



February 2014

Dear Parents of Students Enrolled in the Las Cruces Public Schools,

Federal and state laws require all students to participate in state accountability assessments (exams); however, if you are considering not having your child take the required state assessments – having them “opt out” – LCPS wants to provide you some important information to better understand the process and any possible impact on your child’s graduation.

If your child is enrolled in grades 3 through 8 and you “opt out” of having them take the state assessments, promotion to the next grade is not affected. However, if your child is in high school, he/she must meet the state of New Mexico’s graduation credit and assessment requirements in order to receive a *Diploma of Excellence*.

The State of New Mexico specifically requires that a student demonstrate competence through the Standards Based Assessment/High School Graduation Assessment (SBA/HSGA) in order to receive a high school diploma. Therefore, students who “opt out” of testing at this level will not receive a *Diploma of Excellence*; instead, they will receive a *Certificate of Completion*. The *Certificate of Completion* indicates the student earned the required number of credits but did not meet all state requirements.

The Las Cruces Public Schools Board of Education has adopted Policy IKFC regarding a “portfolio alternate demonstration of competency.” It states that in order for a student to qualify for a portfolio alternate demonstration of competency, he/she must first meet all other state requirements.

As of this date, both New Mexico State University and Doña Ana Community College do not require a *Diploma of Excellence* to apply for admission. Keep in mind that the Las Cruces Public Schools does not establish entrance requirements for institutions of higher education; therefore, parents are advised to research admission requirements for colleges and universities.

Thank you.

Dr. Steven Sanchez
Deputy Superintendent