

## **Special Edition P-16 News and Notes**

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### ***Important Updates from June Meeting of the Board of Regents***

The Board of Regents met in Albany on June 22 and 23, 2009. Meeting materials are available on the Web at <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/>. Highlights of items discussed this month include:

#### **Modifications to Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Examination Schedule for 2009-10 School Year Now Underway**

As you know, the **Board of Regents** has been discussing the scheduling of grades 3-8 English language arts (ELA) and mathematics exams and working to expedite the release of exam scores. I am pleased to report that ELA and math exam results are now available months earlier than usual. In addition, this month, the Board of Regents endorsed moving the administration of the 2009-2010 grades 3-8 ELA and math examinations to the month of **May**.

I want to thank all of you who provided us with your input on the examination scheduling, exam question format, and scoring options through our first-ever online survey on examinations. We received over 22,500 responses that informed the policy discussions of the Board of Regents. While recommendations for a preferred examination calendar varied, the largest majority of respondents supported changing the exam schedule. Advantages of administering the exams in May include:

- More time will be available to teach grade-level curriculum before the exams.
- Winter weather-related scheduling problems will be avoided.

- The Department will be able to meet the new federal requirement that all school accountability decisions be made before the beginning of the next school year.
- This will help accustom students to what are in effect end-of-course exams as opposed to point-in-time exams as they are now.
- This option reduces the overall time for exam administration and scoring, which then allows more time for instruction.

We know that there are details that must be addressed and are working on these issues immediately. For example, work is now underway to revise current examination calendars and scoring timelines. Updated revised versions reflecting the new administration dates and scoring timelines for the grades 3-8 ELA and math exams will be shared with you as soon as possible.

If you have any questions about changes to the examination calendar, please contact David Abrams, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Standards, Assessment and Reporting at (518) 473-7880. Your continued support and collaboration are welcomed and appreciated as we move forward with the implementation of the revised grades 3-8 examination administration and scoring timelines.

## **High School Graduation Rates**

This month, the Regents discussed a number of issues related to New York's high school graduation rate, including: next steps for establishing graduation rate goals and annual targets for accountability purposes; the impact of a 5-year of high school on the graduation rate; potential implications of phasing-out the local diploma; and the importance of ensuring the reliability of the data districts report to the Department. New graduation rate data, which helped to inform the Regents discussions, are available on the web at:

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/pressRelease/20090622/>.

## **Guiding Principles for Foundation Aid and Opportunities for Maximizing School District Resources**

The Regents have been discussing ideas to maximize school district resources--improving achievement and containing costs. In light of the State's continuing economic crisis, the Regents have requested that staff continue to develop the theme of maximizing resources and promoting efficiencies as they begin considering their 2010-11 proposal on State Aid to school districts. In the coming months, the Regents plan to engage in discussions about preserving Foundation Aid, increasing the effective use of BOCES Aid, fostering green building construction and other efficiencies in school construction that will explore ways to maximize school district resources while pursuing educational adequacy. The item that was discussed by the Regents this month can be found on the web at:

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2009Meetings/June2009/0609sad1.htm>

## ***Update: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)***

Today, the United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released “Implementing Guidance for Reports on Use of Funds Pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.” The guidance can be accessed on the OMB website at:

[www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda\\_default](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda_default). OMB reports that the guidance addresses the mechanics and chronology of recipient reporting, provides clarification on reporting to [recovery.gov](http://recovery.gov) and [federalreporting.gov](http://federalreporting.gov), clarifies the definition and obligations of recipient and sub-recipient, provides a common framework for data quality, and further clarifies job creation estimates by recipients. Department staff are now in the process of reviewing the guidance to determine the specific implications for schools and districts.

Also, we want to take this opportunity to remind you that to be eligible for funds, ARRA requires that all primary grantees (New York State and the State Education Department) and their subgrantees (local educational agencies) have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and register with Central Contractor Registration (CCR). If you do not already have a DUNS number and/or have not registered with the CCR, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. Additional information about obtaining a DUNS number and registering with CCR is available at [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant\\_faqs.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_faqs.jsp).