



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 3, 2020

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., State Superintendent 

SUBJECT: Federal Waiver of State Assessments – MEMO #COVID-19-104

U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos notified me and other state school chiefs across the country this afternoon that states should not anticipate any waivers to the federal requirement to administer statewide summative assessments for the 2020-2021 school year.

At the end of June, State Board of Education President Dr. Casandra Ulbrich and I had [requested](#) Secretary DeVos to continue waiving the federal requirements for student assessments and school accountability for the 2020-21 school year, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Ulbrich and I urged DeVos back in March to allow for nationwide waivers to federal laws requiring state summative tests and certain related accountability measures. DeVos and the U.S. Department of Education subsequently granted waivers of these federal requirements for Michigan and all other states in the country.

Schools across the country, including those in Michigan, were closed for all or large parts of the spring. State health officials across the country monitor daily the status of the pandemic and the pandemic's spread. The COVID-19 virus continues to adversely affect the ways in which Americans live, work, and go to school.

We agree with the need to know where children are academically in a pandemic, but strongly disagree with the need to use spring state summative assessments for this purpose. Recent state law requires benchmark assessments in the fall and in the spring of this school year for this purpose.

We will be re-applying this winter for federal waivers from statewide summative test administration.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors

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