



Our Students. Their Moment.

# **Our Challenge: Graduating Students College & Career Ready**

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President of the University of the State New York and  
Commissioner of Education

**June 11, 2012**

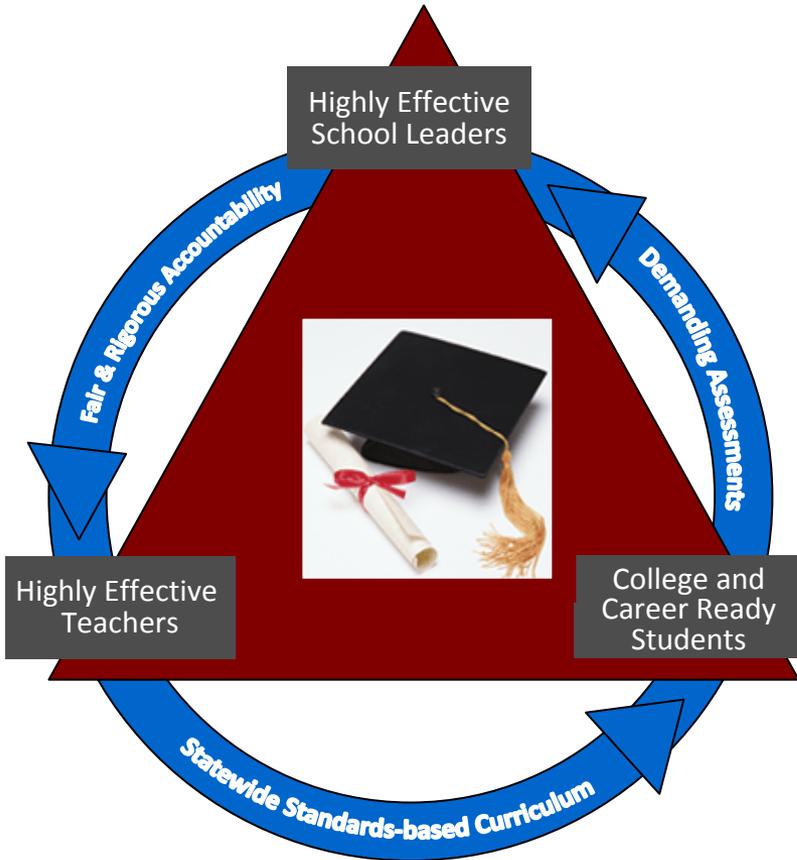
**10:30 a.m.**

**Albany, New York**



# Regents Reform Agenda

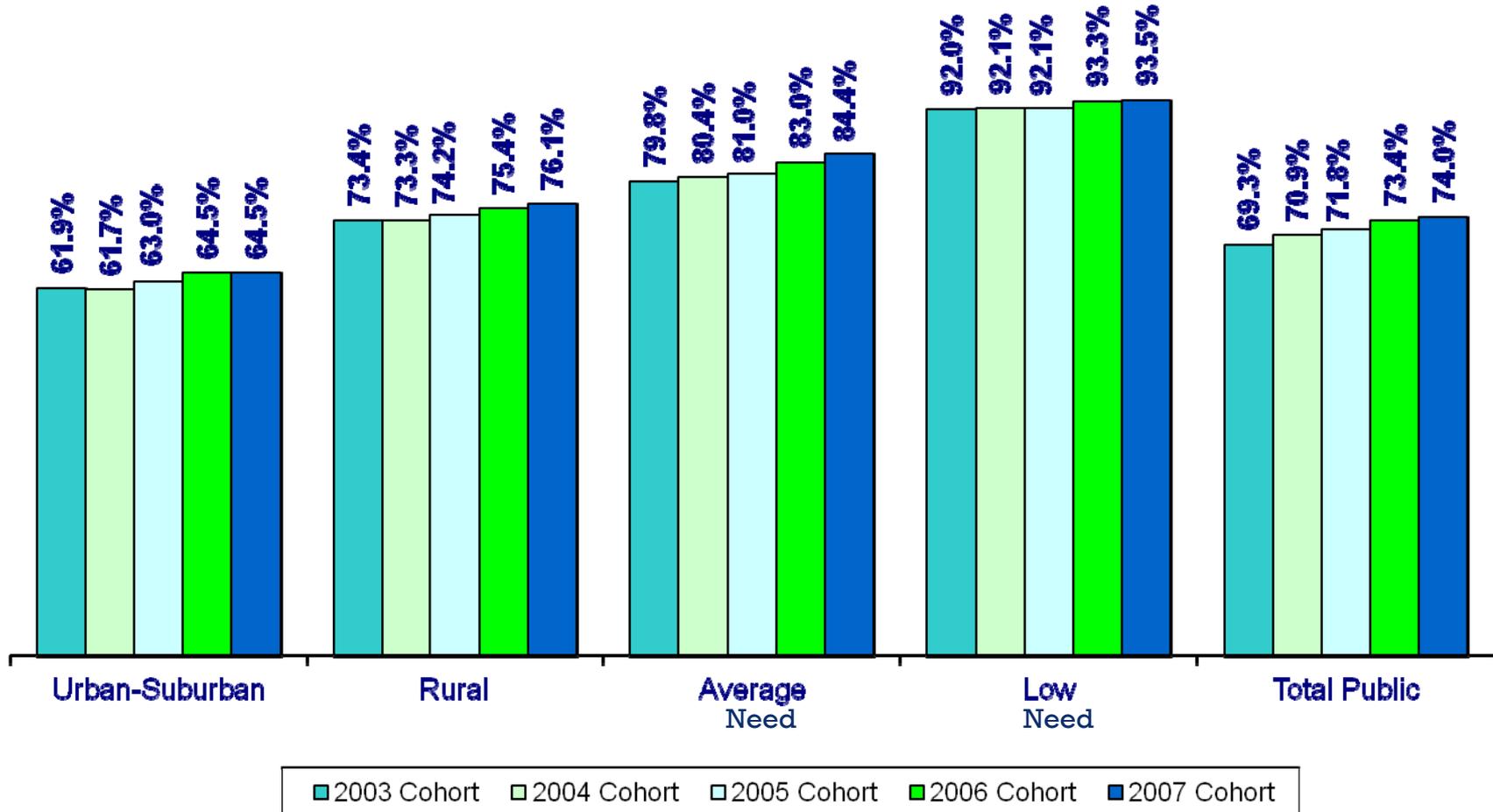
## All Students College & Career Ready



- Implementing **Common Core Standards** and developing **curriculum and assessments** aligned to these standards to prepare students for success in college and the workplace.
- Building **instructional data systems** that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practice in real time.
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding **effective teachers and principals**.
- Turning around the **lowest-performing schools**.

