

March 4, 2021

On Thursday, March 4, 2021, Board Vice President Jean Halle convened the meeting. She was joined by the following members: Gail Bates, Shawn Bartley, Charles Dashiell, Jr., Susan Getty, Vermelle Greene, Rose Li, Rachel McCusker, Joan Mele-McCarthy, Lori Morrow, Warner Sumpter, Holly Wilcox, and student board member Jason Wu.

[Link to meeting agenda, materials, and video](#)

### **Special Meeting on State Assessments**

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The State Board met on the afternoon of March 4 to receive an update on the administration of the 2021 State Assessments and to consider the department's recommended approval of the adjusted schedule for administration of the modified, statewide English language arts and mathematics assessments for grades 3-8 and high school.

State Superintendent Dr. Karen Salmon opened the meeting by sharing her excitement for what she described as an 'elegant solution to the questions around equity and access to State assessments while avoiding taking too much time away from instruction.' She shared that one of the remedies, the last on the U.S. Department of Education list, was to delay the State assessments until the fall of 2021. Also, States may use a diagnostic assessment, resulting in a dramatic reduction in testing time for Mathematics and English Language Arts. ([USDE Letter to Chief State School Officers \(February 22, 2021\)](#))

Dr. Salmon reiterated the benefits of the turn-around time of 48 hours in providing results to teachers for immediate application to teaching and learning in the classroom. She stated that much more detail would be provided at the State Board's regularly scheduled meeting in March. In March, she will be asking for the State Board's approval of the recommendation to decouple the accountability system assessments. Dr. Salmon also emphasized the social/emotional benefits to students and staff to reduce the amount of time devoted to these tests and to apply the results towards meaningful instruction. In response to a question from Board member McCusker, Dr. Salmon shared that although the department is aware of the variety of diagnostic tests and tools being used by local school systems, she believes in the need for a uniform statewide diagnostic assessment.

The State Board voted to approve the Superintendent's recommended plan for administering diagnostic assessments in the fall, rather than the plan discussed at the State Board's February meeting to administer summative assessments in the spring of this school year. Only Ms. McCusker, the teacher association-elected member of the board, voted no.

[Memo](#)