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## **NEWS-ACTION**

*Be Informed. Take Action. Improve Greenville's Public Schools.*

**MAR. 18  
2008**

Welcome to The Alliance for Quality Education's *NEWS-ACTION*—a brief, periodic update on issues affecting Greenville public schools and actions you can take to help improve our schools.

- Today's topics:**
- **Another opportunity to improve state testing**
  - **House version of State K-12 budget passed**

### **NEWS**

**Legislation to change the state testing system goes to the State Senate.** The House of Representatives passed legislation last month to change the state testing system. The legislation (H.4662) will be considered for the first time in the Senate at a K-12 Education subcommittee meeting Wednesday (3/19) morning.

This House-passed legislation has some differences with an earlier version of the bill reported in last month's *NEWS-ACTION*. In particular, social studies is no longer required as an additional MAP ([Measures of Academic Progress](#)) assessment. The latest bill only requires MAP testing in English/language arts and math. (In Greenville County Schools MAP is already administered in reading, language arts, math and science.)

The following other major changes from the PACT system continue:

- A new state accountability test would replace PACT starting in the 2009-2010 school year. What test would replace PACT is not stated.
- Student test results would provide diagnostic information useful to teachers and parents for the next school year.
- The test would still cover four subjects—English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies—in grades 3 through 8.
- Sampling would still occur for science and social studies tests. Through random selection half the students in each grade would take one test, the remainder the other.
- New student performance indicators would be used:

<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Below Basic	Not Met
Basic	Met
Proficient	
Advanced	Exemplary

[More information](#) concerning the House-passed legislation on the state testing system is available at the Alliance web site.

**State K-12 funding avoids cuts under the House-passed state budget.** Due to the forecast of little growth in state revenues, many state agencies and programs had their budgets cut in the recent state budget passed by the House. K-12 education funding was one of the few areas that did not suffer a cut. However, money was reallocated within the State Dept. of Education which may cause cuts in some local programs. The school district anticipates a tight budget for the upcoming school year. Deliberation on state

funding for public education now moves to the Senate.

**OUR VIEW** The Alliance supports the following changes to the state testing system:

- **Elimination of sampling for science and social studies tests.** Diagnostic information useful for teaching and learning is not possible with sampling.
- **If essential for accountability, require science and social studies assessments of all students in a few grades only.** Comparing year-to-year progress in science and social studies has limited value since the content in these two subjects often does not build on previous-year learning (unlike reading, language arts and mathematics). This approach would also reduce time spent on testing and test preparation in most grades.
- **Reduce the amount of information in school report cards to include only priority items.** Current school report cards contain an excessive amount of data and information, and it is not clear which indicators are of greatest importance. School staff are forced to spend an unreasonable amount of time in data collection.

**ACTION** Call the following key members of the Senate Education K-12 subcommittee. Tell them what changes you want in our state testing system (bill 4662).

Sen. Wes Hayes	Chair	(803) 212-6410
Sen. John Matthews	Vice-Chair	(803) 212-6056
Sen. Mike Fair	Subcommittee member from Greenville County	(803) 212-6420

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