



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

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**TO:** District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Schools  
Directors of Special Education  
School Administrators of Public Schools  
School Administrators of Nonpublic Schools  
School Administrators of Charter Schools  
Chairpersons of Committees on Special Education

**FROM:** Angélica Infante-Green *A. Infante - Green*

**SUBJECT:** Important Information Regarding Changes to the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) in Social Studies and Science

Please be advised that, beginning with the 2017-18 school year, the NYSAA Program will no longer include a Social Studies component. The NYSAA Assessments in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science will continue to be administered. In addition, for the 2017-18 school year and thereafter, NYSAA-eligible students will be assessed using the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) computer-based assessments for Science, as well as for ELA and Mathematics.

The goal of the elimination of the Social Studies component is to require the least amount of testing necessary to provide accurate information about student achievement, and to minimize the instructional time required to administer the NYSAA Program to students. As part of the NYSAA Program, students with severe cognitive disabilities are assessed on the NYSAA Assessments in ELA and Mathematics (at Grades 3-8 and once at the secondary level), and in Science (at Grades 4, 8 and once at the secondary level). Students participating in the NYSAA Program earn separate and independent scores on each NYSAA Assessment.

The discontinuance of the NYSAA Assessment in Social Studies will not impede any NYSAA-eligible student from attaining the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential Certificate. In addition, since the results of the State Assessments in Social Studies are not used for State or Federal accountability purposes, this discontinuance will not affect the accountability status of a district or school.

The change in assessing Science with DLM will allow for the use of a computer adaptive testing program for Science, similar to the program already being used by NYSAA-eligible students for ELA and Mathematics. In adaptive testing, students receive testlets of varying difficulty, depending on their answers to the questions on the previous

testlet. During the assessment administration, students have access to unique accessibility tools and supports to fit each student's needs and preferences, which will result in an assessment that measures a greater depth and breadth of proficiency than in the past. Computer-administered assessments are also compatible with a wide range of technology-based assistive technology devices. The DLM computer-administered assessments in Science will be electronically scored and reported.

In addition, this change will allow the administration window for the Science component to align with the administration window for ELA and Mathematics, which will be from **March 14, 2018 to June 8, 2018**. In having one computer-based test system for the complete NYSAA program, the amount of time and resources needed for educator training in order to administer the assessment will be reduced. In fall 2017, there will be one comprehensive training for all three content areas, reducing the amount of time that educators will be out of the classroom for training.

If you have any questions concerning these changes, you may contact the Office of State Assessment at 518-474-5902 or [emscassessinfo@nysed.gov](mailto:emscassessinfo@nysed.gov).