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TO: Principals of Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, Charter Schools and State Operated Schools

FROM: Mary Ann Snider, Director
Office of Assessment and Accountability

SUBJECT: Gathering Teacher Judgments about Student Proficiency for NECAP Science Tests

As you know, the NECAP test in science will be given to students in grades 4, 8, and 11 in May of this year. An important step in the first year of administering a new test is the standard setting process. Standard setting is that process that allows us to classify student performance into four achievement levels: *Proficient with Distinction, Proficient, Partially Proficient, and Substantially Below Proficient*. It is our intention to have a strong connection between classroom performance and NECAP test scores. We learned during the standard setting process for other NECAP tests that teacher judgments provide an invaluable starting point for determining student achievement levels. We would like to build on that good practice by having teachers make determinations about the performance of their current students in grades 4, 8, or 11 against the grade span expectations in science.

We know that this is a busy time of year for teachers, but we are asking you to invite your teachers to use a secure password protected website to submit confidential ratings on student proficiency. We are hoping to receive a rating for every student in grades 4, 8, and 11. Our contractor, Measured Progress, will keep the website active 24 hours a day between May 1st and May 29th. Teachers may provide ratings for their students at one time, or complete the ratings in multiple sessions, whichever is more convenient. For the process to be statistically valid, we will need the majority of students to be rated. Please be assured that participation is optional and the ratings will be used only in state-level summative statistics.

This represents the first step in the standard setting process. Teachers will also be invited to be part of a standard setting panel with colleagues from New Hampshire and Vermont following the administration of the test. Your assistance with this initial work would be greatly appreciated. Your school's password and an explanation of this process along with a description of the NECAP Achievement Level General Descriptions will be included in the administrative box of your testing materials. Please do not hesitate to call me (222-8492) if you have any questions or concerns about this process.

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Thank you!