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September 26, 2012

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Legislative Education Study Committee

**FR:** Travis Dulany

**RE:** **STAFF REPORT: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION ASSESSMENT /  
ALTERNATIVE DEMONSTRATION OF COMPETENCY**

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**Introduction**

With regard to high school graduation requirements, the Public Education Department (PED) has provided at least two guidance documents:

- on March 20, 2012, PED staff issued notice stating that the spring 2012 administration of the New Mexico Standards-based Assessment would, for the first time, serve as the exit exam for students graduating in 2013 and beyond (Attachment 1); and
- on August 31, 2012, after the school year had begun, the department disseminated guidance documents outlining requirements for alternative demonstration of competency<sup>1</sup> (Attachment 2).

This information item is being provided to the committee in the event that members receive inquiries about the newly implemented graduation requirements, and includes:

- 2013 high school graduation exit exam requirements; and
- background.

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<sup>1</sup>The memorandum issued on August 31, 2012 references another piece of correspondence, dated August 13, 2012. On September 20, 2012, Legislative Education Study Committee staff requested a copy of said August 13, 2012 memorandum; however, at the time this staff report was finalized, staff had not yet received a copy of the memo.

## 2013 High School Graduation Exit Exam Requirements

According to the August 31, 2012 guidance issued by PED, two options are available for students graduating in 2013:

- Traditional demonstration of competency:
  - for math and reading, students must achieve a certain score<sup>2</sup> on the standards-based assessment, with neither individual score below the “nearing proficient” proficiency level;
  - for science, students must achieve a certain score on the science<sup>3</sup> standards-based assessment taken during the junior year; and
  - for social studies and writing, students must demonstrate competency by passing the appropriate US History and English course.
  
- Alternative demonstration of competency:
  - for each subject area that has a related college readiness/placement exam, a student can demonstrate competency by meeting the appropriate cut score (Attachment 3) in one of the following:
    - ✓ the advanced placement exam;
    - ✓ the ACT, SAT, or PSAT;
    - ✓ the Accuplacer; or
    - ✓ International Baccalaureate curriculum;
  
  - for math, students may demonstrate competency by passing the appropriate math course:
    - ✓ Algebra II;
    - ✓ Integrated Math 3; or
    - ✓ the corresponding existing district end-of-course (EOC) exam to either Algebra II or Integrated Math 3;
  
  - for reading and writing, students can demonstrate competency by passing English 3 or its corresponding district EOC exam;
  - for science, students may demonstrate competency by passing an appropriate science course – Biology or Chemistry – or that course’s existing district EOC exam; and
  - for social studies, students may demonstrate competency by passing an appropriate US History course or that course’s district EOC exam.

Additionally, PED guidance documents specify that students must exhaust all opportunities to show competency on the standards-based assessment before alternative demonstration of competency can be considered.

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<sup>2</sup> As determined by PED, the composite score required is 2273.

<sup>3</sup> As determined by PED, the composite score required is 38 for the science portion of the standards-based assessment.

Finally, as noted in the March 20, 2012 memorandum cited previously, PED states that requirements for demonstration of competency “will be reviewed once [the department has] transitioned to the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers assessments in 2014-2015.”

