



Danya Labban
Auditor General

July 2, 2014

Mr. Frank Patone
Audit Director
Office of the State Comptroller
Division of State Government Accountability
123 William Street
New York, NY 10038

Re: Status Update on Recommendations in the OSC Audit of the Department's Compliance with State Arts Education Requirements (Report 2011-N-4)

Dear Mr. Patone:

This letter constitutes the New York City Department of Education's (Department) status update on recommendations made by the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) on the Department's Compliance with State Arts Education Requirements. While the Department disagreed with the OSC's conclusions about arts education in New York City high schools, we did agree with the two audit recommendations as follows:

- Ensure that NYC high school students receive an Arts education that complies with SED Regulations.
- Work with high school officials to ensure that they are aware of and maintain documentation to support compliance with SED Regulations.

The Department is providing the following update on the status of these recommendations:

- 1) In order to assure consistent alignment of arts course work across multiple high school sites and given that New York State does not have the capacity to review the hundreds of high school arts course syllabi that would need to be approved annually, the DOE is devising frameworks for high school arts instruction in dance, music, theater and visual arts for the basic introductory arts courses. These high school arts frameworks will be standards aligned (New York State Arts Standards and The New York City Blueprints for Teaching and Learning in the Arts) and will provide clear expectations for student learning in each art form upon the completion of the course of study. These frameworks will be available to all high schools by August 31, 2014.

- 2) Regarding records retention that complies with SED Regulations, the Department continues to work to provide clear records retention guidelines for course hours, including mechanisms for schools to capture and maintain this information.

Subsequent to the audit report, the Department has:

- i. Improved tracking of Arts teacher certification via BEDS.
- ii. Pre-populated via STARS (the DOE's course coding system) all Middle and High School teacher assignments to reduce school level error.
- iii. Issued clear guidance, and training, on retention of course syllabi in February 2012. This will occur annually in the fall of each year.
- iv. Provided clear documentation and retention of course hour data through upgrades to the STARS system.

The Department has been working with high school officials to ensure that they are aware of and maintain documentation for high school arts instructional syllabi. The Chancellor will send a message to all school leaders in the fall of 2014 through the weekly news e-letter, Principals Weekly, reminding them of the requirement to retain course syllabi records for all arts instruction. Additionally, requirements will be re-enforced on an ongoing basis through clear messaging from the Office of School Support and through support of network leaders. This will occur on an annual basis as part of the fall school reminders.

The Department's efforts outlined above effectively address the report's recommendations.

Sincerely,



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C: Michael Solomon
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