



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
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SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR

March 11, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, District Test Coordinators (DTCs)

FROM: Gwen Perea Warniment, PhD, Deputy Secretary of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

RE: Spring 2021 Test Administration Guidance

On Friday, March 5, 2021, the PED met with the U.S. Department of Education (USED) regarding our state assessment waiver submission. We are pleased to share that USED was attentive and receptive to our state context and requested flexibility.

Following that meeting, the U.S. Department of Education released an accountability waiver application allowing all states to waive requirements for school identification and related reporting requirements in the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) for the 2020-21 school year. PED is gathering [public comment](#) on this latest accountability waiver, which will exempt New Mexico from meeting the 95% assessment participation rate normally required by ESSA, satisfying our assessment waiver request.

In light of Secretary Stewart's announcement of the return to in-person learning by April 5, 2021, all local education agencies should reevaluate opportunities to administer spring assessments to the ***greatest extent possible***. High-quality assessments are important tools used to gather data about student performance. Results from spring assessments and other measures can help educators and parents understand where students are making progress, and where they are falling behind. Data from summative and interim assessments help state and district leaders structure learning supports for students who might have struggled with their learning during the past year. This data will become crucial as schools plan for summer tutoring and acceleration.

PED recognizes that certain circumstances may inhibit the school's ability to test all students. We continue to reinforce that families with any health or related concerns should not be required to send their students to school for the sole purpose of participating in state testing. We also continue to our commitment that

schools will respect tribal sovereignty with regard to tribal public health orders. The recently released accountability waiver allows families who desire to remain remote for the remainder of the school year to do so without the school incurring a penalty for those students not being included in the school's testing program.

Summative ESSA assessments are available to LEAs for in-person administration.

To ensure valid test scores and maintain test security, spring summative assessments are to be administered and proctored in local school buildings or other approved sites. All spring assessments are available for administration. For questions on additional orders or materials shipment, please contact PED.Assessment@state.nm.us. District Test Coordinators will need to ensure correct test assignments based on the [revised guidance](#).

PED has extended spring testing windows to meet local needs.

PED has lengthened the test administration windows and added additional testing dates where possible. The [revised assessment calendar](#) is now available on the District Test Coordinator (DTC) resource page.

LEAs are required to complete the Spring 2021 Flexible Testing Survey.

As a reminder, all District Test Coordinators (DTCs) should complete and revise responses on PED's [Spring 2021 Flexible Testing Survey](#), initially due on February 15, 2021. This survey serves as an official LEA notification to PED of its intentions. DTCs should reevaluate opportunities to test in light of students being back in their building for in-person learning. Survey collection windows are as follows.

- Collection 2: March 30, 2021 (Opportunity to revise)
- Collection 3: April 15, 2021 (Opportunity to revise)
- Collection 4: May 17, 2021 (Opportunity to revise)

PED Assessment Bureau will host office hours for DTCs.

The Assessment Bureau will host two question and answer sessions for all DTCs:

- For time-sensitive dependencies on ordering tests, Thursday, March 18, 2021, at 9:00 AM MT.
- For general inquiries and all other concerns, Friday, March 26, 2021, at 9:00 AM MT.

Please contact Lynn Vásquez at Lynn.Vasquez@state.nm.us or 505.469.8967 for questions or concerns.

cc: Ryan Stewart, EdLD, Secretary
Tim Hand, PhD, Deputy Secretary
Alexis Álvarez, PhD, Director of Accountability
Lynn Vásquez, Division Director of Assessment & Learning Management Systems
New Mexico Assessment & Accountability Advisory Committee
New Mexico Technical Advisory Committee