




Deputy Commissioner
Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Educational Technology

May 2014

To: BOCES District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public Schools
Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools
Charter School Leaders

From: Ken Wagner 

Subject: Update on Common Core Regents Exams

This memorandum provides a summary of the phase-in of the Common Core Regents Exams. In particular, additional details are provided regarding the cut scores that will be posted for test scoring purposes.

Student Participation in Common Core Regents Exams

Student progress on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in high school English language arts (ELA) and math courses will be assessed beginning in June 2014 on the Common Core Regents Exams in Algebra I and ELA, in accordance with the previously posted phase-in schedule.¹

Any student who, in the 2013-14 school year or thereafter, regardless of grade of enrollment, begins his or her first commencement-level math course culminating in a Regents Exam in June 2014 or later, must take the Common Core Regents Exam in mathematics that corresponds to that course, as available, and be provided with Common Core instruction. Typically, this first course will be Algebra I (Common Core).

Although the Common Core Regents Exam in ELA also will be available beginning in June 2014, no students are required by the State to pass this exam until the students who first entered grade 9 in the 2013-14 school year graduate in June 2017. These students would typically take the exam in grade 11 in 2016. Students who first entered grade 9 prior to the 2013-14 school year (typically, this year's 10th through 12th grade students), who continue to be instructed in the 2005 ELA Learning Standards, will continue to be able to take the old Regents Comprehensive Exam in English through its last administration in June 2016.² Students in grades 10 through 12 this year who have been provided with Common Core instruction in ELA, and whose

¹ See <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/commoncore/transitionccregents1113rev.pdf>.

² See <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/commoncore/transitionccregents1113rev.pdf> (Attachments A and B on pages 7 and 8) for a schedule of availability of the Regents Exams that measure the CCLS and the 2005 Learning Standards.

school has determined that the course of study leading to the Common Core Regents Exam is complete, should take the Common Core Regents Exam in ELA. The decision rests with the school as to whether these 10th -12th grade students have been prepared for the Common Core Regents Exam in ELA.

During the first year that the Common Core Regents Exams in ELA, Algebra I and Geometry are available, students enrolled in Common Core ELA and math courses may, at local discretion, take the Regents Exam that measures the 2005 Learning Standards **in addition to** the Common Core Regents Exam. For the ELA exam, this option is available for the January 2014, June 2014 and August 2014 administrations only. For the Common Core Algebra I and Geometry exams, this option extends to all administrations while the Regents Exams in Integrated Algebra and Geometry (2005 Standards) are being offered (for Algebra I: the June 2014, August 2014 and January 2015 administrations; for Geometry, the June 2015, August 2015 and January 2016 administrations). If students take the old Regents Exam in addition to the new Common Core Regents Exam, the higher of the two scores may be used for transcript and other local purposes. The higher score will be used for accountability and other State purposes.

Delay in Full Common Core Implementation

Since 2010, the Department has posted graduation rate data that include the percentage of students in a high school cohort who graduated and scored 65 or higher on the Regents Exam in English and a Regents Exam in math, as well as the percentage of students in a cohort who graduated and scored at an aspirational college- and career-readiness level of at least 75 and 80 on these exams, respectively.

The Department will maintain a similar distinction on Common Core Regents Exams between a score required to meet the State testing requirement for a Regents Diploma and an aspirational score that demonstrates a student met Common Core course-level expectations. This distinction will help ensure fairness to students and a smooth transition as we continue the full implementation of the Common Core.

Specifically, the Class of 2022 (i.e., students who first enter grade 9 in the 2018-19 school year) is the first group of students required to pass Common Core Regents Exams (ELA and one exam in math) at the aspirational level, indicating that they fully met Common Core course-level expectations in order to satisfy the State testing requirement for a Regents Diploma.³ These students are currently enrolled in grade 4 and are expected to take a Common Core Regents Exam in 2017-18 (if enrolled in Algebra in grade 8) or 2018-19 (if enrolled in Algebra in grade 9).

