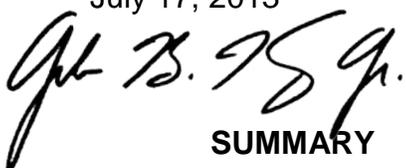




THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents
FROM: Ken Slentz 
SUBJECT: New York Performance Standards Consortium
("Consortium schools")

DATE: July 17, 2013

AUTHORIZATION(S): 
SUMMARY

Issue for Decision (Consent Agenda)

Required assessments for 39 schools using portfolio assessments.

Reason(s) for Consideration

Review of Policy.

Proposed Handling

Review and approval.

Procedural History

In 1995, the State Education Department ("SED" or "the Department") granted a variance to a group of schools that make up the New York Performance Standards Consortium ("Consortium schools") to use a portfolio assessment in place of the Regents exams in mathematics, social studies, and science. This was before the Board of Regents began to require that students take and pass Regents examinations for graduation. Generally, a portfolio is a compilation of a student's work during the year and may consist of exhibits, projects, book reports, papers and other similar items. Each school determines what makes up student portfolios.

Beginning in 2005, the Regents decided to require that students in the Consortium schools take and pass the English Regents examination in order to receive a high school diploma while allowing the use of portfolio assessments in lieu of Regents

examinations to meet graduation assessment requirements in mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in schools with a portfolio assessment variance must meet the same 22 units of credit requirement as do all other students in order to earn a diploma.

Background Information

Since 1995, the Consortium schools have operated under a variance that has subsequently been renewed several times, most recently in 2008, that allows them to use portfolio assessments in place of Regents examinations to meet State graduation requirements.¹ As a result, the Consortium schools have a unique history of almost twenty years of use of portfolio assessments such that these tests are deeply embedded in the schools' culture and educational practice. Over the course of the variance period, the Consortium schools have gathered significant data on student performance not only on the English Regents examination, but also with respect to course grades, high school graduation and college enrollment, particularly among African-American and Latino students as well as students with disabilities and English language learners.

Recommendation

It is recommended that 39 Consortium schools be allowed to extend their use of portfolio assessments in place of the Regents examinations in mathematics, social studies, and science to satisfy §100.5 of the Commissioner's regulations for a further three-year period, through the 2016-2017 school year. Students who enter ninth grade in the fall of 2008 and thereafter in these schools are required to pass the English Regents examination on the same basis as all other students in the State.

Department staff also recommends that, if the Board of Regents approves the extension of this variance, the Board also direct that, should any of the 39 Consortium schools not seek to utilize its variance beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, the Commissioner may grant the variance to another Consortium school in the same school district that replicates the educational practices of an existing Consortium portfolio assessment school.

Timetable for Implementation

Immediate.

¹ The 39 Consortium schools referenced in this item comprise the list of schools approved by the Regents in June 2008, as modified by the Regents action of October 2008.