

**OVERVIEW:  
HIGH SCHOOL  
GRADUATION  
& QUALIFYING  
EXAM, 2/11/03  
& 1/28/04**

## Optional Assessment Results for 12th Grade Students

February 11, 2003

IEP students in Grade 12 as of Fall 2003 OASIS Count	809
IEP students that have yet to pass all three parts of HSGQE	608

Students applied for Optional in Fall2003/Spring2004	207
Students who applied 03/04 who passed all three parts of HSGQE Fall'03	16

Students eligible who have applied for Optional Assessment in Feb. '04	191
# of IEP students who have not applied for the Optional Assessment	*417

*Disability Codes of the 417	
Learning Disabled	170
Mental Retardation	111
Multiple Disabilities	78
All Other Disabilities Combined	58

GRADE 12 STUDENTS THAT HAVE APPLIED FOR OPTIONAL EXAM

2/11/2004

	Grade 12 Students That Applied For Optional Assessment Fall 2003 or Spring 2004	Grade 12 Students Optional Assessment Participated in HSGQE Passed All Three Tests	Grade 12 Students Optional Assessment Participated in HSGQE Passed Only Two Tests	Grade 12 Students Optional Assessment Participated in HSGQE Passed Only One Test	Grade 12 Students Optional Assessment Participated in HSGQE Not Passed Any Test
<b>STATEWIDE TOTALS</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>79</b>
		<b>7.7%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>38.2%</b>
<b>Eligible For Optional</b>	<b>191</b>		<b>48</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>79</b>
			<b>25.1%</b>	<b>33.5%</b>	<b>41.4%</b>

# Exit Exam (HSGQE)

“(a) A student may not be issued a secondary school diploma unless the student passes a competency examination in the areas of reading, English, and mathematics or receives a waiver from the governing body. . . . The department shall determine the form and contents of the examination and shall score completed examinations.”

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FOLLOWING  
DOCUMENT(S)  
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POOR  
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# Alternative Assessment Program

“(c) Notwithstanding (a) of this section,  
(1) a student who is a child with a disability and who does not achieve a passing score on the examination required under (a) of this section, with or without accommodation, is eligible to receive a diploma if the student successfully completes an alternative assessment program required by the student's individualized education program or required in the education plan developed for the student under 29 U.S.C. 794; . . .”

# Conform to State Standards

“(c)(1) . . . an alternative assessment program must, to the maximum extent possible, conform to state performance standards established for the competency examination required under (a) of this section; . . .”

# Take and Fail Requirement

“(c)(1) . . . this paragraph does not apply to a student unless the department determines that the student has taken and failed to pass the competency examination with or without accommodations”

# Department must approve

“(c)(1) . . . this paragraph does not apply to a student unless . . . the department approves the student's alternative assessment program described under this paragraph;”

# Board may establish standards

“(f) The department shall by regulation establish uniform standards for an alternative assessment program required under (c)(1) of this section. . . .”

# No change after Junior Year

“(f) . . . . The alternative assessment program required under (c)(1) of this section applicable to an individual student may not be changed after February 1 of the student's junior year of study.”

