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# NEWS RELEASE

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## State Initiates New High School Exit Exam in Spring of 2011

SANTA FE - Beginning in the spring of 2011, the grade 11 New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (SBA/High School Graduation Assessment) will be administered as New Mexico's high school exit exam, announced New Mexico Secretary of Education Designate, Dr. Susanna M. Murphy.

The SBA/HSGA will replace the New Mexico High School Competency Exam (NMHSCE) that has been in use since 1986. The SBA is the test currently being used by the New Mexico Public Education Department to assess Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The new exit exam was set by state Statute 22-13-1.1(L), NMSA 1978.

This year's 11<sup>th</sup> graders will take the SBA in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. The SBA/HSGA is the state's first high school exit exam to be aligned with New Mexico Content Standards in grades 9 through 12. Students will have three opportunities to pass the SBA/HSGA in high school, once in the spring of their junior year, and in the fall and winter of their senior year. Students leaving high school without a diploma will be allowed to retake the SBA/HSGA for five years after leaving.

Four versions of the SBA/HSGA will be available. Students may take the test in English and Spanish versions, or Braille and Large Print. Accommodations will also be provided for students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

Students who do not pass the SBA/HSGA will be able to use a portfolio of standards based indicators as an Alternate Demonstration of Competency (ADC). To ensure the ADC meets the rigor of the SBA/HSGA, guidelines are currently being developed by a state team led by Dr. Stanley Rabinowitz, a nationally recognized expert in assessment, and representatives from New Mexico's public schools, institutions of higher education, career and technical education, and the PED. The guidance documents will be ready for the districts by October 1, 2010. Throughout the 2010-11 school year, there will be a rollout of further information that will include sample portfolios with scoring guides.

The old high school exit exam, the NMHSCE, was last administered to grade 10 students in spring 2009. Any student who did not pass the NMHSCE will be retested with that test. Students who leave high school without a diploma will be able to retake the NMHSCE for five years after leaving high school. The new SBA/HSGA met approval from the U.S. Department of Education for use as the State's assessment for measuring the adequate yearly progress (AYP) of schools and districts. It will serve a dual role as a graduation assessment and accountability assessment. A different set of passing scores from those used for AYP will be established to determine eligibility for a diploma.

Statewide taskforces will be convened this fall and next spring to define performance levels and passing scores that represent the rigor that is fundamental for readiness for college and the workforce. The taskforces will be comprised of representatives from New Mexico's public schools, institutions of higher education, career and technical education, and the PED. Taskforce members will consider data on the relationship between student scores on the NMHSCE and the SBA and the probability of enrollment in remedial coursework in English and Mathematics in college.

More information about the exam will be available after October 1, 2010 on the Public Education Department's High School Redesign web page: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/HighSchoolRedesign/>

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