

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your efforts in verifying 2008-09 accountability and other school year data. Although the work that must be completed over the next few weeks will be challenging, we have made important progress toward meeting these new federal reporting mandates.

Verification reports for the 2008–09 school year, including the Accountability Verification Reports (AVRs), have been available on nySTART since June 2. Preview Accountability and Overview Reports (preAORs) have been available on nySTART since July 2. These reports will be updated weekly through the week of August 3, 2009. Please make sure you retain for your records a copy of the final reports, which will be based on final data certified on July 31.

As described in my May 2009 memorandum, "July 31, 2009 Deadline for the Verification of 2008–09 Accountability and Other Data," and my email to superintendents and charter school principals on June 12, the federal government requires that New York State publicly report school and district accountability decisions 14 days before the start of the school year. To fulfill this requirement, all data for the 2008–09 school year must be reported, verified, and certified by **July 31, 2009**. (See <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/accountability/timeline.html>.) School districts will receive a deadline from their local data center that will be **prior to July 31, 2009**, to allow sufficient time for data processing. The 2008–09 Statement of Certification of Verification Reports form, which contains a list of all reports for which data must be verified, can be found at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/nystart/certification.html>.

Again, we appreciate the work you are doing to meet this federal deadline. Ensuring that New York State complies with the new federal rules may be critical to the continued receipt of federal funds. Please share this memo with everyone in your district who is involved with the collection and submission of data.

Preview Accountability and Overview Reports

The Preview Accountability and Overview Reports (preAORs) provide information on whether a school or district made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on 2008-09 school year data in the SIRS. The preAORs will be refreshed every Thursday from July 2 until August 6. Data and determinations in the preAORs are based on data in Level 2 of the Student Information Repository System (SIRS) at 11:59 p.m. on the previous Friday.

Since accountability verification is ongoing, please review the preAOR Report Guide found at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/nystart/reportguides.html> for an explanation of how to interpret these preliminary reports, especially with respect to the NYSAA One Percent Cap, NYSESLAT score availability on July 14, and schools and districts with "Pending" status.

District personnel should pay particular attention to the verification of NYSESLAT scores that will appear in the AVRs for the first time on July 14. These scores will impact preAOR accountability calculations for students properly coded as NYSESLAT in lieu of ELA for accountability purposes (students with a Program Service code of 0242).

As always, any necessary changes must be made to the source data contained in the local student management system and loaded to Level 1/Level 2 of the SIRS. Districts should work with their Level 1 data center to determine the data-loading schedules in place prior to the statewide July 31 certification deadline for 2008-09 school year data.

Additional Reporting Resources

Beginning the week of July 6, schools and districts will have access to two additional reporting resources.

- **Reasonableness Report:** Through the Level 2 Reports described in my email communication of June 12, the Department has added an additional "Reasonableness Report" that school personnel can use to check their data for significant year-to-year changes that may indicate a reporting error. In particular, please check your number of graduates and number of students eligible to take the NYSESLAT in lieu of the ELA for accountability purposes (students with a Program Service code of 0242). Remember that a student is only counted as a graduate if he or she is coded with a diploma type and a corresponding exit enrollment code.
- **Total Cohort Files:** Your Level 1 data center has been provided with data files that contain student-level information (by local and NYSSIS ID) for the 2003, 2004, and 2005 Total Cohorts. These files will be updated weekly and can assist your efforts to make any corrections (such as the proper coding of graduates and accurate cohort membership identification) to Total Cohort data prior to the July 31 deadline.

Differentiated Accountability Status Determinations

New York State has implemented a "differentiated accountability" model for 2009-10 accountability decisions based on 2008-09 school year data. Districts were recently mailed prospective status determinations, based on 2008-09 statuses and possible AYP outcomes for the 2008-09 school year. More information about differentiated accountability can be found at http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/nyc/APA/Differentiated_Accountability/DA_home.html. This link includes a worksheet that allows school personnel to calculate a school's prospective status based on information contained in the preAOR.

Final differentiated accountability status determinations are scheduled to be made public on August 26, 2009. Districts will receive notification of these status determinations prior to the public release via the Information and Reporting Services (IRS) Portal. All superintendents and charter school principals currently have access to the IRS Portal via their existing SED Web Business Portal account at <http://portal.nysed.gov>.

Currently, the IRS Portal is refreshed weekly with elementary/middle- and secondary-level data files for accountability verification. If you have not already done so, I strongly encourage you to log into the portal or give rights to an appropriate designee, so that you are able to retrieve your accountability status information when released in August.

User IDs and passwords necessary for access to the SED Web Business Portal are managed by the SED Delegated Account System (SEDDAS). Information regarding SEDDAS can be found at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/seddas/seddashome.html> or by calling the SEDDAS help desk at (518) 473-8832.

Backmapping

No Child Left Behind and state regulations require that all public schools be included in the accountability system. Schools that serve only students below grade 3 and, consequently, do not participate in State assessments are called "feeder" schools. The Department uses a system called "backmapping" to make accountability decisions for these schools. Backmapping is a method by which the grade 3 assessment score of a student is attributed to the feeder school in which the student was enrolled before entering grade 3 as well as to the school in which the student took the grade 3 assessment.

Feeder schools that are required to do backmapping are those whose highest grade is grade 1 or grade 2 (schools with grades 1, 2, 1–2, K–1, or K–2 only). These schools are required to submit data to the Department through the SIRS. If they do not submit data to the Department through the SIRS, they are considered *not* to have made AYP. Further information on backmapping and a list of schools required to submit these data can be found at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/sirs/>.

Title I Data Collection

There is a new online tool for filing the 2009-10 Title I School Status Report. This report allows districts to indicate whether a school is participating in a school-wide or targeted Title I program for the 2009-10 school year. This information is the basis for accountability and other important decisions.

Beginning June 1, 2009, school districts and charter schools were able to access the report through the SED Web Business Portal at <http://portal.nysed.gov>. The due date to complete the 2009-10 report is July 23, 2009. Unlike prior years, completion of the report is only required if the Title I funding status for a building within a district or a charter school has changed. If your Title I funding has not changed, the Department will carry forward the Title I funding status from the previous year. Basic instructions can be found upon accessing the report. More detailed documentation is available at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/title1/home.html>.

January/June English Regents Examination Reporting

All students who took session one of the January 2009 Regents Comprehensive Examination in English at a school that was closed on January 28, 2009 due to inclement weather were allowed to take session two of the June 2009 examination to complete the examination. The score earned by the student on session one of the January 2009 Regents Comprehensive Examination in English may be combined with the score earned on the June 2009 session two to constitute one complete, official examination administration. Affected students who chose to take both sessions of the June 2009 Regents Comprehensive Examination in English were awarded a final examination score for the June 2009 administration as well as a final score for the special combined-date administration. A new measure code has been created specifically for reporting the special combined-date score. The test administration date for reporting the special combined-date score is the first day of the June Regents period.

Scores earned on the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English must be reported using the SIRS. Both scores must be reported for students who earned both the special combined-date score and the June 2009 score. The single combined-date score must be reported for students who earned only that score. No score should be reported for students who took session one in January 2009 but did not take session two in either January 2009 or June 2009. A student can choose which score will be included in his or her transcript but not which score is reported in the SIRS.

Again thank you for all your effort and support as we work together to meet these challenging new federal requirements. I hope the additional resources we are providing will help you to complete this work.

Sincerely,

Alan Ray
Assistant Commissioner
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