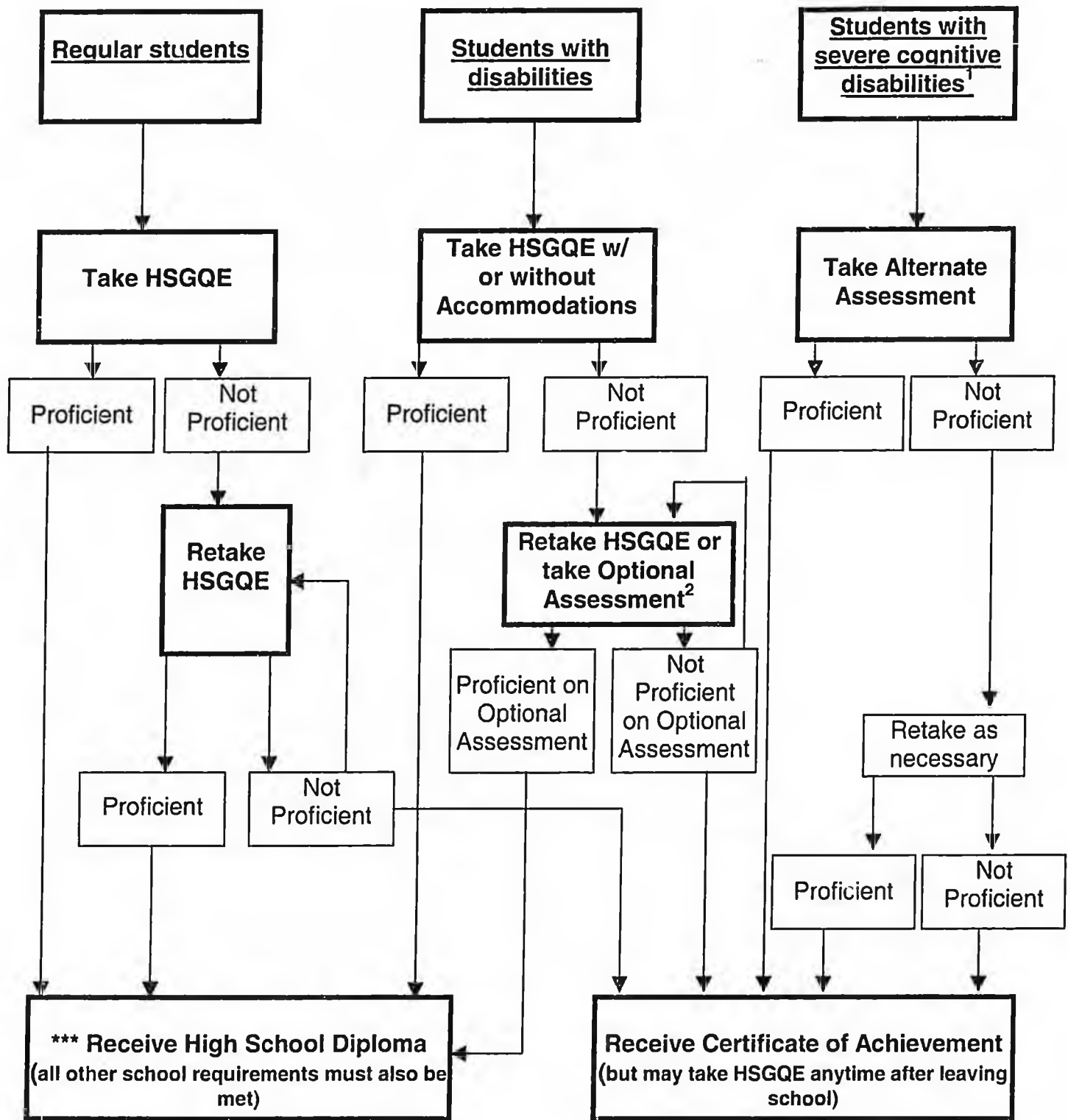
High School Exams	In effect	Future	
No Alternative/Certificate of Attendance or Achievement	AK, SC, LO, MA, MI, NJ, IN, TN	NM & AZ in '06	2
Differentiated Diploma	AL, FL, GA, NY, NC, VA, UT		
Modified + Lower Cut	MN		
Can be exempt from exam	NV, OH		
Local Assessed/Decision	TX	WA in '08	1
Override based on IEP team and principal	CA		

**WAIVERS**

- California
- Georgia
- Indiana
- New Mexico
- Ohio

# ASSESSMENT PATHWAYS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS\*

Department of Education & Early Development



<sup>1</sup>Under rare or unusual circumstances, a local school board may waive a student's obligation to pass the HSGQE. Also, a student who passes an equivalent exam in another state does not have to take the HSGQE. Additionally, a senior who arrives too late in the school year to take the HSGQE may be exempted from the exam as well as a student with a disability in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or higher in the 2002-2003 school year whose IEP team acted on advice from the department that completing the IEP requirements would lead to a diploma.

