

★ English criteria lauded

NY among states rated 'good' in national review

BY JOHN HILDEBRAND
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New York State's academic standards for English Language Arts continue to set relatively high goals for students after revisions last year that included jettisoning the Common Core label, a new national review concludes.

The reviewers faulted New York, however, for failing to pair its standards with specific lists of high-quality literary works, such as Shakespearean dramas. Such lists could help teachers select appropriate readings for students, the report said.

The state's English benchmarks, which cover instruction from preschool through 12th grade, got a quality rating of "good" from a review team assembled by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a Washington, D.C., think tank. The group's 156-page report was re-

leased early Wednesday.

New York was among seven states, including Indiana and Pennsylvania, that received "good" ratings. Indiana scored highest in that group. Seven other states, including Texas, Missouri and Virginia, got lower marks of "weak" or "inadequate."

All of the 14 states selected for a thorough review of English standards had made substantial changes in their Common Core academic guidelines over the past six years. The reviewers were curriculum experts, selected from university faculties across the country.

"They didn't get the highest rating. There were certainly states that had higher standards, but they weren't the worst," said Amber Northern, the institute's senior vice president for research, in reference to New York's standing. "It wasn't a train wreck what they did here, but they took out some pretty important things."

Jonathan Burman, a spokesman for the state Education Department, said the agency was reviewing the report and declined to comment on spe-



Students take the state English Language Arts test at Davison Avenue School in Malverne on April 12.

JEFF BACHNER

cific findings. National Common Core academic standards were adopted by New York and 44 other states shortly after their approval by the National Governors Association in 2010.

One feature of the guidelines was an accompanying list of "exemplars" — dozens of fiction and nonfiction works, poems, historical documents and other readings that academic experts considered challenging for students on specific grade levels. Selections ranged from Dr. Seuss' "Green Eggs and Ham" beginner children's book in kindergarten to Ernest Hemingway's novel "A Farewell to Arms" in 11th grade.

The Fordham Institute analysts sought to determine what had happened to those benchmarks and exemplars over the past five or six years, in the aftermath of widespread revolts by teachers, parents and students against standardized tests that were tied to the Common Core

standards. The upheaval hit hardest on Long Island, where tens of thousands of students boycotted state exams in English and math each year.

In response, New York's Board of Regents last September approved amended sets of standards in both ELA and math, renamed Next Generation Learning Standards. The Regents said at the time that the guidelines remained rigorous.

The institute's analysts, in Wednesday's report, agreed that the state's English benchmarks were clear and well-written overall, and that they lay out a framework of learning requirements "that will support many students' college and career aspirations." The analysts decided that state math standards had not been changed enough to warrant review.

At the same time, reviewers deplored the lack of specific guidance on appropriate English

reading material — guidance previously provided in the Common Core exemplar lists, now discarded.

The report, titled "The State of State Standards Post-Common Core," concludes that some language in New York's standards "could be interpreted to mean that students do not need to read grade-level texts."

Funding for the project included a grant from the foundation of software billionaire Bill Gates, a major supporter of Common Core.

Vincent Cereola, the English department chairman at Ward Melville High School in Seatauket, said exemplars could be appropriate under some circumstances, but that teachers need to be given discretion in choosing reading material for individual students.

"We want to have foundational texts that struggling readers will find engaging," he said.

Henry Schein on list of firms 'changing the world'

BY VICTOR OCASIO
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Henry Schein Inc., Long Island's largest public company, has been selected by Fortune magazine as one of 57 companies worldwide that are "changing the world."

The Melville-based dental and health care products distributor is ranked No. 29 on Fortune's "Change the World" list along with companies like Apple, Google parent Alphabet, and the Alibaba Group.

The list, released Tuesday, is made up of companies that are "doing well by doing good" — that is, they have found ways to increase business through socially responsible causes.

Henry Schein was recognized for three initiatives it has used to improve oral health for those in need around the world: the Alpha Omega-Henry Schein Cares Holocaust Survivors Oral Health Program, which provides free dental care to Holo-

caust survivors across North America; Give Kids A Smile, a program developed with the American Dental Association that has provided free oral health care to more than 5.5 million children in need in the United States; and the Global Student Outreach Program, an initiative that partners the company with dental schools around the world to improve health for underserved communities.

"Since our earliest days, we at Henry Schein have worked

to align our strengths as a business with the needs of society, so it is greatly rewarding to be named to Fortune's 'Change the World' list," Stanley M. Bergman, chief executive and chairman of the board of Henry Schein, said in a statement.

The company said its efforts have been beneficial to business.

Henry Schein customers who participate in the Give Kids A Smile program purchase 10 percent more in products on average than those who

don't participate, the company said. Similarly, dental school partners that participated in the Global Student Outreach Program in 2016 and 2017 "increased their year-to-year business" with the company at more than twice the rate of the average dental school customer.

Henry Schein is the largest local public company based on revenue of about \$12.5 billion in 2017. The company has 1,430 employees on Long Island and about 22,000 worldwide.