



Assessments in New York State

MCSBA believes that curriculum-based, developmentally appropriate assessments aligned with best practice research are an essential part of the instructional process. Such state assessments can effectively monitor student achievement and inform instructional programs. In conflict with these goals the current reform agenda is driving districts to reduce and/or eliminate important curricular areas to redirect limited resources on singular exams and data reporting.

MCSBA asks State Leaders to address the current issues in the assessment portion of its education reform agenda:

<p>SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF INSTRUCTION</p>	<p>The current high stakes, one size fits all state assessment model requires pretests, posttests, 3-8 tests, Regents exams as well as field tests. The requirement that to the extent practicable teachers not score their own assessments places an additional burden on districts to facilitate group scoring which often results in teachers being pulled out of their classrooms to participate in scoring assessments multiple times over the course of the year. Taken together, these issues will result in a significant loss in instructional time and is especially harmful now when Common Core Standards are being implemented.</p>
<p>STRESSFUL ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS</p>	<p>The increased pressure to do well on tests that will ultimately measure the performance of teachers and administrators creates an anxiety laden environment for students that will equate to poorer performance. Multiple measures only truly exist when state scores are significantly good because the other measures are easily negated by poor test scores.</p>
<p>PROFICIENCY NOT MEASURED</p>	<p>The current assessments system yields a single statistic that does not fully account for student proficiency. Therefore, this isolated snapshot in time restricts programmatic evaluation or instructional improvement. Student performance and/or growth on the NYS assessments should not be used to measure teacher or principal quality.</p>
<p>LACK OF TRANSPARENCY FOR DISTRICTS AND COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>The current assessments have been shown to have design flaws and errors. There doesn't appear to be any accountability on the part of the test publishers to improve their product, nor any opportunity to confirm the reliability or validity of the tests. Benchmarks are also changed with little or no notice creating confusion and frustration among communities about the proficiency of their students and the performance of their schools. Teachers are not able to easily access results from those assessments in a format that would be informative to their instruction.</p>
<p>LACK OF FLEXIBILITY</p>	<p>The reform agenda has no options for high performing districts with highly proficient students. These successful schools have evaluation systems already in place that are proven and are held accountable to by their communities. Creating a shift from current successful systems to an undemonstrated system temporarily halts current progress and puts high performing districts and their students at risk.</p>

MCSBA believes education must provide students with the tools to become successful, productive citizens and quality assessments can be one of the ways to monitor progress toward that goal. We also believe that public education in our country has the responsibility to nurture culture, creativity, individualism and civic duty and that these are also equally important elements in our collective society.