



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent
of Education

July 31, 2012

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MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Sherrill W. Parris
Deputy State Superintendent of Education

RE: Statewide Formative Assessment

Most, if not all, of you have heard that the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) will be providing a statewide option for formative, interim, and benchmark assessments beginning August 2012. Through a rigorous, competitive application process, GlobalScholar, Inc., was determined to best fit the needs of what our state is attempting to accomplish.

Through GlobalScholar[®]/Scantron[®] all Alabama school districts and schools will have unlimited free access to unprecedented test management solutions. This resource will be very helpful to your personnel in assessing students on relevant content in Alabama's College- and Career-Ready Standards in Kindergarten through Grade 12.

The *Achievement Series* from Scantron[®] is a powerful formative assessment platform that is used for all grade levels and subject areas districtwide. Its open-content structure and options of online or paper-based testing provide the flexibility needed to fit each school district's unique needs and pacing guides.

The *Performance Series* from Scantron[®] is a computer-adaptive test based on Alabama standards that assists teachers in quickly pinpointing the proficiency level of their students across a range of subjects. This provides for more accurate student placement; diagnosis of instructional needs, including recommended instructional adjustments; and measurement of student gains across reporting periods.

The ALSDE staff and GlobalScholar[®]/Scantron[®] are planning and scheduling professional development and technical assistance for districts and schools in order for this resource to be available at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year. You may have already received communication about initial meetings.

Dr. Bice has assured you in several venues that while this resource is available for all Alabama schools and districts, its use is not mandatory. We would ask, however, that you participate in the installation and training opportunities for this resource in order to familiarize yourself and your staff with its potential. Even if you have current

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contracts/relationships with other vendors for formative assessments, we believe you will find assessments for grades and subjects in this resource that may supplement your current instruments.

Some of you do have and plan to continue the use of other formative assessments for which you have an annual cost. Dr. Bice also assured superintendents in this situation that the ALSDE would assist with that annual cost for this school year due to the late notice of this statewide resource. If this situation is true for your district, by Monday, August 6, 2012, please send the following information to Joyce West by e-mail (jwest@alsde.edu) or by fax at (334) 353-4497, so that the ALSDE can arrange to send the appropriate funds to your district as soon as possible:

- A copy of the current contract/agreement your district has with the vendor
- The subjects and grades tested by school and the 2012 ADM for those grades by school

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (334) 242-8154 or via e-mail at sparris@alsde.edu. As we begin to implement Alabama's new and more rigorous standards in 2012 and 2013, we know that the use of formative, interim, and benchmark assessments will be critical. We are excited about the potential positive impact of these instructional tools as we equip our students for success in school and in life.

SWP:DK

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