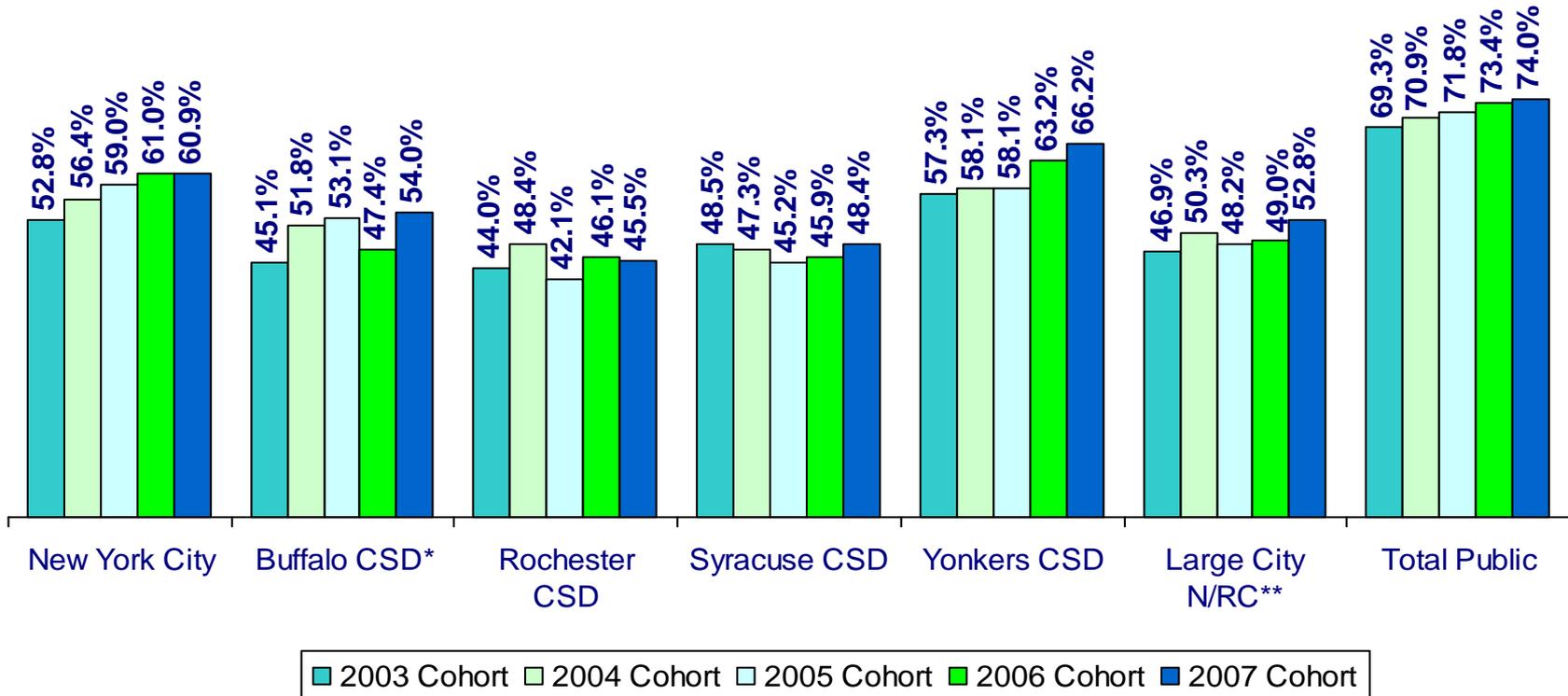
# Graduation Rates have increased, but they are not improving fast enough

Percentage of Students Graduating with a Local,  
Regents, or Regents with Advanced Designation diploma  
After 4 Years  
Results Through June 2011, All Students



# Big 5 Graduation Rates have generally increased, but remain too low

Percentage of Students Graduating with a Local, Regents, or Regents with Advanced Designation diploma  
After 4 Years  
Results Through June 2011, All Students



\*Because of a one-time change in 8th grade promotion policy, the 2005 and 2006 total cohort enrollments in Buffalo are significantly smaller and larger, respectively, than earlier cohorts. Cohort size decreased again for the 2007 Cohort.

\*\*Large City N/RC = Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers combined

2007 cohort results for Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers include students enrolled for at least one day in a school or the district. The "one day" rule is in effect for all NYC, N/RC and statewide cohorts.

# Our Challenge

## Graduating *All* Students College & Career Ready

New York's 4-year high school graduation rate is 74% for All Students  
However, the gaps are disturbing.

### June 2011 Graduation Rate

#### Graduation under Current Requirements

	% Graduating
<b>All Students</b>	74.0
American Indian	59.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	82.4
Black	58.4
Hispanic	58.0
White	85.1
English Language Learners	38.2
Students with Disabilities	44.6

#### Calculated College and Career Ready\*

	% Graduating
<b>All Students</b>	34.7
American Indian	16.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	55.9
Black	11.5
Hispanic	14.5
White	48.1
English Language Learners	6.5
Students with Disabilities	4.4

\*Students graduating with at least a score of 75 on Regents English and 80 on a Math Regents, which correlates with success in first-year college courses.

Source: NYSED Office of Information and Reporting Services

# Our Challenge

## Graduating *All* Students College & Career Ready



- Today, roughly two-thirds of all new jobs require some form of postsecondary education.
  - Seven of the top ten fastest-growing occupations require not only some post-secondary education, they actually require a post-secondary degree
- According to a recent study by the Rutgers University Center for Workforce Development,<sup>1</sup> only 16% of 2009-2011 high school graduates have full time jobs, compared to 37% for the 2006-2008 classes.
  - Overall, 37% of high school graduates attended some college, though only 29% did so on a full-time basis
  - When graduates were asked what they would have done differently in high school, 29% of respondents said they “would have better prepared for college”

<sup>1</sup>Source: *Left Out, Forgotten? Recent high School Graduates and the Great Recession*. Van Horn, Zukin, Szeltner, and Stone. John J Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. Rutgers University. June 2012

