

SUBJECT: 4 AAC 06.715 Work ready/college ready transitional skills curriculum and benchmark assessments; 4 AAC 06.717 Work ready/college ready transitional skills assessment

The Anchorage School District believes the WorkKeys exam is a quality assessment that provides important information for students and families, educators, employers, and universities about student achievement related to college and work readiness. Further, the WIN curriculum and benchmark assessments provide opportunities for students to advance their studies in and awareness of work related proficiencies.

However, at minimum, the Anchorage School District supports the proposed regulation to delay the mandated use of these assessments by one year. These tools and assessments are available to students and districts ready to access them, and a delay in implementing the mandate doesn't limit a school or district's ability to move forward. The delay would enable districts that have technological or other implementation challenges to continue to work through them to ensure a smooth roll out should the mandate come.

Under the current system of assessment, the Anchorage School District does not believe the WorkKeys/WIN assessments should be mandated. Between the mandated Standards Based Assessments, HSGQE, TerraNova, NAEP, ELPA, Kindergarten Profile, etc., and district-specific formative, benchmark, and progress monitoring assessments that are a critical part of any instructional program, districts do not have the time or resources to invest in another mandated exam.

The Anchorage School District proposes bolder action, however. We propose that the State Board and the Department of Education of Early Development work with the Alaska Legislature and districts to replace the essential skills High School Graduation Qualifying Exam with the much more robust and meaningful WorkKeys Exam at the 10th grade.

The requirement for the HSGQE was created in response to concern that some students were graduating high school without the essential skills necessary to be productive in the world of work. An unintended consequence of that action has been that many students now set their sights too low – only on passing the HSGQE rather than reaching toward even higher levels of proficiency and achievement. Many students question why they should be required to continue high school when they have already passed the exam as 10th graders. Unfortunately, since the exam is essential skills, the students' perception that they have met necessary levels of achievement for life-long success is misguided.