
Office of Standards & Instruction Newsletter

A quarterly newsletter from the NYS Education Department's Office of Standards and Instruction

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Statewide Elementary Math Tournament

The New York State Education Department and First in Math are hosting a spring 2023 statewide mathematics tournament comprised of virtual regional contests and an in-person statewide event.

This competitive event will bring together elementary students, educators, and families, in a friendly and supportive environment geared toward encouraging students to strengthen and apply math knowledge and skills.

The Elementary Mathematics Tournament is a component of the New York State Expanded Math Access Program, the goal of which is to support math fluency and build a love of math for NYS students in grades K-5. As part of the program, New York State has made available to schools and families, for free, the First in Math Program, a nationally recognized resource that offers games, activities, and contests to thousands of schools and their students nationwide.

First in Math provides students with access to online standards-based math games and activities **at no cost to NYS districts, schools, or students.**

The 2023 Elementary Mathematics Tournament consists of a virtual regional contest (qualifying round) and an in-person Statewide Championship event.

The virtual regional contest will focus on the popular 24® Game series featured in the First In Math online program. These games test fact fluency, automaticity, problem solving, procedural fluency and other critical math skills. As children practice, the games' simple structures allow learners to engage quickly, seek out higher levels of challenge, and increase confidence in mental-math abilities.

All students in grades 1 to 5 enrolled in the First in Math program will receive an invitation to compete in the Virtual Regional Contest on Thursday, March 30, 2023, which will take place during school hours on a flexible schedule.

Regional winners will earn a spot at the NY State event at SUNY Albany on Saturday, May 20th, 2023.

At the Statewide Championship Event, students

will use game cards (representing online activities they can practice) competitively in a group setting to demonstrate, through modeling, their conceptual understanding.

Student prizes include personalized trophies for grade level winners (three students per grade) at Regional and Statewide events, and certificates for all participants.

Winning schools at each grade level will receive a \$1,000 reward for the Regional Contests, and a \$5,000 reward for the Statewide event.

For more information regarding the First in Math the Expanded Math Access Program, visit the Office of Standards and Instruction's mathematics webpage.

The First in Math program, and participation in the Tournament, is available to all schools and programs that educate students in grades K-5 in New York State. Schools and districts interested in signing up for First in Math may contact Nan Ronis, Executive VP of First in Math, at nan@firstinmath.com.

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New York State 2023 Teacher of the Year: William “Billy” Green

On September 13, 2022, the Board of Regents named William “Billy” Green the New York State Teacher of the Year. Green, a chemistry teacher at A. Philip Randolph Campus High School in the New York City Department of Education’s (NYCDOE) Geographic District #6 in Manhattan, will now serve as an ambassador for teachers across the state and as the New York State nominee for National Teacher of the Year.

Green believes his work is to create spaces for learning that empower marginalized people to find their place in STEAM by being responsive to the multiple identities of individuals. “Teachers make people feel special and that is the highest honor we hold,” he stated.

Green’s professional pursuits and extensive experiences have earned him many accolades. He is currently a FabLearn International Technology Fellow, a National Science Teachers Association *Amgen*

Fellow, and served as a NASA Endeavor STEM Leadership Fellow. He was a finalist for the New York State Teacher of the Year in 2019 and for the New York City Department of Education Big Apple Teacher of the Year in 2018.

Green sees himself as “an educator, advocate, and storyteller,” and he follows a philosophy that “opportunities created by great teaching and learning have the power to change an individual, a family, and a community.”

He believes in expanding student choice and agency and insists that students be seen as knowledgeable persons worthy of contributions.

And his tireless commitment to students extends beyond his classroom. Green partners with East Harlem community-based organizations to provide sustainable inclusive programming for LGBTQ youth which include educational, social, and emotional support in a safe space.



He collaborates with Opus Dance Theatre, Inc. to develop international Arts in Education camps in Africa which, using art, preserve and advocate for the cultures of indigenous people.

He hopes that his work inspires other educators and community members. “It is with great honor that I will represent New York State teachers and embody the resilience, care, and high-quality practices that we provide our students.”

Watch this interview with Billy Green on the NYSED website.



