

Literacy Assessment and Instructional Support Pilot
Program Overview
New York City Department of Education

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I. Background

In anticipation of New York State’s adoption of the [Common Core Standards](#), New York City Department of Education is engaging in several small pilots in the 2010-11 school year to help support schools and inform our work in transitioning to these rigorous standards. These network supported pilots will allow teacher and network teams to build leadership in different components of the Common Core work and to help determine what additional supports are needed as we prepare to scale this work to all NYC schools.

Participants in the Secondary Literacy Pilot will work with the AUSSIEs, (Australia United States Services in Education), Karin Hess, and Timothy and Cynthia Shanahan to immerse themselves in the Common Core Standards. The focus of training will be to make connections to current SED standards, learn about and use a diagnostic tool to assess their students’ reading levels and use a text leveling system to identify and use books/Informational texts (e.g., articles, web resources, and other relevant readings). In addition, participants will immerse themselves in the Common Core ELA Standards that emphasize the use of informational and complex texts to inform their curriculum planning for a year-long pilot program. Each pilot school will designate a team of teachers across the subject areas in a selected grade range who share the same cohort of students. (We recommend at least two teachers per subject, but teams may vary by school size). In doing so, these participating teachers will take a leadership role on their grade-level teams at the school site by sharing their work on literacy assessment and book leveling, gaining insights from their grade-level partners on instructional strategies and sharing their gains with their inter-disciplinary pilot team.

Teachers will learn how to assess secondary students’ reading levels, align text to students’ levels, and incorporate the expectations of the Common Core Standards. Teacher teams will use a collaborative inquiry process to build their capacity to assess, instruct and help students master the type of literacy skills they need to meet these new standards.

A collection of artifacts, strategies and practices developed during professional learning sessions, school-based coaching and collaborative inquiry work will then be shared, so that schools throughout the city for 2011-2012 can access, modify and use these materials for their own learning and instruction.

II. Expectations & Provided Resources

Program Expectations

All participating schools will:

- designate a school lead facilitator (e.g., teacher, coach, assistant principal) with a strong background in literacy, who will provide ongoing in-school teacher support and lead the cross-school collaboration with others engaged in the pilot,
- ensure that all participating teachers and school lead facilitators actively participate in the pilot, meaning that all participants will:
 - attend **all** scheduled professional development sessions,
 - conduct regular teacher team meetings in between scheduled professional development sessions to ensure continuity of this work,
 - complete all pre-reading and bring recommended materials to each session [For all course materials, visit <http://tiny.cc/CCLiteracy>, an **ARIS Connect Community** to collaborate with each other and with other schools],
 - provide strategic feedback on and participate in evaluation activities related to the pilot program (e.g. through electronic pre- and post- surveys and in-school feedback sessions), and
 - work with the Senior Instructional Coach and Network Pilot Leads in coordinating the work and sharing it beyond the participants' classrooms.

Provided Resources

Funding: Each school will receive per session/per diem funds to offset costs of participation in the professional development workshops as well as some per session funds to support in-school collaboration.

Professional Texts: As part of the pilot, schools will receive professional books so that teacher teams can participate in study groups. The core texts will serve to help deepen teacher understanding of literacy themes introduced in the pilot.

Literacy Assessment Software: Participating schools will have access to diagnostic software. This software will be introduced in the professional development sessions and will be used to assess students' reading levels to inform book selection.

A Library of Leveled Text: Participating schools will also get support on creating a library of leveled texts. This leveling system will be introduced in the professional development sessions and will help educators identify and select texts that are accessible for students' at different reading levels.

III. Roles of Program Participants

School-based Roles

Principals: Principals will play a critical role in supporting program structures and expectations to ensure that teams are deeply engaged in productive collaboration. Principals should check in regularly with school lead facilitators to ensure there is both time and space for this Common Core Pilot Teacher Team to meet on a regular basis. The principal should also create a plan for this teacher team to share their learning with the larger school community. Principals are strongly encouraged to participate in the pilot launch to help establish the foundation for the work and are invited to attend all other workshops.

