



Christie Administration Announces Interim Report of Study Commission on Student Assessments

For Immediate Release

Contact: Michael Yapple
Rich Vespucci
609-292-1126

Date: January 23, 2015

Trenton, NJ – The Study Commission on the Use of Student Assessments in New Jersey, which is studying issues and concerns about testing in public schools, has issued its interim report, the Department of Education announced today.

The nine-member Study Commission, created by Executive Order No. 159, is charged with reviewing and providing recommendations about the volume, frequency and impact of student assessments occurring throughout New Jersey school districts, including those administered for college admission, college credit, and college pathways. The Study Commission is also examining possible recommendations regarding the Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Common Core State Standards, and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC) assessments, which will be part of the final report due to the Governor.

In its interim report, the commission reviewed public perceptions regarding over-testing of students, including the various kinds of assessments being given in classrooms. The commission focused on efficiencies in overall testing in terms of both quality and quantity. The commission found that individual schools and classrooms have, over time, developed a number of different tests with different purposes that, if not constantly reviewed for redundancy or quality, may be problematic in terms of limiting instructional time or detracting from the student experience.

Some of the recommendations of the Study Commission's [interim report](#) include:

- Each district should review the universe of tests and quizzes being given in classrooms, with the goal of developing a coordinated integrated assessment structure and schedule. Parents should be engaged in the process, and notified annually of the assessments their child will take.
- The state should lead efforts to review the universe of testing, and also review the federal and state-required tests (PARCC, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, etc.) to ensure they are coordinated with other tests and capable of integration into instruction. The state should also make greater efforts to communicate with the public regarding its own vision for educational improvement and how student assessments should be used to accomplish that vision.
- The New Jersey Department of Education should conduct a study to learn more about assessment practices of local districts and schools, including the impact on instructional and student learning time.

The commission has developed a number of initiatives to engage the public in its work, including a user-friendly [website](#) to inform the public about the work of the commission and to provide a mechanism for public input and feedback; scheduling three regional [public testimony sessions](#) for Jan. 27, 28 and 29; and holding a series of focus groups with students.