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MEMORANDUM NO. 2015-053

TO: District Superintendents
Principals
Curriculum Directors
High School Counselors

FROM: Deb Lindsey, Director of State Assessment,
Accountability Division

DATE: May 4, 2015

SUBJECT: Legislative Changes Related to District Assessment
System Requirements

CHANGES TO DISTRICT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

2015 Session Laws, Chapter 0179 (Senate File 0008/Senate Enrolled Act 87 [SF0008/SEA87]) includes significant changes to district assessment system design, reporting, and review requirements. This memo provides an outline of changes as a result of language that has been eliminated and/or added. The timing and guidance on when and how these changes will be implemented and supported through the Department of Education are included, when possible. Guidance documents related to the district assessment system design requirements and the review processes are being developed and those materials will be provided as soon as possible.

In summary, the statutory changes streamline requirements for district assessment systems and associated graduation requirements by:

- Eliminating annual reporting of district assessment systems (formerly due August 1), effective immediately; instead, reviews of district assessment systems will be integrated with the accreditation process by
 - a. Requiring districts to annually attest that their district assessment systems and graduation requirements are consistent with state board requirements via the AdvancEd ASSIST assurances, by November 1 of each year, and

- b. Requiring districts to provide evidence of alignment of their district assessment systems every five years as a part of the AdvancEd accreditation review, beginning with the 2015-16 school year (more frequent reviews may be required when schools are rated as “not meeting expectations” in the school accountability system authorized under the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act)
- Eliminating “measure or multiple measures” (the former body of evidence) proficiency requirements for high school graduation, and substituting course completion (sufficient Carnegie units/credits) as the graduation requirement, effective March 9, 2015
- Eliminating tiered diplomas, effective for students graduating after March 9, 2015

Specifics related to each of the changes are provided below, along with relevant statutory excerpts. Please note that statutory citations and page numbers relate to the following document: <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/2015/Enroll/SF0008.pdf>.

Changes as a result of language that has been eliminated:

Districts are no longer required to submit an annual report on the district assessment system beginning August 1, 2015.

21-3-110 (a) (xxiv)

The district shall ~~on or before August 1, 2015, and each August 1 thereafter,~~ report to the state board in accordance with W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iv) on its assessment system established under this paragraph. (pg. 14)

Districts are no longer required to include a measure or multiple measures for purposes of determining completion of high school graduation requirements.

21-2-304 (a) (iv)

~~Beginning school year 2014-2015, and each school year thereafter, each district's assessment system shall include a measure or multiple measures for purposes of determining completion of high school graduation requirements. The state board shall by rule and regulation establish guidelines for district development of this measure or measures, and shall through the department of education, provide support to districts in developing each district's measure or measures.~~ (pg. 10)

21-3-110 (a) (xxiv)

~~Beginning school year 2014-2015 and each school year thereafter, a component of the district assessment system shall include a measure or multiple measures used to determine satisfactory completion of high school graduation requirements and developed in accordance with guidelines established by the state board.~~ (pg. 14)

The associated requirement to describe performance levels in order to achieve proficiency of the common core of knowledge and common core of skills related to high school graduation is no longer required.

21-2-304 (a) (iii)

Student content and performance standards prescribed under this paragraph shall include standards for graduation from any high school within any school district of this state. ~~and shall describe required performance levels in order to achieve proficiency of the common core of knowledge and common core of skills prescribed under W.S. 21-9-101(b).~~ (pg. 9)

Effective for the 2015 high school graduation class, the requirement for high school diploma endorsements has been eliminated.

21-2-304 (a) (iv)

~~A high school diploma shall provide for one (1) of the following endorsements which shall be stated on the transcript of each student:~~ (pgs. 10, 11)

21-3-110 (a) (xxv)

~~At minimum, provide the three (3) endorsements on high school transcripts specified under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iv) and may provide additional endorsements.~~ (pgs. 14, 15)

The WDE950 Collection for the 2015 graduating class will make reporting endorsements an “optional” data field. Districts may choose to continue this practice, but it is no longer a state requirement. However, transcripts for students graduating before the effective date of this law (March 9, 2015) must still include an endorsement.

Changes as a result of language that has been added:

The bill adds language to identify “course completion” as the standard to be met for graduation from high school. Completion of the required number of Carnegie Units will be evidence of meeting this requirement.

21-2-304 (a) (iv)

The board shall also establish, in consultation with local school districts, requirements for students to earn a high school diploma as evidenced by course completion and as measured by each district's assessment system prescribed by rule and regulation of the state board and required under W.S. 21-3-110(a)(xxiv). (pg. 10)

This bill added an annual report of evidence on 1) district assessment alignment to the content and performance standards, and 2) graduation standards.

21-3-110 (a) (xv)

...and on or before November 1 of each school year, report to the department evidence of the alignment of its assessment system with the uniform state standards provided within its schools; (pg. 12)

21-3-110 (a) (xxv)

...and on or before November 1 of each school year, report to the department of education evidence that the district is compliant with high school graduation standards imposed by the state board under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iii); (pg. 15)

Meeting this requirement will be accomplished by adding to or revising the existing WDE assurance statements submitted by November 1 through the AdvancED ASSIST system.

The AdvancED five (5) year accreditation review cycle will include a specific review of the district assessment system. This review will be implemented with the 2015-2016 school year.

21-2-202 (a) (xxxvi)

(xxxvi) Commencing school year 2015-2016, in conjunction with the school district accreditation process required under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(ii) and as a component of the statewide education accountability system created under W.S. 21-2-204, conduct a review of each school district's assessment system once every five (5) years to ensure alignment with the uniform state education standards promulgated by the state board, and to ensure district adherence to the uniform graduation standards prescribed by the state board under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iii). Reviews undertaken pursuant to this paragraph, together with findings, shall be reported to the state board and any deficiencies determined by the review shall be addressed through the statewide system of support established under W.S. 21-2-204(f). (pg. 3)

21-2-204 (a) (iv)

Once every five (5) years and on a staggered basis, the state board shall through the department, annually review and approve each district's assessment system designed to determine the various levels of student performance as aligned with the uniform state standards and the attainment of high school graduation requirements. (pg. 10)

21-3-110 (a) (xxxiv)

Effective school year 2015-2016, in conjunction with district accreditation, as a component of the statewide education accountability system and in accordance with W.S. 21-2-202(a)(xxxvi), be subject to a review by the department of education once every five (5) years on the alignment of the district's assessment system with the uniform state education standards promulgated by the state board, and the district's adherence to the uniform graduation standards prescribed by the state board under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iii). (pg. 15)

Current Chapter 31 Rules require district assessment systems to be aligned, consistent, fair, and have a defensible standard setting method. The new language places the emphasis on alignment to the unified state standards. The Chapter 31 rules will be revised and a guidance document will be developed and provided to support districts in the near term.

In addition to the review that will be conducted in conjunction with the five (5) year accreditation review cycle, if a school is designated as “not meeting expectations” through the

accountability model calculation, the representative(s) identified for this district may conduct a specific review of the district's assessment system as part of the statewide system of support.

21-2-204 (f) (vi)

In addition, the evaluation of a district's student assessment system as provided by paragraph (vii) of this subsection may be undertaken in that school year immediately following any school year in which a school within the district has been designated as not meeting expectations. (pg. 5)

The guidance document noted above will provide support for districts and the representatives as they review the district assessment system in light of the “not meeting expectations” accountability rating.

For questions or concerns, please contact Shelly Andrews at shelly.andrews@wyo.gov or 307.777.3781.