March 19, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Ed Richardson
Interim State Superintendent of Education

RE: PreACT/ACT

The Assessment Task Force (complete list of members is attached) has been meeting to develop an assessment plan for Alabama in Grades 3-8 and in high school. By April 12, 2018, they will have recommendations that can be shared with the Alabama State Board of Education and you in order to be placed into a Request for Bids (RFB) that will allow us to evaluate the desires versus the cost.

I am convinced the Task Force is committed to obtaining the best assessment possible for our schools. In the meantime, we have uncovered a situation that if left unattended will have negative consequences for high schools in Alabama being able to measure academic growth for the 2018-2019 school year. When the Alabama State Board of Education voted to discontinue with the ACT Aspire in Grades 3-8 and Grade 10 in June 2017, there was no replacement assessment selected for Grade 10. Scantron is being utilized for Grades 3-8 only in the 2017-2018 year. To measure high school growth for 2017-2018, we can utilize the spring 2017 ACT Aspire in Grade 10 and the ACT in Grade 11 this spring. But by not giving a Grade 10 assessment this spring, there will be no good way to measure growth against the ACT spring 2019 administration.

This situation has been vetted by the Assessment Task Force and its recommendation is to utilize the PreACT for all Grade 10 students in the spring of 2018 so growth can be measured against the spring 2019 administration of the ACT. This was shared with the Alabama State Board of Education during its March 8 Work Session.

In my estimation there is no downside to this recommendation and the upside is very positive—we can continue with the growth measurement for high schools. Additionally, 50 Alabama high schools already have made plans to use local funds to purchase the PreACT for Grade 10 students this spring (6,000 students statewide).

As to whether the Assessment Task Force recommends this plan as a permanent solution or not remains to be seen, but it is an excellent recommendation for spring 2018 and likely 2019, at a minimum.

We all know high school students well. When it comes to assessments, they ask in unison—"does this count?" They know the ACT Aspire Grade 10 "did not count," in that it did not affect them personally. The PreACT and the ACT do affect them so they are much more likely to give their best effort on both, which should improve high school results.

ER:LAK

Attachment

FY18-1009
Assessment Advisory Committee

Ashley Chasteen – Teacher, Jefferson County
Becky Birdsong – Superintendent, Geneva County
Dr. Beth Quick Dean of College of Education, University of Alabama in Huntsville
Dr. Caroline Novak – President, A+ Education Partnership
Dr. Eric Mackey – Executive Director, School Superintendents of Alabama
Carrie Garris – Parent/Speech Pathologist, Clarke County
Nancy Anderson – Associate Director/Attorney, Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program
Heather Johnson – Parent, Tallassee City
Jeana Winter – Executive Director, Alabama Parent Education Center
Dr. Jacqueline Brooks – Superintendent, Macon County
Dr. Jimmy Shaw – Superintendent, Florence City
Kellie Yeager – System Test Coordinator, Jefferson County
Lisa Heard – Curriculum/Special Ed Coordinator, Tallapoosa County
Mallory Lamb – Teacher, Oneonta City
Khristie Goodwin – Special Education Coordinator, Oxford City
Marcia Smiley – Assistant Superintendent, Perry County
Dr. Pamela Fossett – Manager of Ed. Policy & Professional Practice, AFA
Maria Johnson – Principal, Beverly Magnet School
Dr. Shannon Stanley – Superintendent, Boaz City
Dr. Vic Wilson – Executive Director, CLAS
Vickie Holloway – System Test Coordinator, Montgomery County
Tisha Allred – EL Coach/Parent, Walker County
Dr. Jim McLean – Executive Director for the Center of Community-Based Partnerships
Keri Southern – Parent, Alabaster City
Sally Smith – Executive Director, Alabama School Boards Association
Lissa Tucker – Alabama School Boards Association
Mr. Jeff Hyche – Principal, Hartselle High School
Kyle Kallhoff – Superintendent, Demopolis City
Theresa McCormick, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Certification Officer, Auburn University
Jennifer Fernandez – Teacher, Decatur City
Dr. Trey Holladay – Superintendent, Athens City
Thomas Rains – Vice President of Policy, A+ Education Partnership

ALSDE:
Dr. Ed Richardson Dr. Joe Morton Dr. Tony Thacker
Judy Pugh Maggie Hicks Kathy Padgett
Nannette Pence Kanetra Germany Susan Beard
Crystal Richardson Michelle Lee Sandy Ledwell
Josh Laney

Center for Assessment
Dr. Scott Marlon
Dr. Juan D’Brot