



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
300 DON GASPAR
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501-2786
Telephone (505) 827-5800
www.ped.state.nm.us


HANNA SKANDERA
SECRETARY- DESIGNATE OF EDUCATION

SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

December 21, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, Directors of State Educational Institutions, District Test Coordinators, Charter School Test Coordinators, and State Education Institution Test Coordinators

FROM: Hanna Skandera
Secretary-designate 

RE: REVISED ADMINISTRATION OF HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

The Statewide Assessment Program is changing to measure student growth for New Mexico's School A-F Rating System and identifying students in need of intensive intervention. These important changes are described below, and more information about high school assessment graduation requirements can be found in the attached FAQs. Changes include:

10th Grade Students Will Take SBA or NMAPA. Beginning this spring, second-year students (10th graders), will take the Standards Based Assessment in reading and math, along with third-year students (11th graders). Students with significant cognitive disabilities will take the New Mexico Alternate Performance Assessment in reading/language arts and math. Science assessments will not be administered to second year students in 2012. Scores for both second-year and third-year students will count toward high school graduation. The added administration gives students another chance to pass the high school exit exam. For testing, students will be classified by year in school rather than grade to clarify eligibility requirements.

PED will pay for testing second year students in 2012 for school districts, charter schools, and State Educational Institutions.

11th Grade Students Still Take SBA or NMAPA. Students must continue taking the SBA or NMAPA in their third year in reading/language arts, math, and science for federal accountability requirements (school and district ratings) and for calculating growth. The tests will be administered in spring, as usual.

SBA or NMAPA Retest in Fall of 4th high school year. Students not passing the SBA or NMAPA may retest in the fall of their fourth year. This will be the only retest opportunity for fourth year students.

Alternate Demonstration of Competency. Students not passing the SBA or NMAPA fall retest can meet graduation requirements through the Alternate Demonstration of Competency (ADC). The PED is redesigning the ADC without requirements to assemble and evaluate a portfolio of student work.

The Assessment and Accountability Bureau is ready to answer your questions about these changes. Please contact Robert Romero (robert.romero1@state.nm.us or 505.827.6524), Diana Jaramillo (diana.jaramillo@state.nm.us or 505.827.6570), Charles Trujillo (NMAPA - Charles.Trujillo@state.nm.us or 505.827.6536), or Dr. Tom Dauphinee (tom.dauphinee@state.nm.us or 505.827.6528).

Your ongoing commitment to helping our students with quality information about achievement is appreciated.

HS/TD/dt

Cc: Executive Team
Leadership Team
David Abbey, Director, Legislative Finance Committee
Frances Ramirez-Maestas, Director, Legislative Education Study Committee
Gloria Rendon, NMCSA
Joe Guillen, NMSBA

Enclosures (1)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following FAQs explain new high school assessment requirements, starting in spring 2012.

Question: What scores are required to pass the SBA or NMAPA for high school graduation?

Answer: A student's highest scores in reading and math will be averaged into a composite score. Higher achievement in one area can compensate for lower achievement in the other. A 95% confidence interval based on the standard error of measurement will define the limits of a student's score. If the passing score (proficient) is inside or below those limits for any student, the student meets the assessment graduation requirement.

Question: What tests should accelerated, retained, returning, or transfer students take for high school graduation?

Answer: High school assessment requirements apply to students in a variety of circumstances. Students must take the high school assessment in reading and math twice for student growth, and once in science to meet federal accountability requirements for participation. Students must meet the high school assessment requirement for graduation.

Accelerated students:

- High school students who expect to complete coursework requirements before their fourth year should take the Grade 11 SBA/HSGA high school assessment in reading, math, and science. High schools should closely monitor accelerated students to ensure they meet assessment requirements before graduating.

Retained students:

- There are three opportunities to pass the high school graduation assessment, once in the student's second year, once in their third year, and in the fall of their fourth year. Scores in reading and math will only be counted for growth in a student's second and third years, and science will only be counted in the student's third year.

Returning students:

- Returning students who were freshmen in 2008 through 2011 are required to meet high school graduation assessment requirements, and if they are returning third- or fourth-year students, they must also take the science assessment to meet federal accountability requirements. Returning fourth-year students who expect to graduate in 2011-2012 are only required to meet coursework requirements, due to a temporary suspension of the SBA/HSGA by Senate Bill 360.

Transfer students:

- Transfer students move from out of state, from one district to another, or to another high school in the same district.
 - Out-of-state transfers-in in their fourth year must pass the graduation assessment if they did not take or pass a sending state's exit exam. If they passed a sending state's exam, they meet New Mexico high school graduation assessment requirements. Out-of-state transfers-

in during their second or third year must take the state assessment to meet graduation and accountability requirements.

- In-state transfers in their second or third year must take the state assessment to meet graduation and accountability requirements.

Question: Can target graduation proficiency scores be set for students on the Career or Ability Pathways?

Answer: New Mexico Administrative Code 6.29.1.13 (g) provides that an IEP team may set a proficiency target on the state assessment or alternate assessment for students on a Career Readiness or Ability program of study. Performance targets should be set in all content areas where a student scored below the state assessment's established proficiency level.

Question: How will students' year in high school be defined and tracked?

Answer: All students will establish their official second- and third-year status according to the year they are identified as a first-time ninth grader. STARS enrollment is utilized to establish student membership in their relevant high school graduation 4-year cohort, as well as the appropriate year for assessments. Student rosters will be available in SOAP for data review and test preparation as the assessment windows approach. Every second-year and third-year student must be tested. Note that aggregate results will now be presented in reports using the students' year in school (second-year noted as "2 Yr" and third-year noted as "3 Yr") rather than by a high school grade.