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**TO:** District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools

**FROM:** Candace H. Shyer, Assistant Commissioner  
Office of Assessment, Standards and Curriculum

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**SUBJECT:** Additional Guidance on APPR Plans and Grades 3-8 ELA and Math  
Common Core Assessments

This memorandum provides an update to Deputy Commissioner Ken Slentz's March 2013 memo regarding Implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (see: <http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/field-memo-transition-to-common-core-assessments.pdf>) and the associated August 2013 field memo from Commissioner King (see: <http://usny.nysed.gov/docs/memo-scores-release.pdf>) and provides information on how the transition to Common Core assessments will affect annual professional performance review (APPR) plans submitted by school districts and boards of cooperative education services (BOCES) for the 2012-2013 school year.

### **Changes to NYSED Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Assessments**

On March 6, 2013, the Department released a memorandum from Deputy Commissioner Ken Slentz to school administrators regarding the transition to Common Core assessments.<sup>1</sup> That memo outlined the steps that have been taken by the Department since 2010 to implement the Common Core Standards.

In April 2013, New York State administered the first round of tests to measure student progress on the Common Core for Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Because the new tests were designed to determine whether students are meeting a higher set of performance standards, the Department indicated that fewer students were expected to perform at or above Common Core expectations (i.e., proficiency) than was the case with prior-year State tests.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://engageny.org/resource/field-memo-transition-to-common-core-assessments>

As expected, the State-provided growth scores resulted in similar proportions of educators earning each growth rating category (Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, and Ineffective) in 2012-13 compared to 2011-12, despite the lower percentage of students who scored proficient against a trajectory of college- and career-readiness as indicated by tests that fully measure the Common Core. This is in large part because the State's growth model took into consideration changes in student performance compared to "similar" students (i.e., students with similar characteristics and academic histories). Therefore, all educators had a fair chance to do well, regardless of the changing rigor of the test.

The Department recognizes that following the 2010 adoption of the Common Core by the Board of Regents many districts and BOCES planned for the associated changes to the State assessments. As such, this guidance applies only to those districts or BOCES that have not already taken steps to ensure their APPR plans for the 2012-13 school year reflect their district or BOCES goals and expectations for student performance on the new, more rigorous State assessments and utilizes the Department's "2012 to 2013 Comparison Chart" for establishing matching targets. For the purposes of these charts, the 2012 and 2013 scale scores were matched using statewide percentile rank. Proficiency rates in 2012 and 2013 cannot be directly compared because the 2012 tests were designed to measure different learning standards than the 2013 Common Core tests. Therefore, the 2013 proficiency rates represent a new baseline and this is why the scale scores were changed. However, for the purposes of APPR, the fairest way to preserve the intended rigor of the targets based on the 2012 scale is through percentile ranks. The Department has provided for you tables that indicate the 2013 and 2012 scale scores that are associated with the same percentile rank. Using the percentile rank as the basis of comparison in APPR for this transition year assures that the change in proficiency rates will not negatively impact performance against targets that were developed with the 2012 tests in mind.

In particular, this memorandum applies to those educators without State-provided growth measures whose district or BOCES specified that they will use Grades 3-8 ELA and/or Math State assessments to measure growth for the State Growth or other comparable measures subcomponent. This memorandum also particularly applies to those educators in districts or BOCES whose APPR plan uses locally-selected measures of student achievement that rely on scale scores, year-to-year changes in scores, or "percent of students proficient" on Grades 3-8 ELA and/or Math State assessments.

The 2012 to 2013 Comparison Chart may be used in the following scenarios. The Department recommends that districts and BOCES consult with their local counsel as they implement these solutions to ensure they are implemented in a manner consistent with the district's 2012-13 APPR plan and Education Law section 3012-c.

**SCENARIO 1:** The district or BOCES chose an option for their other comparable measures Growth subcomponent and/or locally-selected measures subcomponent that relies on a scale score expectation on State assessments for achievement or a minimum rigor expectation for growth. For example, the district may have set an expectation that for a teacher to be rated Effective, a targeted percentage of students in

a 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom had to score at or above a scale score of 699 on the New York State 4<sup>th</sup> grade State ELA test.

