



**U.S. Department of Education Releases Guidance to States
on Assessing Student Learning During the Pandemic**

By Beula Postlewait, Communications Representative

On February 22, 2021, the Press Office of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) issued a statement regarding the administration of assessments for this school year.

Today the U.S. Department of Education (ED) is providing guidance to states emphasizing the importance of flexibility in administering assessments this year as a result of the pandemic and supporting the use of assessment data as a source of information for parents and educators to target resources and support, rather than for accountability purposes this year.

State assessments and accountability systems play an important role in advancing educational equity, identifying student needs, and targeting the resources to address them. At the same time, some schools and districts may not be able to safely administer statewide summative assessments this spring using their standard practices, while others may wish to prioritize learning time during the scant in-person schooling time this year in many communities. The pandemic requires that states have significant flexibility in implementing this work for the 2020-2021 school year and ED's guidance is a practical approach that balances these two priorities.

“The Department of Education is committed to supporting all states in assessing student learning during the pandemic to help target resources and support to the students with the greatest needs,” said Ian Rosenblum, acting assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education. “We also recognize that at a time when everything in our education system is different, there need to be different ways that states can administer state tests like moving them to the fall so that precious in-person learning time this year can be spent on instruction. Balancing these priorities is the best approach.”

ED’s guidance makes clear that states should consider the ways they can do things differently this year. Flexibility available to states includes:

Extending the testing window and moving assessments to the summer or fall,

Giving the assessment remotely, where feasible,

Shortening the state assessment, to make testing more feasible to implement and prioritize in-person learning time.

The Department also recognizes that individual states may need additional assessment flexibility based on the specific circumstances across or within the state. ED is prepared to work with states to address their individual needs and conditions while ensuring the maximum available statewide data to inform the targeting of resources and support.

To see the rest of this article, go to this [website](#).

Please check this website for current information that may have been released since this announcement. Check with your local district and state for local regulations and guidance.

Your Nazarene Educators Worldwide Council is praying for you as you complete this unusual year. Regardless of where you serve as an educator, or whatever your title might be, God is ready to help you and encourage you. You can make it through this year with His help. If you have specific prayer requests, contact me or our chairperson, Marilyn Dominick. We will be happy to pray with you and for you.

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