

GEARING UP FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEXT GENERATION STANDARDS:
PLANNING DISCUSSIONS TO DEFINE THE ELEMENTS THAT SUPPORT THE P-3 INSTRUCTIONAL CYCLE
 JANUARY 2018

Purpose	School administrators and teachers can use this planning tool to structure meetings and conversations about the elements that support the Prekindergarten to 3rd Grade (P-3) instructional cycle within the context of New York State’s Next Generation Early Learning Standards.
Objectives	<p>At the end of the meeting, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate key messages about the Next Generation Standards for young learners. • Define and distinguish between learning standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. • Describe implementation challenges. • List strategies for managing challenges.
Materials	<p>(1) Optional presentation slide template [Attached]</p> <p>(2) Pre-Meeting Assignment Handout: <i>Introduction to the New York State Next Generation Early Learning Standards</i> [http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/introduction-to-the-nys-early-learning-standards.pdf]</p> <p>(3) Optional Pre-Meeting Assignment Video: <i>Standards, not Standardization: The Early Learning Standards and Diverse Populations</i> [NOT AVAILABLE AS OF 1/25/2018 Check back here: http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/next-generation-ela-math-learning-standards-conference-november-2017]</p> <p>(4) Handout: <i>A Resource for Understanding the Relationships Between the State Standards and the Prekindergarten to 3rd Grade Instructional Cycle</i> [http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/standards-and-the-instructional-cycle-document-11-30-17-conference.pdf]</p> <p>(5) Handout: <i>Discussion Scenarios Sets 1-3</i> [Attached]</p> <p>(6) Flipchart paper or projected notes</p>
Time	Approximately 2 hours. The times given for each activity can be adjusted to meet the needs of participants.



Plan an extended staff meeting that includes P-3 teachers, specialists, coaches, aides, and others to:

- Review the *Introduction to the New York State Next Generation Early Learning Standards*.
- Learn about the relationships and distinctions among learning standards and the instructional cycle with a focus on the nature of children’s learning and development in P-3.
- Explore scenarios to facilitate discussions of issues related to the P-3 Standards implementation.
- Explore local solutions.

I. Pre-Meeting Assignment and Preparation:

Prior to the meeting, ask teachers, specialists and aides to read through the pre-meeting handout, *Introduction to the New York State Next Generation Early Learning Standards* and highlight statements and/or concepts that resonate most with them. It should take approximately 10 minutes. Provide participants the option of also watching a presentation about the Introduction, *Standards, not Standardization: The Early Learning Standards and Diverse Populations*. The video is approximately 50 minutes long.

Explain that they will discuss the key messages and concepts they identify as a full group at the staff meeting.

If you choose to use slides for your meeting(s), customize the optional slide template.

Review the script provided below and adjust times to fit your needs.

II. Meeting Overview

Introduction (5 minutes)

Put the following into your own words:

As you know, New York State has undergone an extensive standards revision process and has recently rolled out the Next Generation Learning Standards. We have until 2020-2021 [<http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/next-generation-learning-standards-and-assessment-implementation-timeline>] to familiarize ourselves with the new State Standards and to understand the rationale behind many of the changes so we can make thoughtful modifications that are in the best interests of young students in our local programs.

Throughout the review and public comment process, the State heard from educators, parents, community members, early childhood professionals and others that the Standards needed to do a better job of articulating the unique nature of learning in P-3. In addition to wording, alignment, and structure changes to the standards themselves, there was a need to distinguish between the various elements of the whole instructional cycle.

There was a lot of discussion about whether standards pushed developmentally appropriate practice to the side in favor of “rigor” coupled with a concern about pushing standards down, rather than using P-3 as a foundation to be pushed up. And these are fair concerns. This theme of appropriateness also came up during the summer 2016 ELA committee. The discussions would start with the standards, but then move into other areas of the instructional cycle. There was a lot of concern that standards were unintentionally moving school programs away from what were developmentally appropriate practices (like play-based instruction, highly integrated curricula, experiential approaches, child-directed opportunities) to what was considered more “academic” or “rigorous” practices (like narrowed instructional focus, rigid and tightly paced schedules, few opportunities for play and discovery). And we think that’s because there is a lot of myth about developmentally appropriate practice. Myths such as – developmentally appropriate practices aren’t grounded in evidence; that they diminish rigor; don’t require any planning; only apply to children birth to 4. None of these myths are true. Because of this, it is important to focus on defining each element of the instructional cycle to communicate that a standards-based framework is compatible with developmentally appropriate practice in P-3 (and vice versa).

