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Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

The New York State Education Department is charged with developing student learning expectations (standards) for what all students should know and be able to do as a result of skilled instruction. Teachers develop curricula in each local school district following these established standards.

Questions about a school's curriculum are to be expected. To different people, the term can mean a variety of things. To some, it may refer to the academic courses offered at a school. Others believe it is the standards, or what is taught in a classroom. Additionally, there may be instances when curriculum decisions, and/or disagreements, require a balance of state, school district, parental, and student interests. As a result, any discussion of curriculum must begin with a shared understanding of the term.

The term "curriculum" refers to the order in which teachers present learning experiences in a course or grade level. These learning experiences are what enable students to meet the New York State Learning Standards. The Board of Regents and the State Education Department have adopted learning standards and mandated that the school curriculum align with them. The curriculum is often presented as units and lessons, and typically includes an outline of the content, concepts, and skills that teachers will teach and in which order they will be covered.

As a result, curriculum and learning standards are not synonymous. Learning standards define the knowledge and skills that students must acquire by the end of each school year. In practical terms, the curriculum brings learning standards to life through instruction that increases students' ability to learn and apply what they've learned.

In New York, there is no state-mandated curriculum. However, there are certain curriculum areas in which public schools must provide instruction. These include English language arts; mathematics, science, and technology; social studies; world languages; the arts; health, physical education; family and consumer sciences; career development, and occupational studies.

There are numerous materials and resources available to aid in the creation of a high-quality curriculum. Examples are textbooks, media, online/digital resources, laboratory equipment, workbooks and teacher manuals, and lesson plans.

Educators frequently refer to the curriculum as a living document. The information-gathering process used to make informed changes includes analyzing and evaluating the current curriculum and evolving student needs, as well as a review of data showing whether students are meeting targeted learning expectations.

Overall, our program must remain flexible enough to meet the various needs of our learners, thanks to differentiated instruction, curriculum, and developmentally

appropriate instructional strategies. The program is also comprehensive to provide our students with a broad educational foundation.