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Press Release



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Governor Hassan, Department of Education Announce Federal Extension of New Hampshire's Pilot Competency-Based Assessment Program

CONCORD – As part of efforts to help students develop the skills and innovative thinking needed for success in the innovation economy of the 21st century, Governor Maggie Hassan and New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) Commissioner Virginia Barry today announced that the U.S. Department of Education (USED) approved a waiver extending New Hampshire's Performance Assessment for Competency Education (PACE) pilot and expanding it to nine school districts.

"New Hampshire is widely recognized as a national leader in competency-based education, innovating in public education to help our young people develop the skills and innovative thinking needed for success in the 21st century economy," Governor Hassan said. "Our PACE pilot is an important part of those efforts, and I applaud the participating districts and the New Hampshire Department of Education for their continued efforts to strengthen and expand this program, a model that is also expanding nationally based on New Hampshire's success."

A first-in-the-nation accountability strategy, PACE allows districts to reduce the level of standardized testing in favor of more locally managed assessments that are integrated into a student's day-to-day work. PACE-implementing districts give the Smarter Balanced statewide assessment once in elementary school, once in middle school and once in high school – in three grades instead of seven. In the years that students don't take the statewide assessment, the PACE districts will administer carefully designed common and local "performance assessments" developed by the districts themselves and validated at the state level.

"This accountability strategy provides locally managed assessments that empower our students and our teachers," said Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D., NHDOE Commissioner. "The PACE project has been widely followed in education circles as demonstrating a strategy for reducing the nation's reliance on standardized testing while providing assessments that give meaningful feedback for students, parents and teachers."

In March of 2015, the [USED approved New Hampshire's PACE pilot](#) in four school districts for the 2014-15 school year and eight districts for 2015-16. The approved waiver extends the implementation of PACE for the 2016-17 school year and expands it to include nine school districts. The NHDOE requested this extension so that the students in the nine pilot districts may take the PACE pilot assessments in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science in lieu of the statewide assessment in certain grades in 2016-17. The PACE-implementing districts are: Concord, Epping, Monroe, Pittsfield, Rochester, Sanborn Regional, Seacoast Charter, Souhegan and the White Mountains School Administrative Unit.

For more information on PACE, visit <http://education.nh.gov/assessment-systems/pace.htm>.



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