# NY's Assessment Program Is Critical to Improved Teaching & Learning

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- The Regents Reform Agenda is a direct response to our challenge of preparing students for College and Careers.
- Reforms are focused on what matters most:
  - What teachers teach: **Standards and Curriculum**
  - How they teach it: **Assessments, Data Systems, Evaluations and Professional Development**
- The assessment program is a key tool to drive improved teaching and learning
  - Key measure of how students are doing on NYS Learning Standards
  - Critical component of the State's accountability system
  - Contributes to our evaluation of teacher and principal effectiveness



# A Brief History Of Assessments in NYS

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- Regents Exams were developed as commencement-level achievement tests to measure NYS Learning Standards and, with appropriate coursework, earn a student a Regents Diploma.
- Elementary and Intermediate-level achievement testing began in 1966 with the Grades 3, 6 and 9 Pupil Evaluation Program Tests in Reading and Math.
- A decade later, the Grade 5 Reading Test and Grade 4 Program Evaluation Test in Science were added.
- In 1979, the Regents Competency Tests were developed to provide a path for high school students to earn a Local Diploma.
- The Grades 4 and 8 ELA and Math tests were redesigned to align with the Learning Standards approved by the Board of Regents in 1996.



# Testing Under NCLB

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- The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires, among other measures, administration of the following assessments:
  - Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) & Mathematics exams
  - At least one Science exam in Grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12
  - At least one High School ELA and one High School Mathematics exam
- The Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics, Grades 4 and 8 Science, and High School English and Mathematics assessments were used by New York, together with graduation rates, to hold schools and districts accountable for student results.
  - Schools and districts were identified as being in Good Standing, In Need of Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring based upon whether they achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on assessments.

# Current Testing Program

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- Pursuant to NCLB requirements, the first Grades 3-8 tests in ELA and Mathematics were administered in 2006.
  - The state had previously administered Grades 4 and 8 tests in those subjects.
  - Development of these assessments was competitively bid.
- In 2010, a contract was awarded that includes development and administration of Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics tests to be administered in 2012 – 2015.
  - The 5-year contract includes development of test questions, conducting field testing, scoring field tests, developing all operational test forms, and scoring materials.
- Regents Exams are developed by SED.
- NYS certified teachers participate in many aspects of test development, including item writing and review, range finding and standard setting.

# Testing Schedule

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English Language Arts, 3 sessions			Mathematics, 3 sessions		
Grades	Estimated Time for Completion	Time Scheduled	Grades	Estimated Time for Completion	Time Scheduled
3-5	70, 60 or 45 minutes	90 minutes	3	60, 60 or 50 minutes	90 minutes
6-8	70, 60 or 50 minutes	90 minutes	4-8	60 minutes	90 minutes

- Tests were designed to be completed in 45 to at most 70 minutes per day. School districts were asked to schedule 90 minutes for each session so that students would have ample time to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

# Increased Rigor

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- In July 2010, the Board of Regents raised the “cut scores” on ELA and Mathematics to more accurately measure proficiency.
- The Department has taken steps to improve quality by:
  - Independently auditing a sample of items of the Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics tests to determine reliability of local scoring
  - Embedding field test questions in exams
  - Adding audit questions to compare performance nationally
- Over several years, graduation requirements have become more rigorous and general education Local Diplomas have been phased out.

Graduation Requirements	
Cohort	Number of Regents Exams with Scores at 65 or Above
2005	2 or more
2006	3 or more
2007	4 or more
2008	5 or more

# Importance of Field Tests

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- Field tests allow SED to build valid operational exams that accurately measure College and Career Readiness by evaluating how a test question will perform prior to initial use.
- To minimize the impact on classroom instruction, field tests are given in forty minute sessions to approximately 20% of total students in selected schools.
- Embedding field test questions in an operational exam is a best practice that generates higher quality test data than stand-alone field tests. In Spring 2012, for the first time field test questions were embedded in NYS Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics tests.
- Historically, New York prints and ships its own exams. SED's capacity to do large scale embedded field testing is limited by printing and shipping capacity (4 versions of each test).
  - Other large states administer **30 or more** versions.
  - Additional funding would be needed to administer more test versions and minimize stand-alone field tests

