TO: Chief School Administrators  
Charter School Lead Persons  

FROM: Tracey Severns Ed.D. Chief Academic Officer  

SUBJECT: New Jersey Department of Education Announces Common Core Model Lesson/Unit Plan Awards  

On behalf of the Office of Academic Standards, we proudly announce the Common Core Model Lesson/Unit Awards. The awards recognize exemplary lesson and unit plans that support New Jersey educators in successfully delivering curriculum aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in ELA/Literacy and mathematics. Submissions will be vetted against national quality rubrics and principles. The highest scoring plans will be recognized and rewarded by the state.

Objectives for offering NJ teachers this opportunity  

- Increase the supply of high quality, CCSS aligned lessons and units specifically designed by and for NJ teachers;  
- Provide tools to shift current classroom practices to the expectations set forth in the CCSS;  
- Widely distribute exemplars, complete with step-by-step strategies shown to work in NJ classrooms, schools, and districts;  
- Provide an opportunity for all NJ teachers to learn from the experience of their peers and to self-regulate their own capacity before implementing new strategies; and  
- Provide NJ teachers with opportunities for recognition and rewards by the State.

Award-winning plans generated, submitted, and vetted by practicing NJ educators  

When practicing teachers vet their instructional plans against national quality-based rubrics and principles, the process serves as a powerful method to identify excellence in the classroom. Current NJ teachers who are using the CCSS to improve student success are encouraged to submit lesson and unit plans to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) for scoring against the Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products rubrics (EQuIP) and the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). EQuIP is an initiative of the American Diploma Project Network designed to identify high-quality materials aligned to the CCSS. UDL is a framework and set of principles intended to guide the design of inclusive classroom instruction and ensures that course materials are accessible for all learners. The EQuIP alignment process and UDL principles will be used to ensure the highest quality CCSS practices. For more information, please visit: EQuIP: http://www.achieve.org/EQuIP and UDL: http://www.cast.org/udl/.
**Quality submissions endorsed and rewarded**

When vetted against the EQuIP rubric and UDL principles, exemplary lesson and unit plans will be included on the Educator Resource Exchange (njcore.org) for the benefit of other NJ educators. The exemplary lesson and unit plans will be identified with an insignia representing a lesson/unit plan of state endorsed distinction.

We recognize that creating comprehensive plans complete with materials and supports requires a significant investment on the part of a teacher. When shared with colleagues, this exciting work is highly valued as credible guidance and inspiration for reflection, engagement, and adaptation. We believe teachers accomplishing new levels of student success through their work implementing the CCSS deserve recognition for their outstanding achievement.

1. A teacher or team of teachers contributing a *lesson* plan that earns an exemplary score will receive an award of $200, an official endorsement of their lesson plan, and state recognition.

2. A teacher or team of teachers contributing a *unit* plan that earns an exemplary score will receive an award of $500, an official endorsement of their unit plan, and state recognition.

**Plan submission**

Practicing teachers interested in submitting a lesson or unit plan for consideration of a Common Core Model Lesson/Unit Award must complete the 2014 application. A link will be provided on the NJDOE home page ([http://www.state.nj.us/education/](http://www.state.nj.us/education/)). The purpose of the application template is to collect model lesson and unit plans in a consistent structure for review, vetting and posting. The format can be used in the development of local practices but is not a state requirement for local use. Teachers in any content area at any grade level who have already seen student success by integrating CCSS with their own design for specific innovations are encouraged to submit their unique lesson and unit plans as exemplars. Applications must include all requested information. It is advised that all lesson or unit plans be aligned with the EQuIP rubrics and UDL principles prior to submission. ([http://www.achieve.org/EQuIP](http://www.achieve.org/EQuIP))

The Division of Academics and the Office of Academic Standards are using this opportunity to present a new model of support for educators. Our new definition of meaningful support is not limited to the traditional exclusive model of off-site technical assistance and workshops, attended by few and turn-keyed to many, but rather a tiered and flexible system of support that recognizes educators’ diverse levels of expertise, unique needs, interests, and valuable contributions. Successful teachers are at the centerpiece of our PD model.

We believe that you will find the Common Core Model Lesson/Unit Awards a unique opportunity to share expertise and receive well-deserved state endorsement and recognition. Your partnership is highly valued and together we can transform what and how teachers teach and students learn. Join us; we are excited to bring this new opportunity to you!
Please send any questions to: unitlesson@doe.state.nj.us.

TS/KH/WWO/unitlessonplanawards/website/memo/5-5-14
c: Members, State Board of Education
   Commissioner, David C. Hespe
   Senior Staff
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