



Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PA PENNSYLVANIA PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN RELEASES STATEMENT ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ASSESSMENT SURVEY BY PENN STATE TEAM

(HARRISBURG), FEB. 25 – Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC) today released a statement regarding the survey of local school districts’ high school graduation assessments performed by a Penn State Research Team conducted at the request of the Department of Education that indicated only 18 school districts appropriately measure proficiency in math and reading for their students and use these results accordingly to award diplomas. The research team also found that mathematics assessments more often rated as aligned to the state academic standards than reading assessments. Additionally, the practice area was weaker than the standards’ alignment measure for most school districts. The report can be found at <http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/lavs>.

“The study indicates the ongoing debate over graduation requirements is timely and appropriate and that administrators and educators alike should make use of the excellent work being done in some school districts,” said Joan L. Benso, president and CEO, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC). “The challenge now is how to move the debate forward learning from the information gained on local assessment models and giving districts the tools they need to educate our students and assure they graduate ready.”

PPC believes this framework must include a reliable statewide assessment system for district use along with the option for districts to use a local assessment model that can be reasonably validated against the state standards; other supports for districts such as model curriculum, early diagnostics and professional development; timely remediation designed to assure that every student achieves; and, the funding required to educate every child to state academic standards.

“It is troubling that just 18 school districts had an assessment system that met both the level of alignment and practice required to be sure that students have met the academic standards prior to graduation,” Benso said. “We also were disappointed that nearly 20 percent of school districts chose not to participate in the study and hope none of those districts have voiced public opposition to end-of-course graduation competency exams.”

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“However, we are encouraged that there seems to be a heavy reliance on standardized assessment tools either purchased from private companies or provided by the state indicating there is a strong likelihood that many local districts would make use of graduation competency exams.

“This independent study supports what other assessment measures have indicated - Pennsylvania must do more to assure that *every* student who graduates from high school meets the academic standards and is prepared for the rigors of postsecondary education and the workforce,” Benso said.

More information is available by contacting Kathy Geller Myers, PPC Communications Director, at 717-236-5680 or by visiting www.papartnerships.org.

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