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January 2021 Regents Examinations Cancelled Due to Ongoing Pandemic

The January 2021 administration of the High School Regents Examination Program is cancelled due to the ongoing COVID–19 pandemic, Interim State Education Commissioner Betty A. Rosa announced today. This cancellation applies to all Regents Examinations that had been scheduled for the January 2021 Regents Examination period. No decisions have been made regarding the June and August 2021 administrations of Regents Examinations or any of the other State assessment programs.

"The Board and I are enormously grateful to the dedicated educators, school staff, community members, and parents who are working so diligently to ensure that students are safe and healthy this school year," said Board of Regents Vice Chancellor T. Andrew Brown. "Whether they are engaged in in-school, hybrid or remote learning, we are committed to ensuring each of New York's students has access to the rigorous coursework necessary to prepare them for success this year and beyond. The cancellation of the January Regents Examinations will not impact that priority."

"Throughout the pandemic our priority has been the health and wellbeing of our students and educators," said Interim Commissioner Betty A. Rosa. "We determined the January Regents Exams could not be safely, equitably and fairly administered across the State given where the pandemic currently stands. We will continue to monitor applicable data and make a decision on other State assessment programs as the school year progresses, being mindful of the evolving situation."

Modifications to Diploma Requirements for Students Impacted by the Cancellation of January 2021 Regents Examinations

Due to the cancellation of the January 2021 Regents Examinations, the Department will propose modifications to the assessment requirements that students must meet in order to earn high school diplomas, credentials, and endorsements at the December Board of Regents meeting. These modifications apply to all students who are completing a secondary-level course of study or make-up program in January and are scheduled to participate in one or more of the January 2021 Regents Examinations.

Regents Examination Exemptions

To ensure students are not adversely impacted by the cancellation of the exams, the Department will ask the Board of Regents to adopt emergency regulations pertaining to the assessment requirements that students must meet in order to earn diplomas, credentials and endorsements. Under the proposed

emergency regulations, students who are planning to take one or more Regents Examinations during the January 2021 examination period at the conclusion of a course of study or make up program shall be exempt from the requirements pertaining to passing such Regents Examination to be issued a diploma. To qualify for the exemption, the student must meet one of the following requirements:

- Be currently enrolled in a course of study that would ordinarily culminate in the taking of a January 2021 Regents Examination and earn credit for such course of study by the end of the first semester of the 2020-21 school year; or
- Between September 1, 2020 and the end of the first semester of the 2020-21 school year, successfully complete a make-up program for the purpose of earning course credit; or
- Be preparing to take a required Regents Examination to graduate at the end of the first semester of the 2020-21 school year.

Use of Safety Nets

All current safety net options remain in effect for all students and must be considered in the determination of which diploma type can be awarded. To determine whether general education students, English language learners, and students with disabilities are eligible to earn either a Regents or local diploma, districts and charter schools should consider an exempted examination to be a score of 65. However, students with a disability eligible for the compensatory safety net may not use exemptions on tests to compensate for lower test scores.

Any student including a student with a disability who does not earn a Regents or local diploma continues to be eligible for a free appropriate public education until the end of the school year in which the student turns age 21, or until the receipt of a Regents or local high school diploma.

Mastery, Honors, Technical Endorsements

Examinations from which students have been given an exemption as a result of the COVID-19 related cancellation of the January 2021 Regents Examinations shall be excluded from any calculation used for determining eligibility for an Honors or Mastery endorsement on a diploma. In the case of Honors endorsements to either a Regents Diploma or a Regents with Advanced Designation Diploma, if a student achieves a calculated average of 90 or above on all examinations taken applicable to their diploma type, they will attain the honors endorsement on such diploma. Any examination exempted as a result of COVID-19 related cancellation of the January 2021 examinations shall not be included in such calculation.

Please view the memo sent to the field, an FAQ document and the Department's COVID-19 Information site for additional information and guidance.

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