



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
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SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

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GOVERNOR

April 18, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents of Public Schools, Directors of State Charter Schools, State Education Institutions, and BIE Schools, and District Test Coordinators

FROM: Hanna Skandera (signature on file)
Secretary-designate, Public Education Department

RE: **SBA Assessment Window**

Background and Assessment Window Changes

As we discussed at the Spring Budget Workshop, the Public Education Department is working to provide final data for AYP determinations and school grades (beginning in the 2011-2012 school year) to districts and schools in a timely manner. As a result, over the next two academic years (2011-2012 and 2012-2013), New Mexico will transition to a shorter assessment window.

Our goal is to provide data back to districts and schools in a time frame that allows for instructional decisions and planning for the upcoming academic year to be based on student achievement data. As such, for the 2011-2012 school year, districts can anticipate final SBA data back by the first week of June, with AYP and school grades finalized and released by the end of June.

Currently, New Mexico allows for a 5 week assessment window for the 3-8 and grade 11 Standards Based Assessments (SBA).

During the 2011-2012 school year, the assessment window for the NM SBA will be from March 19, 2012-April 13, 2012 (4 weeks).

During the 2012-2013 school year, the assessment window for the NM SBA will be from March 18, 2013-April 5, 2013 (3 weeks).

Basketball Tournament and Spring Break

Several districts expressed concern that a shorter SBA window will interfere with the state basketball tournament and spring break calendars for universities and students enrolled in dual credit courses. Because the window will not open until the third week of March and the basketball tournament is generally the first week of March, the Public Education Department does not anticipate any interference.

After meeting with the New Mexico Higher Education Department, the Public Education Department has determined that while there may be disruption for some students in terms of the dual credit courses, we are committed to moving forward with a 4 week window in the 2011-2012 academic year. Please see Attachment A for details on the spring breaks for several New Mexico colleges and universities.

Best Practices

As you prepare for a shorter assessment window, please make every effort to complete and return the SBA's within the first 3 weeks of the assessment window next year so that we can make a coordinated effort to have our completed materials shipped and delivered to our testing contractor Measured Progress by April 13. Of course, districts will still have the flexibility to use the 4th week of the window as a make-up week, but the sooner we can get materials to Measured Progress, the sooner we will receive actionable data.

Additionally, we want to encourage districts to consider other ways to expedite the completion of the SBA's. For example, districts could reduce the overall number of days it takes to complete all of the assessments by transitioning to fewer days overall while extending the time used for assessing on each individual day.

This has been an effective model in other states such as Kentucky where all 3-8 and high school students are assessed state-wide within 5 days. Louisiana is able to assess all students across their state within 7 days. Part of the strategy in these states, and many others, has been to extend the number of hours per day that students are being assessed.

The Public Education Department is also discussing options to expedite the return of NMAPA data and will follow-up with districts accordingly.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Tom Dauphinee at either (505) 827-6528 or tom.dauphinee@state.nm.us or Leighann Lenti at either (505) 412-2285 or Leighann.lenti@state.nm.us.

cc: Senator Cynthia Nava, Chair, Senate Education Committee
Representative Rick Miera, Chair, House Education Committee
David Abbey, Director, Legislative Finance Committee
Frances Ramirez-Maestas, Director, Legislative Education Study Committee

Subject: SBA Assessment Window
Date: April 18, 2012

ATTACHMENT A

2012 Spring Break Schedules for New Mexico Universities, Colleges, and Community Colleges

University of New Mexico: March 12-16, 2012

Highlands University: March 12-16, 2012

New Mexico Tech: March 12-16, 2012

Northern New Mexico Community College: March 12-16, 2012

Central New Mexico Community College: March 12-16, 2012

New Mexico State University: March 19-23, 2012