

March 17, 2017

Dear Colleague:

I want to make you aware of a change we are making regarding test participation and the state report card. To ensure school and district report cards ratings are as transparent as possible, the test participation deduction will be removed from the 2016-17 School Report Cards. **The 2016-17 state accountability report cards, which will be released in fall 2017, will not have deductions for test participation for districts or schools.**

Ensuring all students participate in state assessment remains a high priority. Although there will no longer be deductions, we will continue to report test participation rates in the School and District Report Cards. Assessing student performance to measure the progress each subgroup of students is making, and to clearly identify achievement gaps in our state remains a critical focus of the department.

For federal accountability, ESSA requires that schools annually test at least 95 percent of their students in Grades 3-8 and once in high school in ELA and mathematics. In addition, federal law requires that all non-tested students are included in the denominators when determining achievement. **Non-tested students will still count against schools in the federal calculation of participation and proficiency, but not in our state report cards.**

The department will continue to monitor test participation rates going forward. Further information on ESSA as well as Wisconsin's draft plan, which we anticipate will be available for public review in May, can be found online. Please visit our transition page: <https://dpi.wi.gov/esea/transition>.

If you have questions about accountability, please contact the [Office of Educational Accountability](#) or your district/CESA [Accountability Trainer](#).

Sincerely,



Mike Thompson, PhD
Deputy State Superintendent

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