This meeting is designed as a precursor to our next stage of work, which will be to study the standard revisions and plan local implementation. Today, we’ll focus on the elements that support the P-3 instructional cycle within the context of New York State’s Next Generation Early Learning Standards. By the end of the meeting, we should be able to:

- Articulate key messages about the Next Generation standards for young learners
- Define and distinguish between learning standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Describe common implementation challenges
- List strategies for managing challenges

III. Review Key Messages and Concepts About the Next Generation Standards for P-3

Activity: Key Messages and Concepts (20 minutes)

- (1) Ask the group to take out their marked-up copy of the *Introduction to the New York State Next Generation Early Learning Standards* from the pre-meeting assignment.
- (2) Split the group into pairs.
- (3) Ask pairs to take turns sharing key messages/concepts that resonated with them.
- (4) Return to the whole group. Ask each pair group to share up to three key messages/concepts with the whole group.
- (5) Record key messages/concepts on chart paper or electronically on a projected screen.
- (6) Discuss the following:
 - Did you notice any common themes across the groups? Why do you think it was important to emphasize these messages/concepts? Did these seem to be about standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment, or a combination? Why do you think it's important to make those distinctions?
 - Wrap-up: This activity not only provided some high-level background to help us understand the issues related to P-3 standards implementation, it also demonstrated the need to tease out and distinguish between standards for learning and the elements that make up the instructional cycle, which is not standardized. Next, we'll dig into these distinctions and then work on common real-life scenarios.

IV. Standards for Learning and the Instructional Cycle

Introduction: (5 minutes)

- (1) Distribute Handout: *A Resource for Understanding the Relationships Between the State Standards and the Prekindergarten to 3rd Grade Instructional Cycle*. Explain that the illustration on the front depicts the elements of the instructional cycle and their relationships and the back provides a deeper narrative description of each. Highlight the following:
 - Students are at the center, which signifies that it means ALL students, WHOLE students, and DIVERSE students. The double arrows between student learning and the three elements remind us that students are active participants and at the core of the instructional process.
 - While the State Standards serve as a framework, the elements within the instructional cycle are cyclical in nature and work together in multiple ways. State Standards provide a framework for districts to develop and vertically and horizontally align local curriculum. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment

function together in an ongoing manner, where one regularly informs the other in a plan – teach- reflect – adjust pattern to support student learning.

(2) Next, we're going to work in teams to explore each element more carefully.

Activity: Defining Standards, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment (30 minutes)

- (1) Divide staff into teams (pairs or larger, depending on the size of the group) so that you end up with at least four small groups.
- (2) Assign each team either Standards, Curriculum, Instruction, or Assessment (you may end up with more than one team per element).
- (3) Ask each team to carefully read the narrative descriptions for the assigned element.
- (4) Using chart paper or projected notes, ask each team to prepare a mini-presentation on their element for the whole group.
- (5) Explain that the purpose of this activity is to help the group define and distinguish between the elements and to highlight any P-3 nuances.
- (6) Ask each team to present their lesson to the whole group.
- (7) Discuss the following:
 - Now that we have a firm understanding of each of the elements, we're going to work on a set of scenarios that bring some local-level implementation challenges to light.
 - Before we do that, let's take a quick break.

Break: (5-10 minutes)

Activity: Discussion Scenarios (30 minutes)

- (1) Distribute Handout: *Discussion Scenarios Sets 1-3* so that each small group ends up with one set.
- (2) Split the group into small teams of 4-5. The teams should be large enough to promote active discussion. Depending on the size of the group, you may decide not to split the group into teams.
- (3) Explain that there are three sets of scenarios but that each team will be looking at one set of five. Explain that these are real scenarios from across the state and that they are common.
- (4) Ask the teams to read through the five scenarios individually.
- (5) Ask the group to discuss the scenarios in their teams using the guiding questions (Which element does this relate to most? Is this based on a state or local decision/assumption?) and come up with possible solutions (How would you address the challenge?)
- (6) Ask each team to assign a reporter who will report out to the whole group.

- (7) Whole group report-out: Ask each team to state the scenario and summarize the discussion. You may choose to limit the report out to one or two scenarios per team, depending on time limitations.
- (8) Discuss the following:
- What surprised you about the scenarios? How do you think these scenarios relate to standards implementation? Why do you think it's important for us to think about our local instructional cycle as we gear up to implement the new standards? Where you able to connect the challenges highlighted in the scenarios with the *Introduction* and the *Resource* we reviewed today?
 - There is no doubt that some of these scenarios ring true for us as well!

V. Whole Meeting Wrap-up

Final Wrap-Up Activity: (20 minutes)

Put the following into your own words:

Given the key messages from the introductory materials, our own learning about P-3 over the last several years, and a renewed understanding about implementation, let's reflect on our current practice.

Discuss the following as a whole group:

- What are our strengths? For example, curriculum development processes that emphasize integrated learning experiences, a formative assessment system inclusive of social/emotional development markers that teachers use to adjust instructional approaches, flexible classrooms that promote teacher-child interactions.
- What areas do you think we could use support in as we begin learning about the Next Generation Standards and why? For example, no mechanism to adjust curricular pacing; little flexibility to incorporate purposeful play and extended interactions; no curricular goals for social and emotional development; narrow assessment focus on code-based skills. What structural/administrative supports do you think we might need to address these challenges (e.g., collaborative planning time, review curricular goals, introduction of classroom centers, daily schedule review, play materials to support instruction, child development workshops)?
- Record answers.
- Wrap-up: As we dive into the revised Standards, we will use these ideas to inform our local implementation.