

Dear Colleagues,

The NJDOE recently concluded its two-month-long statewide conversation around the next generation of assessments. During this process, I had the pleasure of traveling to many schools to hear directly from students, educators, administrators, and parents. This tour was a massive department-wide undertaking that was necessary to ensure that we heard from everyone who wanted to contribute and that we provided as many avenues as possible for input.

We visited all of New Jersey's 21 counties, holding 75 collaboratives and meetings in schools, with community partners and at the NJDOE. We also held three online webinars for interested parties who could not make it to one of our meetings. We logged more than 5,700 miles travelling across the state.

We heard a great deal of consensus on these themes: 1) Reducing the amount of statewide testing in high school; 2) reducing the length of the test; 3) keeping our standards and assessment questions that require critical thinking; 4) making sure any changes are communicated clearly and with time for smooth implementation and professional development; 5) appreciation for keeping parents and teachers engaged in the process for the transition.

In culmination, I plan to present our findings to the State Board of Education and submit our assessment tour report and draft regulations that would be needed to respond directly to the feedback we received during outreach. By making the transition in phases, we can ensure a smooth implementation in schools across the state and maintain compliance with current state and federal requirements.

Longer term changes will be considered during the 2018-19 school year and made by working closely with stakeholders, the State Board and legislators to carefully plan a state assessment system that meets New Jersey's needs and standards.

- **The proposed changes include:**
 - Streamlining graduation requirements by reducing the number of required tests in high school from 6 to 2.
 - Ensuring that educators and parents receive test data in a timely manner
 - Providing flexibility for first-year English learners on the English language proficiency test.
- **Additional changes include:**
 - Reducing the length of the testing for all grades by 25%
 - And reducing the weight of the assessment on teacher evaluations.

Please review our [Statewide Assessment Outreach Report and proposed regulations](#) for more detailed information. Stakeholders can [email](#) the State Board public comment on the proposed regulations. I look forward to working collectively with you to advance efforts to bring fairness, equity and academic excellence to New Jersey's students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lamont O. Repollet
Commissioner of Education