January 14, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent of Education

RE: Data Center

Realizing the importance of education data to parents, business and industry representatives, and educators, we are releasing Phase One of a new Data Center on the Alabama State Department of Education Web page at www.alsde.edu. Phase one consists of the following changes:

1. Report Portal – All reports have been moved to various places on the new Web page and in the Data Center global navigation.
2. Accountability Reporting has been moved to Assessment Reports => Statewide Reports.
3. Public Data Reports have been moved to Enrollment Reports.
4. Accountability and Assessment Reporting (previously accessed under the “big blue button”) has been moved to Assessment Reports => School Level Reports.

Additional phases of the Data Center will be released as we move into a new reporting system.

Graduation Rate Reporting: Four years ahead of the predicted schedule, you have raised your graduation rates to a new record high. This is validation that your teachers, your students, and you are working harder than ever. We will be releasing our annual public data release of your graduation rates by district, school, and sub-groups on January 20, 2015, through our new Data Center at www.alsde.edu.

We are absolutely delighted to see the graduation rate making these kinds of unprecedented gains. It is the result of teachers focusing on identifying the specific needs of students, removing barriers to learning, and helping students meet their goals. Also, students are taking responsibility for their own academic success and putting in the hard work that is required to graduate from high school. In an era of more rigorous academic standards, greater accountability, and higher expectations of our teachers and students, Alabama educators and the students they serve continue to demonstrate what steadfast resolve and hard work garners.
Assessment Reporting: Last spring, students in Grades 3-8 took the first year of new assessments aligned to the Alabama College- and Career-Ready Standards (CCRS), the ACT Aspire assessment in place of the Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT). These results provide a new baseline for students’ achievement. The results are not comparable to previous assessments as they are more rigorous and challenging and aligned to new standards and expectations for students. Clearly, we must own the areas in which we need improvement as it is our goal to make sure all of Alabama’s students graduate prepared for the world that awaits them after high school. We are proud of educators and students for teaching, learning, and aspiring to meet the challenges of higher academic standards.

ACT Aspire and ACT Plan scores provide parents with honest feedback about how prepared their child is for college and/or a career after graduation. In addition, the ACT Aspire and ACT Plan align with the ACT assessment that all 11th graders in Alabama take. The annual aggregate reports meeting FERPA regulations and USDOE public data reporting requirements will be available to the public on the ALSDE Data Center January 20, 2015.

Thank you for your continued efforts to ensure our students graduate college- and career-ready. If you have questions concerning the data center or above-referenced data releases, please contact Dr. Melinda Maddox at mmaddox@alsde.edu or 334-242-9716.

TRB:MM:ATB

cc: Data Managers

FY15-3012