



TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Angelica Infante-Green *A. Infante - Green*
SUBJECT: Update on Computer-Based Testing
DATE: May 9, 2016
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SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

Provide the Board of Regents with an update on New York State's transition to computer-based testing starting in the 2015-2016 academic year. Department staff will provide an update on the Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Computer-Based Field Tests for public schools, charter schools and non-public schools, specifically focusing on readiness and preparation. A field panel will discuss what is needed to be prepared for computer-based testing in schools and districts.

Reason(s) for Consideration

The first administration of computer-based field tests in grades 3-8 in ELA and math will be administered through June 2016.

Procedural History

This issue will come before the P-12 Education Committee for discussion at the May 2016 meeting.

Background Information

In May of 2012, the Department announced a plan to transition to computer-based testing (CBT) in grades 3-8 as part of its commitment to improving test delivery, reducing test length, and shortening the turn-around time on testing results. This transition is part of the five year contract with Questar Assessment Inc. to develop the

State's 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics assessments and to provide all schools with the option of administering these tests on computers.

School participation in computer-based field testing in 2016 was voluntary by school. When schools placed requests for 2015-16 elementary/intermediate level operational tests, schools were asked to indicate whether they would like to administer the 2016 Grades 3-8 stand-alone ELA and Mathematics field tests either in the traditional paper-based format or as computer-based tests. NYSED strongly suggested that every district consider committing at least one school in the district to administer computer-based field tests in spring 2016 to help schools and districts understand the technical requirements of CBT and begin to plan for a full rollout of CBT in the future.

To date, 952 schools, in about half of New York State school districts, volunteered to administer computer-based field tests in 2016. The computer-based field testing window will be from Monday, May 23, 2016 through Friday, June 10, 2016. The paper-based field testing window will be from Tuesday, May 31, 2016 through Friday, June 10, 2016.

Schools and districts need to ensure their readiness to test via computers. The Education Superhighway, a non-profit focused on upgrading the Internet access in every public school classroom in America, flags New York State as a leader with approximately 90% of its schools meeting the federal standard of minimum broadband connectivity of 100kbps/student. Federal and state funding is available to continue to improve connectivity, such as the federal eRate program and New York State's Broadband for All initiative. The Smart Schools Bond Act authorized the issuance of \$2 billion of bond funds to finance improved educational technology and infrastructure to improve learning and opportunity for students throughout the State. In 2015, in support of the Smart Schools Bond Act, the New York State Education Department provided \$14.5 million in additional funding through the federal Race to the Top grant. These funds were in support of the purchase of devices – including laptops and tablets – for students across the state to help integrate technology-rich learning experiences into students' daily instruction. Additionally, \$87 million was awarded through a Microsoft settlement to New York State schools who qualified based on economic indicators for the purchase of eligible hardware and software. For 2015, District Instructional Technology Plans indicate almost half of all districts are looking to increase wifi access and purchase laptop computers. The top five projected expenditures included:

- Wi-Fi (395)
- Laptops (372)
- Professional Development (350)
- Tablets (278)
- Desktops (242)

Readiness for schools to participate in computer-based testing includes both technology readiness and student and staff readiness. Staff will discuss the strategy for implementing this year's computer-based stand-alone field tests, including training and

support for readiness and recovery. Representatives from the field will discuss what is needed to be prepared for computer-based testing in schools and districts.

Next Steps

Department staff will continue to support districts and schools in the transition to computer-based tests as part of the long term strategy to move more testing online in order to move toward the use of innovative, technology enhanced items and a quick return of scores to educators, students, and their parents.