



Contact: Morganne Firmstone, morganne.firmstone@jerseycan.org or 570.352.5783

We Raise New Jersey Statement on Proposed State Testing Changes

Trenton, NJ (July 10, 2018) – Today, members of the We Raise New Jersey coalition released the following statements in response to Governor Murphy’s announcement regarding proposed changes to statewide testing in New Jersey schools:

“We appreciate the statewide assessment outreach conducted by Commissioner Lamont Repollet and the Department of Education over the past several months. We recognize that this system is in need of improvement, and we were happy to host a focus group on this very topic. We were encouraged to see several of the key takeaways—like providing results in a more timely manner—included in the recommendations. However, we have concerns about how we will ensure all students will graduate ready for success after high school, and that “additional pathways” to graduate maintain a high level of rigor. It’s important that parents continue to have as much meaningful and relevant information as possible when it comes to their children’s academic progress,” said Rose Acerra, President of New Jersey PTA.

“Ninth grade is widely known as an important transition year for students and an indicator for later academic success,” remarked Patricia Morgan, Executive Director of JerseyCAN. “Getting rid of the ninth-grade English language arts exam is taking away one important tool for parents to assess where their children are and where they need to go. In addition, studies have shown that Algebra II is one of the leading predictors of later success in college and the workforce. As a state, we should be continuing to raise the bar for our students. These proposed changes say to our kids that tenth-grade reading and Algebra I are our highest expectations for them as we send them off to college and/or career. We’re concerned with the message this sends.”

Andrew Musick of the New Jersey Business and Industry Association added, “We are concerned about the impact of these changes, as NJBIA has supported strong educational standards and rigorous assessment programs in order to ensure that our future workforce is prepared for the jobs of tomorrow.”

“Eliminating four high school exams is eliminating four opportunities to compare how kids are doing across our schools. These tests are one objective way for us to ensure we are providing students from all backgrounds with equitable access to resources and opportunities to compete in college and beyond,” added Michael Taylor, Board Member of the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey.

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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 <https://www.facebook.com/WeRaiseNJ/> and [@WeRaiseNJ](https://www.instagram.com/WeRaiseNJ/).