## **Background**

- Since 1986, to graduate from high school in New Mexico, students had been required by statute to pass the New Mexico High School Competency Exam (NMHSCE) in certain required subjects. In testimony during the 2006 interim about college- and career-readiness of New Mexico high school students, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) heard from representatives from PED and other sources that the NMHSCE:
  - tested skills only at the eighth grade level; and
  - was not aligned with state high school standards.
- In 2007, LESC-endorsed legislation was enacted to require that, beginning in school year 2010-2011, in order to graduate from high school with a diploma of excellence, a student must demonstrate competency:
  - in required subject areas on a standards-based assessment or assessments; or
  - by means of a portfolio of standards-based indicators established by PED.
- These provisions allow PED to establish one exam, a series of exams such as EOC assessments, or a standards-based portfolio, for the following:
  - mathematics;
  - reading and language arts;
  - writing;
  - social studies, including sections on the constitutions of the United States and New Mexico; and
  - science.
- Other provisions require students who exit the school system at the end of grade 12 without having demonstrated competency on a standards-based assessment or by means of a portfolio of standards-based indicators to receive an appropriate state certificate indicating the number of credits earned and the grade completed; and allowed students who to demonstrate competency on a standards-based assessment or portfolio of standards-based indicators within five years of exiting the school system to receive a New Mexico diploma of excellence.
- Until spring 2009, high school students took the NMHSCE in their sophomore year, had five additional opportunities to retake the exam and pass it before they were scheduled to graduate, and had five years after they completed the course requirements for graduation to successfully complete all six portions of the exam to earn a diploma.

- Because statute still requires that students be given five years after they exit high school to pass the test, versions of the NMHSCE may still be required to be administered by some school districts until as late as school year 2017-2018 for some students.
- During the 2011 regular session, LESC-endorsed legislation was enacted to temporarily suspended, for school year 2011-2012, requirements to administer the following assessments:
  - in grade 11, a standards-based assessment in social studies;
  - in grades 4, 5, 7, and 11, a standards-based writing assessment;
  - in grades 9 and 10, a short-cycle diagnostic assessment in reading, language arts, and mathematics; and
  - in grade 11, a college placement assessment or a workforce readiness assessment.
- Additional provisions of the 2011 legislation permitted students graduating in school year 2011-2012 to graduate high school without demonstrating competence in required subject areas on standards-based assessments or indicators.



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HANNA SKANDERA  
SECRETARY-DESIGNATE OF EDUCATION

SUSANA MARTINEZ  
Governor

March 20, 2012

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, BIE Line Officers and Directors of State Educational Institutions

**FROM:** Pete Goldschmidt, Ph.D., Director Assessment & Accountability

**RE:** HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAM REQUIREMENTS

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This Spring's administration of the high school New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA) will constitute the first time that the NMSBA will serve as the exit exam for students graduating in 2013 and beyond. Current statute (§22-13-1.1,L) requires that students meet requirements set forth by the NM PED in math, reading, science, social studies and writing. In an effort to provide students with reasonable opportunities to demonstrate high school competency while also being mindful of the increasing rigor that our adoption of the common core state standards entails, the following criteria apply for students desiring to earn a Diploma of Excellence.

For 2013 graduates

Math and reading: consistent with the score reporting on the *Student Report to Parents*, students must achieve a total combined score on the SBA of 2272.5 and also each subject assessment must minimally meet the Nearing Proficient proficiency level.

The science, social studies and writing requirement will be met by passing the corresponding end of course (EOC) exam (i.e. final exam) that is also currently required to be administered (§22-13-1.1, k).

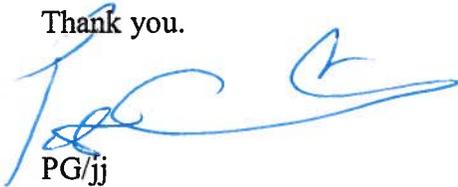
For 2014 graduates

Math and reading: consistent with the score reporting on the *Student Report to Parents*, students must achieve a total combined score on the SBA of 2272.5 and also each subject assessment must minimally meet the Nearing Proficient proficiency level.

The science, social studies and writing requirement will be met by passing the corresponding district developed, PED approved, end of course (EOC) exam.

These criteria will be reviewed once we have transitioned to the PARCC assessments in 2014-2015. Students will have three opportunities to pass the NMSBA exit exam. Once as a H2 student, once as a H3 student, and once as a H4 student. Students must also have a second opportunity to pass the EOC exam. Students who do not meet the exit criteria will have an opportunity to demonstrate competency through the alternative demonstration of competency (ADC), for which additional information will be following in a separate memo shortly.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "PG/jj", is written over the typed name "PG/jj".

