

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and Independent School Headmasters
FROM: Wendy Geller, Director, Data Management and Analysis Division (DMAD)
SUBJECT: Statewide Summative Assessment: Considerations for Interpreting Individual Student Reports
DATE: June 3, 2021

Purpose

The Agency of Education has received many questions recently about statewide summative assessment results. We understand that this year (SY21) there are a lot of unique circumstances present. We hope the following will be supportive to you as you review embargoed student results and plan to share Individual Student Reports (ISRs) with caregivers and students (no earlier than June 14, 2021).

Considerations for Interpreting and Sharing Student Results/Reports

Typically, we interpret the results of our statewide summative assessments understanding that the instruction students have received throughout the year aligns with the content covered on the assessment. This year, beyond anyone's control, the ways that students learned (i.e., remote, in person or hybrid model) and the breadth and depth of instruction/learning all varied across students, schools and districts.

Knowing this, we cannot interpret this year's results assuming all students had the opportunity to learn all content included on the assessment. For example, a student may have responded to an item incorrectly because they did not master the skill that was taught (typical interpretation), or a student may have responded incorrectly to an item because their learning of that area was limited this year. We also know that testing experiences and conditions were not typical this year. Some students were entering the school building for the first time as they approached testing. Other students may have encountered staggered opportunities to test due to several factors.

We do not know how students would have performed on these assessments if schools were fully opened during the entire 2020-2021 school year or if there was not a pandemic. We also know that participation in testing this year is not typical and we may not be able to interpret school, district or state results as we normally would, especially when we consider subgrouping used for reporting.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information, please contact:
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These limitations that we recognize are not characteristics of the assessments themselves. Rather, these limitations apply to interpretation of the results. Statewide summative assessments are intended to provide information at the school, state and district level that can inform decisions related to funding, resource allocation and support. We anticipate that this year's results will help us to understand what students were able to demonstrate mastery of, given the school year's unique circumstances. That being said, we will not likely know why students performed the way they did, as confounding variables do exist.

For these reasons we strongly recommend against making claims related to why students exhibited certain performance on statewide summative assessments. We urge schools, districts and families to take into account the unique circumstances associated with learning and testing this year. We also encourage those reviewing student performance to consider that these results are meant to be useful for school-, district-, and state-level decision making and to take typical care in interpreting results, using these scores as just one of many important measures of academic performance. We are working closely with our vendors to understand more about the data resulting from this year's administration and will report on any advancements made as promptly as possible.

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication this year. Please reach out to [Amanda Gorham](#), Director of Assessment, with any questions.