


MEMORANDUM

TO: Vermont Administrators and Educators
FROM: Daniel M. French, Ed. D., Secretary of Education 
SUBJECT: A Strong and Healthy Start: Reopening and Assessment
DATE: September 2, 2020

Purpose

As school systems across the state do the important work of preparing for reopening, the Agency of Education (AOE) wishes to reaffirm existing guidance in saying that the focus of your efforts at this time should first be on ensuring the success of your reopening plans. Your efforts to reopen your organizations and to support the social and emotional needs of your students and staff members are of highest priority.

Please rest assured that state-wide assessments (e.g. Smarter Balanced, Vermont Science Assessment, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Vermont Alternate Assessment, Vermont Physical Education Assessment, Alt-Vermont Physical Education Assessment), while an important part of our practice, are not the most beneficial area to focus on currently. AOE is working closely with federal partners and the Council of Chief State School Officers ([CCSSO](#)) to prepare guidance for several eventualities at this time. This guidance will be released in the coming months, after the critical work of reopening has taken place.

Existing Guidance and Resources Available

AOE has issued several pieces of guidance that cover where the immediate focus of field partners' attention and effort are best placed. This guidance includes reopening logistics surrounding health and safety, as well as guidance on the use of formative assessments as part of screening assessments to support student learning.

These resources are available via the links below:

[A Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Reopening Schools, Fall 2020](#)

[A Strong and Healthy Start: Social, Emotional and Mental Health Supports During COVID-19](#)

[Universal Screening Assessments: Recommendations to Support a Strong and Healthy School Start](#)

[CCSSO Supporting States Amid COVID-19 Outbreak](#)