PG/jj

Enclosures (1)

cc: Assessment & Accountability Division



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HANNA SKANDERA  
 SECRETARY- DESIGNATE OF EDUCATION

SUSANA MARTINEZ  
 GOVERNOR

August 31, 2012

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, Directors of State-Supported Schools, District Test Coordinators, Charter School Test Coordinators, and State-Supported Schools Test Coordinators

**FROM:** Pete Goldschmidt, PhD, Assistant Secretary, Assessment and Accountability

**RE:** HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION ASSESSMENT AND THE ALTERNATIVE DEMONSTRATION OF COMPETENCY (ADC)

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I want to provide additional clarification about my memo dated August 13, 2012, regarding a schedule change for the fall high school graduation assessment. October retests for students who have not met the math and reading composite cut score of 2273 (or 73 when excluding the grade level prefix on scores) are intended for H4 students. However, given the unique circumstance that students who are H5 in October of 2012 have had only a single administration of the SBA, they are allowed to retest during the October testing window. This exception is only available for students who were H4 during the school year 2011–2012. I encourage districts and schools to provide these H5 students this additional opportunity to meet the assessment graduation requirements.

As noted in the memo dated March 20, 2012, regarding high exit exam requirements, students must demonstrate competency in math, reading, writing, science, and social studies. Since March, the Public Education Department (PED) and the Secretary-Designate's Curriculum and Instruction Advisory Committee have met several times to solidify the assessment requirements for students desiring to graduate with a diploma of excellence. I want to reiterate that students who demonstrate competency through either the traditional demonstration of competency or the ADC will be awarded a New Mexico diploma of excellence. Also, students must exhaust all opportunities to show competency on the SBA before the ADC can be considered.

## Students Graduating in 2013

### Traditional demonstration of competency

- For math and reading, students must achieve a composite score of 2273 on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (SBA), with neither individual score below *nearing proficient*. Students who have not met this requirement through any combination of math and reading assessments as H3, H4, or H5 students can use the ADC.
- For science, students must achieve a score of 38 on the science SBA taken as an H3 student.
- For social studies and writing, students demonstrate competency by passing the appropriate English and U.S. History course.

### Alternative demonstration of competency

- For each subject area that has a related college readiness/placement exam, a student can demonstrate competency by meeting the appropriate cut score in one of the following: AP exam, ACT, SAT, PSAT, or AccuPlacer, or International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum.
- For math, students can demonstrate competency by passing the appropriate math course: Algebra II, Integrated Math 3, or its equivalents or the corresponding existing-district End of Course (EOC) exam.<sup>1</sup>
- For reading, students can demonstrate competency by passing the appropriate English course: English 3 or its corresponding existing-district EOC exam.
- For science, students can demonstrate competency by passing an appropriate science course alone or that course's existing-district EOC exam. Courses are Biology or Chemistry.
- For social studies, students can demonstrate competency by passing an appropriate U.S. History course or that course's existing-district EOC exam.
- For writing, students can demonstrate competency by passing an appropriate English course or that course's existing-district EOC exam. Courses are English 3 or its equivalent.

## Students Graduating in 2014

### Traditional demonstration of competency

- For math and reading, students must achieve a composite score of 2273 on the New Mexico SBA, with neither individual score result below *nearing proficient*. Students who have not met this requirement through any combination of math and reading assessments as H2, H3, or H4 students can use the ADC.
- For science, students must achieve a score of 38 on the New Mexico SBA as an H3 student.
- For social studies, students must pass the social studies EOC, developed by New Mexico teachers, or its equivalent.<sup>2</sup>
- For writing, students demonstrate competency by passing the writing EOC, developed by New Mexico teachers, or its equivalent.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Demonstration of competency has been broadened since Dr. Goldschmidt's 3/20/2012 memo regarding exit exam requirements to afford students maximum opportunity to demonstrate competency, while maintaining rigor.

