



July 1, 2016

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to let you know that final assessment participation rates from the 2014-15 school year at the state, local education agency (LEA), and school levels are now available on OSSE's website at <http://osse.dc.gov/service/accountability>.

As you know, the US Department of Education requires that all states have a minimum 95 percent participation rate on required state-wide math and English language arts (ELA) assessments. Per that requirement, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) must annually make public and submit to the US Department of Education participation rates at the state, LEA, and school levels overall and by subgroup. In addition to the appeals process prior to release of results in fall 2015, OSSE provided LEAs with the opportunity to review and appeal 2014-15 participation information in March 2016.

In 2014-15, as a State, we met the 95 percent participation requirement for ELA overall, and in math for most grade levels. However, we did not meet this level for high school math, high school ELA, or for subgroups in a number of additional areas. This is a matter of concern for all of us because participation in the state assessment is a principle of educational equity. We know that our assessment program is an important opportunity for us to learn how our schools and students are doing so we can ensure college and career readiness for all of our students.

In DC, last year was the first year of implementation of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) Alternate Assessment. In addition, in high school, this transition included a significant change from assessing students based on their grade level (10<sup>th</sup> grade DC CAS) to instead assessing students based on when they access specific course content (Geometry, English II course-specific assessments). Based on these results, we know we need to redouble our collective efforts to ensure full access and participation in the future for all of our students.

As a reminder, as we transition to the Every Student Succeeds Act, OSSE's school accountability classifications will not be updated based on results from the 2014-15 school year assessments (see [February 23, 2016](#) correspondence). However, we are required to take action as a state, and will be following up with LEAs that did not meet the 95 percent level for participation overall, or in any grade or subgroup. As a first step, we are examining the root causes for these rates, including how the first year of transition to new assessments impacted implementation and business rules.

We will also be working with LEAs this summer to verify 2016 statewide assessment results and participation rates. We expect this process to take place significantly earlier than last year, and anticipate being able to release both assessment results and participation rates in late August.

Best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Hanseul Kang', with a large, stylized 'S' at the end.

Hanseul Kang  
State Superintendent