<sup>2</sup>An Optional Assessment is a regular HSGQE that allows for changes to standard test administration procedures.

**FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH BOARD OF EDUCATION****RESOLUTION 2004-01****Student Testing**

JAN 21 2004

WHEREAS legislation passed in 1997, 1998, and 2001 called for the development of a high school competency examination, student benchmark exams, reporting of norm-referenced achievement test data on students, and the development of a school accountability system; and

WHEREAS the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) has invested over \$20 million developing and refining a statewide system of student tests that meet the requirements of both state legislation and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, and has created a school accountability system based on these student tests that has received approval by the U.S. Department of Education for purposes of NCLB; and

WHEREAS consistent student testing and school accountability are essential for monitoring the quality of the education system (both district and school performance) in Alaska and for determining whether schools are improving from year to year; and

WHEREAS changes in the student testing system or in the rules for determining school performance make it impossible to know if increases or decreases in performance are due to improvements or due to the change in testing or accountability systems; and

WHEREAS the DEED released on December 2, 2003, a \$5 million request for proposals to replace the entire student testing system (grades 3 to 9 and the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam) by the spring of 2005 without an opportunity for public review and input; and

WHEREAS, the proposal would require resetting the cut-scores for proficiency (passing scores) and revising the entire accountability plan for NCLB; and

WHEREAS resetting High School Graduation Qualifying Exam passing score may well cause legal problems for school districts and the state when students are held to different levels of performance in qualifying for a high school diploma; and

WHEREAS the new RFP makes no mention of including nationally norm-referenced achievement tests (NRTs) for students, instead leaving the state solely dependent on standards-based tests which do not compare to test results for students across the nation; and

WHEREAS the new testing system emphasizes the importance of a teacher-based testing system that provides information for teachers rather than one which maintains a testing system for accountability purposes; and

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WHEREAS hundreds of Alaskans have participated in developing and refining the current system over the past five years; and

WHEREAS educators all over the state have been developing curricula and programs these past years to ensure students are proficient on standards as measured by the state tests; and

WHEREAS, given the conservative fiscal climate in the state right now, spending \$5 million this year and an unknown amount next year to replace the student testing system seems unnecessary and unwarranted; and

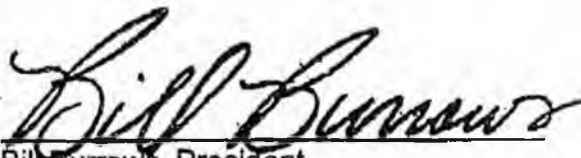
WHEREAS we are grateful to the many members of the education community and general public who participated in developing the current system and who work diligently to make the program succeed;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Fairbanks North Star Borough Board of Education requests the Governor cancel efforts by the Department of Education and Early Development to develop a replacement test system, and the Alaska State Legislature not authorize or appropriate funds to develop or implement such examination systems.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Fairbanks North Star Borough Board of Education opposes any changes to the state testing system that would compromise its use for school accountability, increase the district's legal liability in granting or denying diplomas, or limit its usefulness in monitoring and improving school performance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Fairbanks North Star Borough Board of Education recommends that decisions regarding changes to the state testing system involve thorough discussions with school districts, a consensus that changes and improvements are necessary, and adequate time for making changes including a transition year to ensure comparability and utility of the testing system.

PASSED AND APPROVED JANUARY 20, 2004.

