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Dear Colleagues,

NYSUT has steadfastly supported high-quality, rigorous student learning standards since the inception of New York state's standards movement in 1996. We support the Common Core State Standards and believe that successful implementation will greatly benefit our students. Implementing and integrating the Standards in a classroom, across grade levels, across content areas and in an entire school community (which of course, includes parents/caregivers) is a formidable task — particularly at this time of fiscal difficulties.

This volume of *Educator's Voice* focuses on the **Instructional Shifts** which accompany the *New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy*. These include: achieving a balance of informational and literary texts in instruction; building knowledge primarily through text; building learning activities around complex, grade-appropriate texts; focusing on text- and evidence-based questions and conversations; writing with use of evidence to inform argument; and building academic vocabulary — particularly transferable vocabulary needed to access complex texts across content areas. A more accurate phrase than Instructional Shifts might be Instructional Emphases, since many NYSUT members have been implementing one or more of these particular practices routinely as part of their teaching repertoires.

Successful implementation requires appropriate support through curriculum resources, professional development, instructional materials, time, and organizational structures needed for collaboration. NYSUT has and will continue to advocate for the resources that our students and their educators need. This is particularly critical for students such as those with disabilities and those learning a new language.

We are proud to provide a forum for teachers to share their expertise. These descriptions add to a growing library of best practices with Common Core Standards developed by and for teachers. NYSUT commends the talented teachers who have shared their work in this volume. These descriptions are testimony to the creativity, talent, and drive of their authors. Sharing is characteristic of our members — and so to our members, thank you for sharing, and most importantly, thank you for your tremendous contributions to student success. Your commitment to our students, families, and communities is inspiring!

Sincerely,

Maria Neira
Vice President, NYSUT

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