<sup>2</sup> Districts can submit EOC for consideration for use as EOCs. These must demonstrate the same rigor as those developed for the state by New Mexico teachers. An EOC evaluation rubric will be forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> Districts can submit an EOC for consideration for use as EOCs. These must demonstrate the same rigor as those developed for state by New Mexico teachers. An EOC evaluation rubric will be forthcoming.

Alternative demonstration of competency

- For each subject area that has a related college readiness/placement exam, a student can demonstrate competency by meeting the appropriate cut score in one of the following: AP exam, ACT, SAT, PSAT, AccuPlacer, or International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum.
- For math, students can demonstrate competency by passing the appropriate EOC exam in Algebra II, Integrated Math 3, or its equivalent.<sup>4</sup>
- For reading, students can demonstrate competency by passing the English 3 EOC exam.
- For science, students can demonstrate competency by passing the EOC exam in Biology or Chemistry.
- For social studies, students can demonstrate competency by passing an appropriate U.S. History EOC exam.
- For writing, students can demonstrate competency by passing the writing EOC, which can be taken at the end of English 3 or its equivalent.

A guidance document detailing the implementation of the ADC is attached to this emailed memo and will be posted shortly on the PED's website at [www.ped.state.nm.us](http://www.ped.state.nm.us). Look for it on the A–Z Directory under Graduation Requirements, “Alternative Demonstration of Competency.”

As you identify students who must retest, please keep in mind that only H4 students who did not make a composite score of at least 2273 on the spring 2012 SBA and scored at least *nearing proficient* in reading and mathematics must retest. H5 and higher students will not retest, but can participate in the alternative demonstration of competency process.

PG/fal

cc: Hanna Skandera, Secretary-Designate of Education  
PED Leadership Team  
Assessment and Accountability Division  
Strategic Initiatives and Constituent Services Division

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<sup>4</sup> The EOC for equivalent courses must be aligned with common core state standards in mathematics.

## Appendix C

Table 1 presents the current college and career readiness benchmarks used for school grading. In light of the continuing goal of aligning expectations to 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, cut points are set at the established college and career readiness scores. These scores align expectations for students and schools.

**Table 1: ADC Cut Scores—Based on College and Career-Readiness Cut Scores**

<b>ADC Cut Scores</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving a “3” on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam (specific to subject required subject).</li> <li>• Achieving <i>College Readiness</i> benchmark scores on any of four content areas of the ACT.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ English Composition (18)</li> <li>○ Social Sciences [Reading] (21)</li> <li>○ College Algebra [Mathematics] (22)</li> <li>○ Biology [Science] (24)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Achieving <i>College Readiness</i> benchmark scores on any of four content areas of the PLAN.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ English Composition (15)</li> <li>○ Social Sciences [Reading] (17)</li> <li>○ College Algebra [Mathematics] (19)</li> <li>○ Biology [Science] (21)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Achieving <i>College Readiness</i> benchmark scores on any of three content areas of the PSAT.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reading (50)</li> <li>○ Mathematics (50)</li> <li>○ Writing (49)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Achieving <i>College Readiness</i> benchmark scores on any of three content areas of the SAT.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reading (450)</li> <li>○ Mathematics (450)</li> <li>○ Writing (450)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Achieving <i>College Readiness</i> benchmark scores on any of four content areas of the Accuplacer.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reading (85)</li> <li>○ Writing (109)</li> <li>○ Elementary Algebra (117)</li> <li>○ College Mathematics (115)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Achieving a <i>College Readiness</i> benchmark score on any of six areas of study from an authorized International Baccalaureate curriculum.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Literature (Language A)(4)</li> <li>○ Language B(4)</li> <li>○ Individuals &amp; Society(4)</li> <li>○ Experimental Science(4)</li> <li>○ Mathematics(4)</li> <li>○ Arts(4)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**SOURCE: 2012 Guidance Document for the Implementation of the New Mexico Alternative Demonstration of Competency**