School Lead Facilitators: Each school will designate a school lead facilitator to guide the work at the school level, provide in-school teacher support, and assist teachers as they engage in literacy assessment and cross-disciplinary work. Lead facilitators, in addition to attending the regularly scheduled professional development, will attend supplemental sessions designed to assist them in facilitating the work at the school level. As part of this work, school lead facilitators will coordinate and lead in-school meetings to help direct and deepen the work using a collaborative inquiry process. School lead facilitators will facilitate participating teachers sharing their learning with their larger school community. It is

also highly recommended that school lead facilitators meet regularly with their principal, providing updates on the pilot and planning ways for the participating teachers to share their learning with their larger school community. In addition to school-based collaboration, during school lead facilitator workshops and on ARIS Connect, school lead facilitators will help their team collaborate with other schools engaged in the pilot.

Participating Teachers: Teachers will attend and actively participate in all professional development sessions and school-based planning and implementation. These teachers may form one of your school's inquiry teams who will engage in a collaborative inquiry process to study target students' literacy proficiency levels, work, and their assessment data to determine the students' literacy growth and select texts that align to the literacy demands of the Common Core Standards. Throughout the year, teachers will be asked to share differentiated lesson and unit plans across disciplines, student work samples, and protocols on using students' assessment data to inform their instruction. Additionally, teachers will share sample processes for assessing, diagnosing, and addressing students' literacy needs to support learning of other pilot participants. In addition, teachers will be asked to provide feedback and guidance about the literacy assessment and diagnostic process to inform citywide work with non-participating schools and networks. This will be concentrated on how secondary literacy assessment and diagnosis has affected students' learning as evidenced by student work and assessment data where available.

Network Support

Network Teams: Each network will select at least one member of their network instructional staff to serve as a *Network Pilot Lead* (NPL) who will participate in the year-long pilot program and may include other interested network staff. This person may be the Instructional Coach, the Achievement Coach or another member of the network's instructional support staff. This NPL will also help facilitate the work by providing additional support to participating schools as well as share key takeaways from professional development to their network team and potentially other schools within the network, as applicable. In-school support provided to schools may vary by school but could include coaching, and participation/facilitation of teacher team meetings. The Network Pilot Lead may, with your approval, ask you and your team to share their learning at a Network meeting or may set up more formal structures for inter-school visitations.

Central Supports

Senior Instructional Coach: Each Common Core pilot will have one designated member of the DPA Pilot Team to serve as a "Senior Instructional Coach." The Senior Instructional Coach (SIC) will serve as the DOE's design lead for the pilot and will collaborate with the Network Pilot Leads and other pilot participants to ensure that the pilot is effective in building capacity among participants and developing artifacts to be shared city-wide. This person will serve as a direct link from the Pilot to the DPA Team. They will also serve as a liaison to the NPL, participating principals and teachers. This person will also help to facilitate all PD Sessions, work closely with the Pilot's Lead PD Partner and help collect, select and prepare the pilot's artifacts to be shared city-wide. In addition, this person will serve as instructional support and coach to the Clusters, Networks and NPLs as well as participating schools. The SIC for this pilot is Meesha Brown nbrown11@schools.nyc.gov

Common Core Pilot Project Manager: The Project Manager, along with the Pilot's Senior Instructional Coach and other DPA staff, will work with all schools engaged in the pilot coordinating professional development workshops and providing ongoing support throughout implementation. Catherine White-Guimarães will be the Project Manager for this pilot. If you have any questions about the pilot, please reach out to Catherine at cwhite4@schools.nyc.gov. Catherine will post resources and answers to frequently asked questions on [ARIS Connect](#).

IV. Professional Development Overview & Summer Schedule

Summer Professional Development Schedule

All participating teachers and school lead facilitators are expected to attend the summer professional development workshops (below). Principals are expected to attend the one-day pilot launch and invited to attend all other workshops.