  
Bill Burrows, President  
Board of Education

ATTEST:

  
Susan Bessette  
Secretary to the Board



# Improving Alaska's Assessment System

Report To Senate HESS  
January 28, 2004



## History and Background

- Commissioner appointed June, 2003 and faced immediate issues surrounding NCLB and the state's assessment system
- Talked with educators at all levels including administrators, teachers, parents, and EED staff to identify concerns
  - Testing occurs too early in the school year
  - Results take months to get back
  - Make-up dates are limited and inflexible
  - State is **not** in compliance with NCLB
  - Contract costs are high and escalating

Improving Alaska's Assessment System  
Senate HESS January 28, 2004

### **GOALS**

- 2) Continue to refine state assessment and accountability system
  - a. Develop assessments that have instructional value
  - b. Align assessments with Alaska Standards
  - c. Ensure Assessments provide a growth scale
  - d. Ensure assessment results are timely

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Senate HESS January 28, 2004

## **Department Works with Contractor on Concerns**

- Ability to test later in the school year
  - Cannot be done and meet AYP/NCLB timelines.
- Flexibility in test make-up dates
  - Test make-up dates are set, minimal change of 10 days.

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Senate HESS January 28, 2004

## **Department works with Contractor on Concerns**

- More timely return of test results
  - Results are returned as quickly as possible due to the extensive client load.
- Compliance with NCLB
  - NCLB compliance is being addressed through augmentation of assessments.
- High costs of assessments
  - No adjustment in cost can be given without a decrease or elimination of assessment components.

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Senate HESS January 28, 2004

## **Working with Contractor**

- Attempts to address the concerns and issues with our current assessment system included direct negotiations with the CEO of CTB/McGraw-Hill

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Senate HESS January 28, 2004

## Next Steps

- Do we continue to sole source with our current contractor, or go to a competitive bid?
- Contacted other states to identify
  - Contractor used for assessments
  - Strengths and weaknesses
  - Flexibility with test dates
  - Timely return of results



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## What We Learned

- NCLB has created a more competitive market with additional test vendors for assessment development
- Competition has yielded benefits in the area of scheduling, scoring turnaround time, data collection, reporting and reduced costs



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## NCLB Requirements

- Must test all students in grades 3-8 annually in reading and math
- Must test at high school level once at grade 10, 11 or 12 annually in reading and math
- Assessments must be aligned to **state** standards (not National)
- Primary purpose of testing is to hold schools and districts accountable

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Senate HESS January 28, 2004

## Current Assessments System NCLB Compliance

### Current System

### NCLB Compliant?

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| • Benchmarks 3, 6, 8    | • Need additional questions                     |
| • Terra Nova 4, 5, 7, 9 | • Need 2 <sup>nd</sup> test on Alaska standards |
| • HSGQE 10              | • Needs to include advanced level               |

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## **What Competitive Bid Does Not Do**

- Does not change the Alaska Standards
- Does not change district curriculum or instructional materials
- Does not lower or raise proficiency levels
- Does not throw away past work or money spent to date

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## **Addressing Misinformation**

- We are currently in compliance with NCLB
  - Not without additional work on all assessments.
- National norm referenced testing is being abandoned
  - Including norm referenced tests in this RFP would have limited bidders and not followed past practice. NRTs are not being abandoned and will be addressed in a separate RFP, anticipated not to exceed \$150,000 annually.

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## **Addressing Misinformation**

- New tests will have no constructed responses
  - Competitive bid process asked contractors to give testing options with variable constructed response components (0%, 12.5%, 25%, 50%)
- The RFP will cost the state an additional \$5 million
  - The RFP limits the annual costs to \$5 million or less per year over the next six years. Without the RFP the current assessment system cost begins at \$7.9 for FY05, and escalates to \$9.3 million by FY08

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## **What Competitive Bid Does Accomplish**

- Greater instructional value and ability to monitor student progress from year to year
- Increased alignment with Alaska Standards
- Timely return of results
- Complies with NCLB
- Cost effective

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## Summary

- Identified concerns about assessment system
- Tried to negotiate with current contractor
- Explored competitive testing market

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## Summary

- |                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • <b>Current Costs are escalating</b> | • <b>Costs under competitive bid</b> |
| – \$7.9 million FY05                  | – \$5.0 million FY05                 |
| – \$8.3 million FY06                  | – \$5.0 million FY06                 |
| – \$8.9 million FY07                  | – \$5.0 million FY07                 |
| – \$9.3 million FY08                  | – \$5.0 million FY08                 |

**Total = \$34.4 million**

**Total = \$20.0 million**

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