



We Raise New Jersey Supports Legislative Fix to State Assessment Requirements for Graduation

Trenton, NJ (December 9, 2019) – Ensuring that New Jersey’s young people are prepared with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed after high school does not happen by accident. It takes intentional work in and outside of the classroom, including high expectations at each grade that build to the next.

A critical piece of this work is assessing students in high school to understand where they are on their pathway and to ensure that they are prepared for the next step. The good news is that there is already a plan to provide a check on students’ progress that is as simple as the ABC’s.

[Assembly bill 4957](#) has been passed by the New Jersey Senate and allows for a state assessment that is:

- **A**ligned to what students are learning;
- **B**uilt into a logical sequence to provide support and remediation; and
- **C**lear on the content covered in the test.

Unfortunately, the latest [regulatory proposal](#) from the New Jersey Department of Education would instead create a brand new assessment to test students on content they learned years before and cause undue stress for eleventh graders already facing exams such as the SAT, ACT, and AP.

This proposal calls for the creation of a new graduation exam in eleventh grade to include content in Algebra I, Geometry, and English Language Arts 10. State data show that last year, over 93% of our students had completed Algebra I and about one-third had completed Geometry by the end of grade nine. While the proposal responds to the State Superior Appellate Court ruling requiring a graduation exam be given in eleventh grade, we believe that the [assessment compromise](#) reached in October 2018, prior to the Appellate Court ruling, remains the option in the best interest of New Jersey students, families, educators, and employers.

Assembly bill 4957 would eliminate the legal requirement that a graduation exam be given in eleventh grade. This would open the door to revert back to the compromise that resulted from the Department and State Board of Education engaging in meaningful feedback sessions with a variety of stakeholders. This compromise reduced overall state testing in high school while maintaining high expectations for all students, allowing transparent data on student performance as students complete their sequence of courses, and providing appropriate time for remediation.

We Raise New Jersey supports an equitable public education system that ensures all students are prepared for success in college, career, and life. The Department’s proposal for the eleventh-grade exam does not follow a broader vision for what students need to be able to know and do to succeed after high school. It is essential that any changes to the assessment system be rooted in evidence and tied to a comprehensive vision for student success.

Let’s end this debate that distracts from the important work of educators and students. Join us in support of Assembly bill 4957 today.

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About We Raise New Jersey: WRNJ advocates for the high-quality education every student deserves to be prepared for success in college, career, and community by harnessing the collective strength of New Jersey's influential education, business, and civic organizations. Coalition members include: New Jersey PTA, JerseyCAN, New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey, New Jersey Council of County Colleges, New Jersey Business & Industry Association, and the New Jersey Charter Schools Association. For more information, visit <http://www.werajenj.org>, and follow [@WeRaiseNJ](https://www.facebook.com/WeRaiseNJ) and <https://www.linkedin.com/company/we-raise-nj/>.