Test Development Opportunities with the Office of State Assessment

Interested in participating in the test development process for New York State exams? The Department offers many opportunities for certified teachers and administrators. Visit the Office of State Assessment’s [Test Development Opportunities page](#) for more information.

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Board of Regents Continues Flexibilities in Ways to Provide Laboratory Experiences

At the September Board of Regents meeting, the Board made permanent the option for schools to design and offer hands-on or simulated laboratory experiences—or a combination of the two—to meet the 1,200 minute laboratory requirement to take a Regents Examination in science.

While still promoting hands-on science exploration, the Board of Regents encourages local school and district flexibility to best meet the needs of students. Additional information may be found in the FAQ posted on the NYSED Science page.

Applications Being Accepted for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) are the highest honors bestowed by the United States government for K-12 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics teaching. The National Science Foundation administers PAEMST on behalf of The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. The new application cycle is now under way! Nominations will close on January 9th, 2023 and applications must be completed by February 6th,

2023. Recipients of the PAEMST award receive a certificate signed by the President of the United States, a paid trip to Washington, D.C. to attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities, a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation (NSF), and an opportunity to build lasting partnerships with colleagues across the nation. For more information, please visit PAEMST or the Department's Awards and Scholarships page.



Children of transitioning military families are provided flexibility under the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

In 2014, the State of New York adopted the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (the Compact) into law. The Compact addresses the challenges facing military children as a result of their frequent relocations. It establishes a framework for uniform treatment of military children as they transfer between school districts and states. The compact outlines the requirements that school districts must adhere to when enrolling and educating children of active duty military personnel. Regulatory language and guidance including a memo and FAQ can be found on NYSED's [Interstate Compact webpage](#). Further questions can be directed to our Office of Standards and Instruction at (518) 474-5922 or MilitaryCompact@nysed.gov.

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Teacher Spotlight

Kate Bala, a second grade teacher at Lowville Academy Elementary School, uses science to connect with her students

Meet Mrs. Kate Bala, a 2nd grade teacher at Lowville Academy Elementary school in Lowville, NY.

Bubble gum. It is all part of Bala's approach to interdisciplinary instruction, an approach that taps into the inquisitive nature of children and encourages growth and curiosity across disciplines.

"I start with bubble gum and butterflies," Bala explains. On the first day of school, she passes out bubble gum to her students and asks them to close their eyes and make observations. From here, science forms the foundation for instruction for her students. They make sensory observations, record information on charts, relate questions and statements to declarative and interrogative sentences, generate descriptive language to express their findings in journals, note the properties of gum and investigate similar properties in observable materials. Students read "Bubble Gum Brain" by Julia Cook, they measure and graph the size of bubble gum bubbles, they discuss their findings with classmates, they make and evaluate claims, and they agree and disagree using



the evidence that they themselves acquired.

Writing tasks are scaffolded around inquiry, word problems in math are approached using models they designed, social studies skills are developed by applying these observation skills to primary source documents. Students draw, students move, students talk, students actively participate in their own learning.

And gum is just the beginning. Throughout the year, science forms the groundwork for all instruction. "I help students look at every lesson through a science lens and employ the cross-cutting concepts daily," she explains. "Science is everywhere. Why not use this notion as a catalyst for learning opportunities?"

It is through science that Bala garners excitement and engagement with her students. "Students identify as

scientists," she said, "The students' engagement and natural curiosity became undeniable. I hand over the reins to my students and allow them to drive the lesson."

Philomena Goss, principal at Lowville Academy, has taken notice of the attainments in Mrs. Bala's classroom. "Mrs. Bala's students learn content naturally when she treats them like scientists and guides their wonders, encourages their collaboration, and inspires them to think."

Bala shares her approach by professional development to new teachers in her building by modeling three-dimensional teaching, an approach to science teaching that incorporates disciplinary instruction. "I can *talk the talk* because I *walk the walk*. I am shoulder to shoulder with educators and use this position to truly get on their level and deliver effective professional learning that makes an impact," she said. Bala credits the Science Network meetings at Jefferson-Lewis BOCES for sharing the impact of three-dimensional learning.

"I love what I do, every, single day. If I can foster a love for learning in children and incite the desire to figure something out...for me it's like the hokey pokey...that's what it's all about."

That, and a lot of bubble gum.