Prior to the Class of 2022, graduating students will not be required to demonstrate this level of mastery on Common Core Regents Exam. **However, it has not yet been determined whether the more rigorous performance level will be**

³ See <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2014/February2014/214p12d4.pdf> and <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/commoncore/cclsassessments.pdf>.

phased in gradually prior to the Class of 2022. The Department will seek feedback on this issue from stakeholders and make a recommendation to the Board of Regents in fall/winter 2014. The Local Diploma safety net will remain available throughout the transition.

Scale Scores and Proficiency Levels for Common Core Regents Exams

The Department will provide a raw score to scale score conversion chart for the Common Core Regents Exams, just as we do for the current Regents Exams. Just as with the current exams, the Common Core scale will range from 0 - 100 and a score of 65 will be required for Regents Diploma purposes. What is new for the Common Core Regents Exams is that the Department will provide a chart with cut scores for five performance levels. Cut scores for these performance levels will be recommended in June to the Commissioner, subject to the approval of the Board of Regents, by a statewide representative panel of educators through a formal process known as “standard setting.”

These five performance levels are summarized as follows: ⁴

<u>Performance Levels on Common Core Regents Exams</u>
Level 5: Exceeds Common Core expectations
Level 4: Meets Common Core expectations (First required for Regents Diploma purposes with the Class of 2022)
Level 3: Partially meets Common Core expectations (Required for current Regents Diploma purposes. We expect comparable percentages of students to attain Level 3 or above as do students who pass current Regents Exams (2005 Standards) with a score of 65 or above)
Level 2 (Safety Net): Partially meets Common Core expectations (Required for Local Diploma purposes. We expect comparable percentages of students to attain Level 2 or above as do students who pass current Regents Exam (2005 Standards) with a score of 55 or above)
Level 1: Does not demonstrate Knowledge and Skills for Level 2

As described in the table, the Department will place two constraints on the overall standard setting process, such that the percentage of students who score at Performance Level 2 and above and at Performance Level 3 and above on the

⁴ The existing cut scores and performance levels will remain in place for Regents Exams that measure student progress on the 2005 Learning Standards.

Common Core Regents Exams will remain comparable to those percentages of students who scored at a 65 and 55 and above, respectively, on the current Regents Exams in English and Integrated Algebra (2005 Standards). This is a transparent and appropriate approach to standard setting that ensures fairness to students and a smooth transition as we continue the full implementation of the Common Core through the Class of 2022. Cut scores for the remaining performance levels will be determined by educator judgment of the rigor required by the standards.

Resources to Support Common Core Regents Exams

A comprehensive suite of resources is available to help educators, students and parents understand what to expect on the Common Core Regents Exams, including test design specifications, test guides, sample questions, and webcasts.⁵

The raw score to scale score and performance level conversion chart for the Common Core Regents Exams in Algebra I and ELA will be available no later than Rating Day on June 26, 2014. In addition, the Department will release these Common Core exams in their entirety shortly after Rating Day. A percentage of test questions will include detailed annotations.

As with the Grades 3-8 ELA and math assessments, educators will continue to inform all stages of the Common Core implementation process, including the development of optional and supplemental curriculum modules, development of test questions, selection of test passages, as well as the recommendation of performance level cut scores.⁶

Please contact the Office of Curriculum & Instruction by e-mail at emscgradreq@mail.nysed.gov for questions concerning graduation requirements and at emscurric@mail.nysed.gov or by phone at 518-474-5922 for questions concerning curriculum. If you have any questions concerning the Common Core Regents Exams, the exam schedule, or the implementation timeline, please contact the Office of State Assessment by e-mail at emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov or by phone at 518-474-5900.

Thank you for your continued support with this important and challenging work.

⁵ See <http://www.engageny.org/resource/regents-exams>.

⁶ See <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/teacher/home.html> for more information on how to participate in the ongoing development of New York State assessments.