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Joint Committee on the Public Schools

Testimony Concerning Statewide Standardized Assessment May 14, 2019

Submitted by Melanie Schulz, NJASA Director of Government Relations

Thank you, Senator Rice, Assemblywoman Jasey and Members of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools for the opportunity to speak to you on the topic of assessments.

At NJASA, this has been a primary topic of discussion, and I would like to address my comments in what are three different, but related, buckets.

First – there is an immediate need to expand the *Consent Order* to include the graduating classes of 2021 and 2022.

Absent expanding the *Consent Order*, legislation must be passed to eliminate the 11th grade assessment requirement for graduation.

The consequences of neither of these occurring will cause chaos in school districts.

Right now, school leaders and faculty have no idea what this assessment will look like, nor do they have any direction about how to inform students on what will be tested.

There has been much speculation on what that might be, but superintendents must plan their school year around what is concrete and not conjecture.

Also, keep in mind that even if the *Consent Order* is expanded to include the classes of 2021 and 2022, it does not remove the 11th grade exit exam requirement, and the NJ DOE will have to

start looking at a possible RFP in 6-8 months for those graduating classes starting in 2023, who are those students currently in 8th grade.

The *Consent Order* summary is as follows:

The Classes of 2019 and 2020

Students graduating as members of the Classes of 2019 and 2020 can meet graduation assessment requirements through any of these three pathways:

- (1) Achieve passing scores on high school level NJSLA/PARCC assessments;
- (2) Achieve scores defined in the table below on alternative assessments such as the SAT, ACT, or ACCUPLACER; or
- (3) Submit, through the district, a student portfolio appeal to the NJDOE.

Our position has been to put a bill on the Governor’s desk and if the amendment to the *Consent Order* is approved, then the Governor can veto the legislation.

Second – I would like to address assessment going forward.

NJASA, along with many other stakeholders, has been meeting regularly on the “next generation” of assessments.

Federal Law requires States to conduct assessments, as a condition of receiving Federal funds.

Statewide assessments are required in mathematics and English language arts every year in third through eighth grade and once in high school.

Separately, Federal law also requires a science assessment once in each of the three grade spans: third through fifth, sixth through ninth, and tenth through twelfth.

Working together with stakeholders on what these assessments should look like is necessary and should not be confused with high school exit testing.

Third – NJASA fully supports the creation of a NJ Commission on High School Graduation Assessment Requirements.

The commission would research and study best practices, as well as how other States address high school graduation requirements.

The stakeholders would work for about a year. September 1, 2020 is the date that has been discussed for submitting the final report which would propose recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature and the State Board of Education.

This is vital work that needs to be done, and I ask that legislation be introduced as soon as possible and moved in the Legislature so this commission can begin its work.

Again, thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of NJASA.