

DATE: March 19, 2020

TO: Principals

FROM: Ben Jameson

Good Afternoon,

Earlier today, the USBE voted to suspend all state testing for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. This action would take place even if in-person school sessions were to resume. This suspension would include the following state assessments:

- Summative RISE
- Summative Utah Aspire Plus
- EOY Acadience Reading
- KEEP Exit
- PEEP Exit

Of all state assessments, only the Civics test, required for graduation, is not waived. Yesterday, we arranged for students in our district to take this test via UTIPS at home, if they wish. Social studies teachers have already been notified of this recent adjustment. There are no proctor or security requirements associated with this assessment.

USBE staff will be pursuing a waiver from the federal government for its ESSA requirements and state accountability. They will also be working with the Legislature for some additional flexibilities in testing and accountability. There are currently 36 states who have waived, suspended, or paused state assessments with three more seeking waivers (not including Utah) and one state studying the issue further.

It is unclear at the moment how this will affect schools identified as TSI. More information on that will be forthcoming. It is also unclear how the lack of EOY Acadience Reading data will affect the state funding that data is tied to.

All of that said, the testing platforms for each of these assessments are still open and available, meaning that if we were to resume in-person sessions at schools, we could opt to use all of the tools and assessments in each of these platforms (i.e., benchmarks, progress monitoring, etc.).

Looking to the future and a year without end-of-year testing data, one possible option at least for grades 3-8 would be to administer the RISE Interim at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. We could assess students based on their 2019-20 grade level so that teachers could still be able to use their current grade level benchmark tests during the 2020-21 school year. That way, they would have similar data to that of a summative test and they would be starting the year off with that data for their current students.

Please let me know if you have any questions, concerns or ideas moving forward.

Ben