# Annual Cost of the Assessment Program

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Component	Cost
Grades 3-8 Assessments (including the \$32M 5/year Pearson Contract)	\$13.4M
Regents Exams	\$11.9M
Other Assessments (Including the NYSESLAT for ELLs and NYS Alternate Assessment for subset of students with significant disabilities)	\$9.2M
<b><u>Total Annual Cost of the Assessment Program</u></b> *Does not include the cost of local scoring which is funded by school districts	<b><u>\$34.5M*</u></b>

# Gap Closing Actions to Address Shortfalls

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- SED has faced a structural deficit in the assessment program over several years due to:
  - Decreases in state general fund appropriations and federal funds since 2008
  - Federal carryover funds have been exhausted.
- In 2011-12, SED faced a \$15M deficit in the assessment program. The enacted state budget included \$7M<sup>1</sup>. As a result, the following gap-closing actions were taken:
  - Elimination of the Grades 5 and 8 Social Studies exams and the remaining foreign language Regents Exams (Italian, French, and Spanish)
  - Enact production cost containment and efficiency measures.
- The 2012-13 enacted state budget included \$8.5M for the assessment program to continue assessments at the 2011-12 level, including January Regents.

<sup>1</sup>In August 2011, a one-time donation of \$1.5M from the Fund for Public Schools and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City was announced to reinstate the January 2012 Regents Exams.

# Testing Issues and Actions

## Pearson Issues

- Reading passage on 8th Grade exam inconsistent with rigor of NYS Learning Standards. *(6 out of 472 items; 1.2%)*
- Typographical errors in test questions and scoring guides.  
*(4 out of 1,116 items; 0.35%).*
- Errors in translated tests.  
*(20 out of 4,336 items; 0.46%)*

## SED Actions

- Based on best practice, Pearson will be required to review and revise passage selection and item writing criteria in collaboration and subject to approval by SED.
- Pearson will be required to implement an electronic item writing and editing system to manage review and editing in a timely and accurate manner.
- Pearson will be required to hire a third-party independent translator to resolve differences.

## Oversight and Accountability

- Pearson will be required to provide, at no additional cost to SED, an expert, independent review of processes for the development and accuracy of tests and scoring guides.
- Neither students nor teachers are penalized for errors on tests. When errors are identified, they are removed from scoring, students are given credit, or scoring is revised.
- Contract amendments will provide penalties for unacceptable items and translation errors.

# Moving Forward – Next Generation Assessment System

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Sophisticated, Rigorous, and Secure Testing Program that  
Improves Teaching & Learning and Drives College & Career Readiness

- The Board of Regents adopted the **Common Core Standards** in July 2010 to better ensure College and Career Readiness.
- In January 2010, the Regents endorsed participation in the federally-funded, 24-state **Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)**. PARCC assessments are scheduled to be operational in 2014-15, pending final Board of Regents approval of the resulting assessments.
- The Department has begun to develop a statewide **computer-based testing** transition plan to ensure that new technologies are seamlessly integrated into teaching and learning.
- Following a report by an independent investigator appointed by the Commissioner, the Board of Regents created a **Test Security Unit** in March 2012 to enhance the security and integrity of the testing process with increased monitoring, training, and measures to prevent cheating.
- Legislation enacted in March 2012 provided for a more rigorous **teacher and principal evaluation system** that will incorporate student growth on state assessments as one of multiple measures.

# Evaluating Educator Effectiveness Using Multiple Measures

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## Growth

20%

- Student growth on state assessments (state-provided)
- Student learning objectives in non-tested subjects

## Locally Selected Measures

20%

- Student growth or achievement
- Options selected locally, consistent with collective bargaining

## Other Measures

60%

- Rubrics
- Sources of evidence: observations (at least 31% observations by a supervisor), visits, surveys, etc.
- Options selected locally, consistent with collective bargaining

# What are the Common Core Standards?

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- The development of the Common Core Standards is a nationwide, state-led effort to establish a shared set of clear educational standards for ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.
  - 45 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Common Core
- The Common Core Standards are the first learning standards to be **backmapped** from the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in college and careers grade-by-grade all the way back to kindergarten.
- The Common Core Standards are benchmarked to international standards and informed by the best evidence and research.