Date	Workshop
August 30	Professional Development Workshop 1- All Participants
October 18 th /20 th	Professional Development Workshop 2-Cohorts
November 2nd	Professional Development Workshop 3-All Participants
December 13 th /14 th	Professional Development Workshop 4-Cohorts
February 14 th /15 th	Professional Development Workshop 5-Cohorts
April 4 th /5 th	Professional Development Workshop 6-Cohorts
June 9th	Professional Development Workshop 3-All Participants

Sessions

- Cross-school professional development sessions 7-8 workshops during the school year for all participants (school lead facilitators and teachers)
- Approximately 4-6 additional workshops for school lead facilitators and network pilot leads only
- Regular school-based team meetings for all participants throughout school year 2010-11

Session Types

Literacy Assessment and (Instructional Support) Inter-Disciplinary Professional Development (PD) Sessions

PD Sessions are designed to help educators understand how to assess and interpret students' reading levels and assign texts for their reading levels across subject areas. Sessions are intended to target the skills and strategies needed to modify their current instruction to infuse literacy development into all content areas and integrate the reading demands of the Common Core Standards. During these larger cross-school PD sessions, teachers and school leads will develop a professional learning community consisting of horizontal and vertical teams. The process should include reviewing periodic assessment data, and creating opportunities to collaboratively problem solve to address the various literacy needs of the targeted students throughout this process. Teachers will learn strategies to investigate literacy assessments, level text, and how to use a software tool to assess and diagnose students' reading levels. Professional development sessions will vary in format and may include:

- Small and large group work
- Individual coaching with PD partners
- Use of video and webcasts
- After school (including Fridays) work sessions (*based on need and interest*)
- Saturday, vacation, and/or virtual work sessions (*based on need and interest*)

Facilitator Workshops

These workshops will vary in format and are exclusively for school lead facilitators and network staff. Facilitator workshops are designed to support school lead facilitators in ensuring that concepts and strategies from professional development workshops are applied in classrooms. School lead facilitators and network staff will receive training in facilitating sessions, providing critical feedback, and structuring school-based application of this work. During these facilitator workshops, school leads and network staff will become a part of a professional learning community intent on sharing best practices and collaborating to problem solve should challenges arise throughout this shift in practice.

School-based Team Meetings

Literacy assessment is an ongoing process of evaluation, targeted goal-setting, implementation and revision. Understanding this, schools will use their grade-level team as one of their collaborative inquiry teams where participating teachers will engage in an ongoing study of the Common Core Standards, students' development of literacy skills, and analyzing student work/data as they continuously monitor and revise their cross-disciplinary literacy instruction throughout the year. School lead facilitators will help coordinate and lead regular school-based team meetings. These school-based meetings will provide a structured opportunity to debrief each professional development session, consider the assigned work tasks, reflect on teacher and student work, revise strategies, and provide opportunities to learn with colleagues in between scheduled sessions. Following this inquiry process, systematically studying teacher and student work, will help to ensure literacy remediations are effective in impacting student progress and performance. At times, network staff, professional development partners, and/or principals may attend school-based team meetings to support and engage in the collaborative inquiry work.

Teacher Teams engaged in Collaborative Inquiry

The New York City Department of Education has engaged in a theory of action that situates the power of closing the achievement gap within a nested system of professional development that emerges from teacher teams engaged in a collaborative inquiry process. These teacher teams are well positioned to use a collaborative inquiry process to align their curriculum and assessments to the Common Core Standards. By coming together on a regular basis to reflect on the tasks, tools, and structures developed during this pilot, teachers will develop, revise and/or enrich their instructional planning.

Note: To illustrate how teacher teams can use a collaborative inquiry process to engage in this work, we have provided an expanded definition of collaborative inquiry as well as illustrated diagrams of the Collaborative Inquiry Process on the following three pages.

About Collaborative Inquiry

The NYC Department of Education has defined collaborative inquiry as a sustained process designed to empower teachers to support improved student achievement and to close the achievement gap. Inquiry is:

- Conducted by teams of teachers focused on small groups of students.
- Guided by a systematic, data-informed approach.
- Focused on developing and deepening rigorous instructional strategies and frameworks.