*Solution: Using the Department's 2012 to 2013 Comparison Chart, the district or BOCES will determine the 2013 scale score that corresponds to the 2012 scale score of 699.*

*For example, if the district set the expectation that 75 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students had to score at or above 699 on the New York State 4<sup>th</sup> grade State ELA test, then the superintendent would consult the Department's 2012 to 2013 Comparison Chart for 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA and see that the matching 2013 scale score is 330. Therefore, in 2012-13, 75 percent of students in a 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom would have to achieve a scale score at or above 330 on the 2012-13 assessment for the teacher to be rated "Effective."*

**SCENARIO 2:** The district or BOCES chose an option for their locally selected measures subcomponent that relies on a teacher-specific change in percentage of students who achieve a specified level of performance on State assessments (e.g., a three percentage point increase in the number of students earning proficient (Level 3) or better on the 7<sup>th</sup> grade State Math test compared to those same students' performance on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade State Math test).

*Solution: Using the Department's 2012 to 2013 Comparison Chart, the district or BOCES can find the 2013 scale scores that correspond to the minimum scores required in 2012 to achieve each performance level.*

*For example, if in 2011-12 the district had 60% of their students earning proficient (Level 3) on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade State Math test and the district set a target that there would be a three percentage point increase in the same cohort of students earning a proficient (Level 3) on the 2012-13 7<sup>th</sup> grade State Math test (i.e., 63% of students earning proficient), then the district would use the Department's 2012 to 2013 Comparison Chart for 7<sup>th</sup> grade Math to determine whether the target was met. The superintendent would first look-up on the Department's chart the minimum 2012 scale score required to achieve proficiency (Level 3); in 2012 that scale score was 671. The corresponding 2013 scale score is 290. The 2013 scale score, 290, then becomes the one at which 63% of the teacher's students must perform at or above to meet the target. This approach creates a proficiency anchor for the 2012-13 results and allows the district to determine if the target was met.*

**SCENARIO 3:** The district or BOCES chose an option for the State Growth subcomponent and/or locally selected subcomponent that relies on any change in the percentage of students who achieve scores of proficient or higher on Grades 3-8 ELA and/or Math State assessments.

*Solution: Using the Department's 2012 to 2013 Comparison Chart, the district or BOCES can find the 2013 scale scores that correspond to the minimum scores required in 2012 to achieve each performance level.*

*For example, if a district stipulated in their APPR plan the expectation that in order to be rated “Effective,” 80% of students in a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELA class must score a Level 3 or higher on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELA assessment, then the Department recommends that the district use the Department’s 2012 to 2013 Comparison Chart for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELA to determine the minimum 2012 scale score required to achieve proficiency (Level 3); in 2012 that scale score was 664. The corresponding 2013 scale score is 299. The 2013 scale score, 299, then becomes the scale score that 80% of students must achieve or exceed. In other words, if 80% or more students scored at or above the 299 scale score on the 2012-13 grade 3 ELA assessment, then the teacher would be rated “Effective.”*

The Department has published the 2012 to 2013 Comparison Chart for Grades 3-8 ELA and Math State assessments using 2011-12 and 2012-13 data at the following: <http://www.engageny.org/resource/guidance-for-using-the-2012-to-2013-comparison-chart-with-appr-plans>. Districts and BOCES will only be able to apply the approaches outlined in this memorandum for the 2012-13 school year. Districts and BOCES should review their APPR plans and make any adjustments to those plans consistent with Education Law section 3012-c where they – and their collective bargaining units, where applicable – determine changes are necessary to ensure their plans reflect their goals and expectations. Where the plans do not meet current goals and expectations, the Department encourages districts and BOCES to work with their BOCES and Network Team members as they consider any changes to their APPR plans. Districts should also consult with local counsel regarding any potential material changes. Each material change request must be submitted by the Superintendent of the district or BOCES through [educatoreval@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:educatoreval@mail.nysed.gov). Each material change request must be submitted with signatures from the superintendent, board president, and the president of any applicable collective bargaining units, and each material change request must be approved by the Commissioner.