***“These standards will help teachers, students and parents know what is needed for students to succeed in college and careers, and will enable states, school districts and teachers to more effectively collaborate to accelerate learning and close achievement gaps nationwide.”***

-Arne Duncan, US Secretary of Education  
June 2, 2010

# Moving Forward – Aligning Assessments to the Common Core Standards

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- Common Core Standards-aligned Assessments will be rigorous, and focus on priority knowledge and skills to ensure College and Career Readiness:

## 6 Shifts in ELA/Literacy

Read as much non-fiction as fiction  
Learn about the world by reading  
Read more challenging material closely  
Discuss reading using evidence  
Write non-fiction using evidence  
Increase academic vocabulary

## 6 Shifts in Mathematics

Focus: immersion in important topics  
Build skills across grades  
Develop fluency and accuracy  
Really know it, Really do it  
Use it in the real world  
Efficiently solve complex problems

- The Department is leveraging Race to the Top funds to develop supports and resources to help districts implement the Common Core Standards, including professional development, curriculum modules, and video exemplars of excellent teaching.

# Moving Forward –

## Assessment Program Under the NCLB Waiver

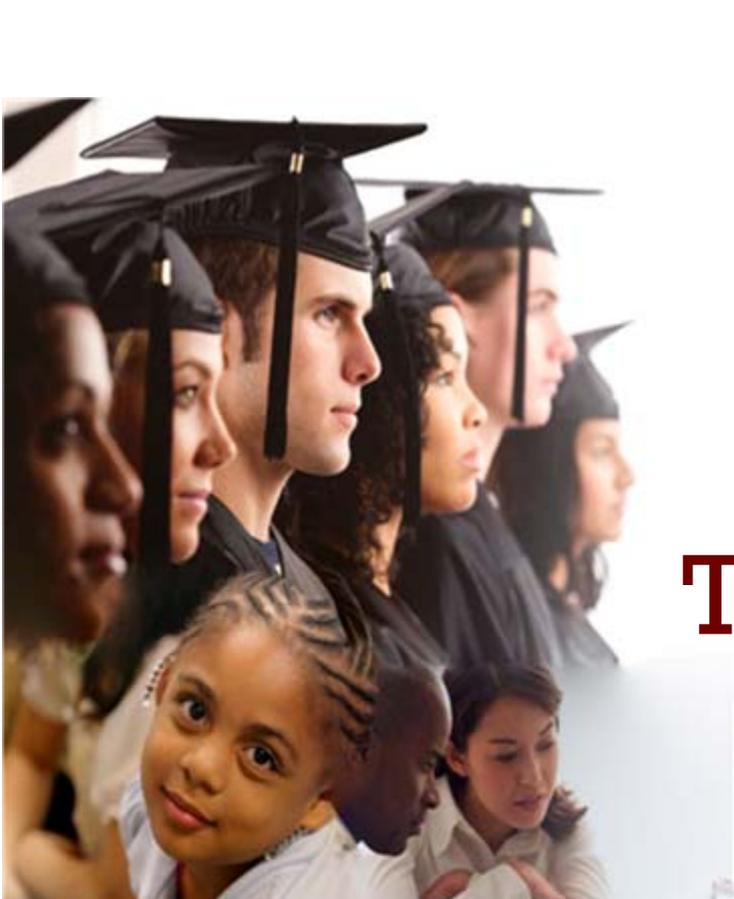
- The US Department of Education approved New York's NCLB Waiver in May 2012 which provides a new opportunity to close the achievement gap and accelerate the Regents Reform Agenda to ensure students graduate ready for College and Careers.
- Under the Waiver, New York will continue to use the Grades 3-8 and High School ELA and Mathematics assessments, Grades 4 and 8 Science exams, and graduation rates for accountability purposes, although in different ways:
  - Incorporate measures of student growth towards College and Career Readiness
- Reward, Priority, and Focus Districts and Schools will be identified and will be provided interventions, incentives and supports.

# The Future

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- Rigorous assessments aligned to the Common Core Standards.
- Integrate new teaching and learning technologies through sophisticated and secure computer-based testing.
- Comprehensive evaluations and supports to ensure teacher and principal effectiveness.





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Our Students. Their Moment.

Thank you.

The Ultimate Goal and Our Challenge –  
Graduating All Students College and Career Ready

