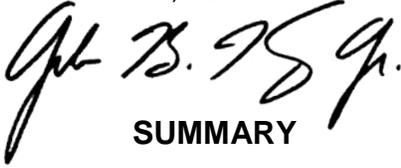
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: P-12 Education Committee

FROM: Ken Wagner 

SUBJECT: Performance Levels for Common Core Regents Examinations

DATE: October 11, 2013

AUTHORIZATION(S): 
SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

Should the Board of Regents direct Department staff to develop for the new Common Core Regents Examinations a performance goal for college and career readiness (similar to the 75/80 aspirational performance goal on the existing English Language Arts (ELA) and math Regents Exams, respectively) that is different from the performance level required to pass an exam required for graduation purposes (similar to the 65 cut score on the existing Regents Exams)? Should the Board direct staff to provide a conversion of the Common Core Regents Exam reporting scale to score bands in the 0-100 range?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Similar to the process followed for the Grades 3-8 Common Core ELA and math exams, performance levels need to be determined prior to the development and review of performance level descriptions by the educators on New York's Content Advisory Panels. Performance level descriptors are detailed descriptions of what students should know and be able to do at each of the designated performance levels. Performance levels and performance level descriptors are needed so that educator panelists can recommend performance standards (or cut scores) during the June 2014 standard setting process.

Proposed Handling

This issue will come before the P-12 Education Committee for discussion at its October 2013 meeting.

Procedural History

The Board of Regents adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts & Literacy and Mathematics at its July 2010 meeting and incorporated New York-specific additions, creating the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), at its January 2011 meeting. In order to help support this transition, the Department launched in 2011 the EngageNY.org website, which includes supplemental curriculum and instructional resources for optional use at the local level and has had over 30 million page views, and the Network Team Institutes, which are statewide turn-key training sessions with over 10,000 attendees to-date from across the State. In July 2013, the Board of Regents endorsed requirements for transitioning students to the new Regents Exams in English Language Arts (Common Core) and in Mathematics (Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II). The first group of students who must pass a Common Core Regents Exam for graduation purposes is expected to graduate in June 2017, seven years after the Board first adopted the standards.

Background Information

The Regents Exams in ELA and Algebra I (Common Core) will be first administered in June 2014. Students who first begin their first commencement-level math course in the 2013-14 school year or thereafter must be provided with Common Core instruction and take the Regents Exam in Algebra I (Common Core). Students who first enter grade 9 in the 2013-14 school year or thereafter must be provided with a high school English course of study aligned to the CCLS and will be required to take the Regents Exam in ELA (Common Core), which is designed to be administered in grade 11. For the June and August 2014 test administrations for ELA and the June and August 2014 and January 2015 test administrations for math, students who are enrolled in Common Core classes may take the old version of the Regents Exam (based on 1999 and 2005 learning standards) **in addition to** the Common Core Regents Exam. The higher score may then be used for grading, accountability, and other purposes.

For the current Regents Comprehensive Exam in English and Regents Exams in math (Integrated Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra 2/Trigonometry), the Department has set a performance level for high school graduation purposes (65) as well as a performance measure (75 and 80 for ELA and math, respectively) that represents an aspirational goal for college and career readiness. Once these performance levels have been determined for the Common Core Regents Exams, the Board will have the option to gradually, over several years, increase the level of performance required for graduation purposes until it is the same as the level required for meeting the aspirational performance goal for college and career readiness.

The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999) indicate that when new tests are designed to measure new standards, a new reporting scale should be used to make a clear distinction with the prior test measuring different standards.

Similarly, the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (1999) indicate that no reporting scale be used that could be easily misinterpreted (such as when a 0 to 100 scale is misunderstood as representing the percentage of correct responses).

The current reporting scale for the Regents Exams (0 to 100) is well known, however. As such, although the Department will recommend to the Board a new reporting scale for the new Common Core Regents Exams (consistent with best practice when new tests measure new performance levels on new standards), the Board may elect to direct staff to provide a conversion of the new reporting scale to score bands in the 0-100 range. We have received widespread feedback that this conversion will help with the ability to understand the new scale and current practice in some districts to factor performance on the Regents Exam into final course grades. The Department will provide guidance to the field on appropriate grading practices to help ensure that local grades make valid use of both the existing Regents Exam scores (which, although on a 0 to 100 scale, do not represent “percentage correct”) and the Common Core Regents Exam scores.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board direct Department staff to develop for the new Common Core Regents Examinations an aspirational performance goal for college and career readiness (similar to the 75/80 scores on the existing English Language Arts (ELA) and math Regents Exams, respectively) that is different from the performance level required for graduation purposes (similar to the 65 cut score on the existing Regents Exams). In addition, it is recommended that the Board direct staff to provide a conversion of the new Common Core reporting scale to score bands in the 0-100 range.