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State Superintendent of Schools

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
DATE: March 4, 2021
SUBJECT: State Assessments for 2020-2021 school year

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this presentation is to provide updated information on the administration of the 2021 State Assessments.

BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states and districts to ensure that all students graduate high school college and career ready. To measure progress against that goal, states must administer annual statewide assessments.

For families, assessment results can identify areas of concern or provide confirmation that a student is on track and progressing appropriately. The data from state assessments can help educational leaders understand how to support curricular training and implementation, identify achievement gaps and needed interventions, and direct instructional support to schools.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a unique challenge for classroom instruction as most students have spent a significant portion of the 2020-2021 school year in remote learning. We are aware of the need to make data driven decisions about instruction and needed resource allocations. Federally, we are required to administer statewide assessments to provide this data. The MSDE understands the challenges that schools face as we return to in-person, hybrid instruction. Utilizing classroom instructional time is a priority as well as gathering reliable information on student learning and gaps in understanding. To assist in minimizing the impact on the limited in-person instructional time in spring 2021, the MDSE is proposing to utilize the flexibility in the testing window as provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

ACTION:

To request State Board approval of an adjusted schedule for administration of the modified, statewide English language arts and mathematics assessments for grades 3-8 and high school.