



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

TO: P-12 Education Committee
Cultural Education Committee

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SUBJECT: New York State Blue Ribbon Panel for the Arts

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SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

Following the decision to create 4+1 Assessment Pathways, the Board of Regents directed Department staff to convene a Blue Ribbon Panel for the Arts to examine how other states provide pathways to graduation in the arts, to determine the role of assessment in this pathway, and to evaluate assessments used to measure student achievement in the arts. Department staff will update the Board of Regents on the Blue Ribbon Panel and the review of assessments for an arts pathway.

Background Information

In May 2014, the Board discussed the use of rigorous career and technical education (CTE) assessments as a pathway to graduation. At that time, the Board also suggested that the Department establish a graduation pathway in the arts. In September 2014, the Board directed the Department to begin the process of establishing a Blue Ribbon Panel for the Arts and to begin identifying assessments that sufficiently measure student achievement in the arts.

Students pursuing focused study in the arts can attain a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation by passing five Regents exams in addition to completing a five unit course of study in the arts. Many students in arts programs are also required to

create competitive portfolios, which are useful for entrance to undergraduate art programs. Students may also earn college credit in the arts by taking Advanced Placement exams or participating in programs that offer both high school and college credit.

With the 4+1 Pathway, approved by the Board in January 2015, students pursuing an arts pathway may now take an approved arts assessment in place of one of the Social Studies Regents exams required for graduation. However, at this time, New York does not have arts assessments approved for the 4+1 assessment option for the arts pathway.

Similar to the approach used in the CTE pathway, the Department recommended the establishment of a Blue Ribbon Panel for the Arts to examine assessment options. The Panel will consist of educators and artists knowledgeable about arts education and arts assessment, including representatives from New York educator associations in the arts, postsecondary institutions, and arts industry partners. In addition, a group of nationally recognized experts in the field of arts assessment will provide technical expertise to the Blue Ribbon Panel.

The Blue Ribbon Panel for the Arts, co-chaired by Regent Tilles, will be charged with conducting a review of currently available arts assessments and evaluating the assessments against the criteria established by Commissioner's Regulation §100.2(mm), which requires that pathway assessments must be approved by the Commissioner pursuant to the following conditions and criteria:

- (1) pathway assessments shall measure student progress on the State learning standards for their respective content area(s) at a level of rigor equivalent to a Regents examination or approved alternative assessment;
- (2) pathway assessments shall be recognized or accepted by postsecondary institutions, experts in the field, and/or employers in areas related to the assessment;
- (3) pathway assessments shall be aligned with existing knowledge and practice in the field(s) related to their respective content area(s) and shall be reviewed at least every five years and updated as necessary;
- (4) pathway assessments shall be consistent with technical criteria for validity, reliability, and fairness in testing;
- (5) pathway assessments shall be developed by an entity other than a local school or school district;
- (6) pathway assessments shall be available for use by any school or school district in New York State; and
- (7) pathway assessments shall be administered under secure conditions approved by the commissioner.

Next Steps

The Department has collected nominations from the field for the Blue Ribbon Panel for the Arts and will announce the Panel in March. The Panel will begin meeting in spring 2015 and we anticipate that the Panel will submit recommendations to the Commissioner for approved arts assessments in fall 2015. In addition, the Department has begun review of a limited number of recognized arts assessments for possible approval in spring 2015.