



**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

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December 21, 2021

**TO:** District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Schools  
Principals of Public, Religious, and Independent Schools  
Leaders of Charter Schools

**FROM:** Betty A. Rosa, Commissioner

**SUBJECT:** Cancellation of the January 2022 Administration of the New York State (NYS) High School Regents Examination Program in Response to the Ongoing Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you that the New York State Education Department (NYSED or “the Department”) is canceling the January 2022 administration of the NYS High School Regents Examination Program in response to the ongoing impact of the COVID–19 pandemic. This cancellation applies to all Regents Examinations that are scheduled for the January 2022 Regents Examination period. This memorandum also provides information on the amendments that I will ask the Board of Regents to adopt as emergency regulations with respect to the assessment requirements that students must ordinarily meet in order to earn diplomas, credentials, and endorsements so that the cancellation of these exams will not adversely impact students.

As this school year has progressed and the dates for the administration of the January 2022 Regents Examinations have grown nearer, there is increasing uncertainty as to the opportunity for all students in schools across the State to participate in these examinations on their scheduled dates. Consequently, we are canceling the January 2022 Regents Examinations administration as we cannot be certain that these examinations can be administered in a fair, equitable, and safe manner for students and teachers across the State at this time.

The Department has not yet made decisions about the June and August 2022 administrations of Regents Examinations. The Board of Regents and the Department will continue to monitor data related to the impact of the ongoing pandemic. When it is time to decide about these Regents Examinations, those decisions will be fully informed by all available and relevant public health and educational data. As always, we will put the health and safety of students and teachers first.

**Modifications to Diploma Requirements for Students Impacted by the Cancellation of January 2022 Regents Examinations**

Because of the cancellation of the January 2022 Regents Examinations, the Department will ask the Board of Regents to approve modifications to the assessment requirements that students must meet in order to earn high school diplomas, credentials, and endorsements. 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 2022 Regents Examinations.

## Regents Examination Exemptions

Subject to the adoption of emergency regulations by the Board of Regents, students who have been planning to take one or more Regents Examinations during the January 2022 examination period at the conclusion of a course of study or makeup program shall be exempted from the requirements pertaining to passing such Regents Examination in order 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 2022 Regents Examination and earn credit for such course of study by the end of the first semester of the 2021-22 school year; or
- Between September 1, 2021 and the end of the first semester of the 2021-22 school year, successfully complete a make-up program for the purpose of earning course credit; or
- Be preparing to take a required Regents Examination in order to graduate at the end of the first semester of the 2021-22 school year.

NYSED is developing additional guidance in the form of an FAQ and will issue that guidance in early January 2022 to address topics such as safety net options, mastery, honors, and technical endorsements so that schools are able to determine which diplomas to grant to their graduates.

## Recording Student Scores for the January 2022 COVID-19 Exemptions

Student transcripts should reflect the examination name and a score of “E” for exempt for those students meeting the eligibility requirements for such exemption outlined above. Schools must report a Standard Achieved Code of “86” with the course of study in which the student earned credit. No other Standard Achieved Code may be used to report these exemptions. The Office of Information and Reporting Services (IRS) will issue complete guidance in the Student Information and Repository System (SIRS) manual for the reporting of January 2022 Regents exemptions. Any questions about the reporting of exemptions in SIRS should be directed to your [Regional Information Center \(RIC\) or Big 5 Level 1 reporting center](#).

Any questions about the exemptions from examination requirements or the effect of such exemptions on student qualification for a diploma should be directed to [emscgradreq@nysed.gov](mailto:emscgradreq@nysed.gov). The Department asks that schools and districts await the additional guidance referenced above before reaching out to the email inquiry box with questions related to the use of safety net options, mastery, honors, and technical endorsements. All guidance will be made available on NYSED’s [COVID-19 Information site](#) after release.

The Department is grateful to the dedicated educators, school staff, community members, and parents who are working so diligently to ensure that students remain safe and healthy.