

**Remarks by MaryEllen Elia  
NYS Education Commissioner**

**ELA & Math Standards for Public Review  
Video Transcript**

***Substantive Changes***

With the English language arts standards more than 60 percent of those standards had changes, and with the mathematics, more than 55 percent. So it isn't just tinkering around the edges and doing small little things. We had a very dedicated committee that met multiple times and then met for a week together to really put all of those ideas together and make sure that while they were still rigorous standards, that they were more clearly defined for our teachers across the state.

***Rigorous Standards***

I think the standards are rigorous, as it was very clear in our AIMHighNY survey that individuals across the state were focused on making sure that our rigor stayed with the standards but that we reviewed those standards, and I think it's a critical thing that

we had teachers, administrators, parents, and our partners in higher ed be part of that review.

### ***Developmentally Appropriate***

One of the comments that came out of our AIMHighNY survey was that we needed to make sure that the standards were developmentally appropriate, particularly for our K-2 population. We worked with experts in the field of child development, and that is part of what was included in the recommendations in K-2. We're also putting a task force together to review them all again and to make sure that they are developmentally appropriate.

### ***Guide for Teachers***

We are not telling teachers how to teach in the classroom. We are giving them the goal that they should have, the standard that should be met by students across the state at every grade level in English language arts and mathematics and in other subjects as well. It's really important for teachers to know what the goal is. It's like having a map. You know where you want to go, you know that you have to get there. Teachers have multiple ways that you can

get to that standard and they should use those multiple strategies as they're presenting those standards in their classroom.

### ***Teachers Develop Curriculum***

It's clear that we have said that the curriculum should be developed locally. That is a local decision. We've indicated where students should be at the end of that grade level and those subject areas, but the school districts and the schools themselves, working with their teachers, should develop the strategies and the instructional materials and the approaches that will work best.

### ***English Language Arts Changes***

Well, I think one of the important changes was that there was really a melding of the approach of both fiction and nonfiction and so that both are very important and we believe that teachers and the committee felt the importance of making sure that there was a good blend, a balance, if you will, between nonfiction and fiction, and that we expanded the opportunities for different types of literature to be used in the standards development with students so I think that really is an important part of the work that we've

done in English language arts to bring those two together and not keep fiction separated from nonfiction, but talk about it in terms of the goals for both types of reading.

### ***Math Changes***

Well, I think one of the things that was very important is while you're maintaining the rigor, to make connections across grade levels with the concepts that students were learning, and that the development of mathematics be just that. That it spiraled from grade to grade, and that those things be coherent as they are being discussed in a second grade classroom with continuity up to third, fourth, and fifth. So the standards themselves, I think, were more clearly defined for the teachers so that they would understand the goals of each one of those standards.