Why Inquiry Matters

Bringing together teams of teachers around school-based inquiry:

1. **Empowers** teachers to make the decisions about how best to instruct their students and therefore be held **accountable** for the results.
2. Supports the development of **leadership** at all levels of the school organization.
3. Improves **learning** and **teaching** within schools.

This is the essence of the Children First reforms. It is the best strategy we have for quickly transforming the practices of 70,000 teachers and closing the achievement gap.

An inquiry approach improves student outcomes by:

- Focusing on how and what students are learning.
- Supporting teachers to study both quantitative and qualitative student data.
- Fostering collaboration around teacher practice to better reach students.
- Enabling teachers to surface trends across groups of students.
- Providing a deeper context for parent-teacher communication.

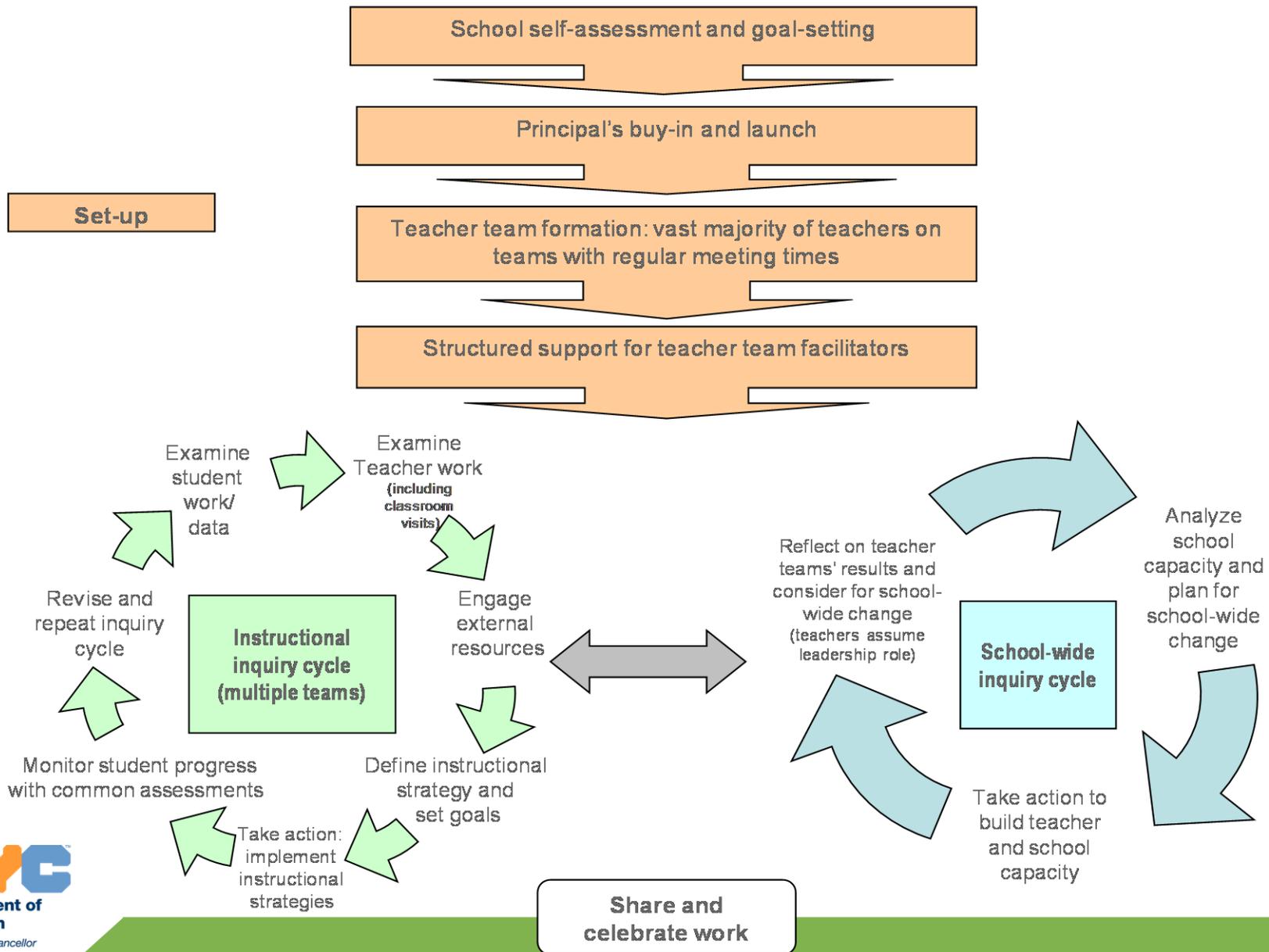
An inquiry approach builds teacher capacity and efficiency by:

- Helping reduce teacher isolation and minimize duplication of work, coordinating instructional planning.
- Creating a safe space for teachers to exchange constructive feedback.
- Enhancing the sharing of resources and effective teaching strategies.
- Encouraging teachers to identify and implement research-based instructional strategies.
- Building teacher confidence by experiencing success with a small group of students.

An inquiry approach builds school capacity by:

- Focusing teachers on aligning assessment, curriculum, instruction and professional development to create a coherent and efficient system.
- Creating a space for teacher teams to share best practices and implement system-wide improvements.
- Promoting shared responsibility for the learning of all students and teachers.
- Supporting the sharing of promising practices between schools.

The Collaborative Inquiry Process



Note: This diagram elaborates on a component of the inquiry process illustrated on the previous page. It is meant not as a stand-alone document but to be read in conjunction with the Secondary Literacy Pilot Program Overview.

- Examine student work, student data to identify trends and patterns in student learning.
- Check if students are on the correct trajectory as articulated in the Common Core Standards.
- If a student or cohorts of students are not exhibiting what they “need to know and be able to do”, teachers and/or teacher teams may need to revisit their literacy lesson/unit plans- and revise/modify and/or enrich as necessary- and then repeat the inquiry process to ensure all students are moving along the developmental continuum for college and career readiness.

- Look at reading assessment data.
- Look at and confer on student classroom data from summative assessments.
- Look at and confer on student classroom data from formative assessments.
- Look at and confer on student work products, collections of work, portfolios.
- Study work to understand student comprehension (reading/writing connections).

Revise and repeat inquiry cycle

Examine student work/data

**Possible ways
Teacher Teams can use the
Collaborative Inquiry Cycle**

- Use literacy assessment tool(s), common classroom-based assessments and student work/student data to review and assess using rubrics (see also Examine Student work/data).
- Study conference notes.
- Compare student work/progress to instructional goals.

Monitor student progress

Examine teacher work (including classroom visits)

- Study teacher designed literacy plans.
- Look at conference-note templates.
- Study cross-disciplinary performance of students.
- Study teacher-designed classroom-based assessments.
- Study individual maps, lesson plans, classroom-based data.
- Visit colleagues’ classrooms.
- Engage in Lesson Study.

- Enact new strategies that are aligned with individual goals.
- Consider grouping strategies to address common needs.
- Collaboratively align literacy instruction horizontally for instructional coherence and continuum of learning.
- Change/enrich/expand teacher pedagogy, across disciplines to align with students’ cumulative assessment data.
- Enact instructional “next steps”, etc.

Take action: Implement instructional strategy

Engage external resources

- Review Common Core State Standards.
- Review NY State Standards.
- Review professional books.
- Materials developed by PD partners and posted on ARIS Connect.
- Look at other online resources.
- Look at other schools’ cross-disciplinary literacy strategies to surface innovation and opportunity.
- Study young adult literature and text levels.
- Collect informational texts at different text levels.

Define instructional strategy and set goals

- Work on individual goals and instructional “next steps” for each student.
- Study text complexity and student levels to set literacy goals.
- As a team, analyze literacy assessment data, record trends, align instructional objectives to the Common Core, and ensure literacy strategies and plans are mapped backwards from instructional goals, etc.

