

Reclaiming this School Year, Fulfilling our Promises

For the last several weeks in the U.S., and for several months worldwide, Covid-19 has loomed larger than life and has dictated how you, and how we at ACSI, have conducted our work. No more. We are reclaiming this school year for the work God has called us to in Christian education, and on behalf of the families and students we collectively serve.

As a movement, we are calling on schools to shift the conversation from a mentality of “school closure” to “finishing this year strong.” We owe this to our families, to our staffs and to the mission we are called to. We must shift from a mindset of “whether we should” to “how do we get there.” To that end, we are calling on Christian schools to continue with their programs, to not cancel assessments, forgo testing, grades or the high educational standards you entered the school year with.

Why we believe this is the right course of action:

1. The God we serve is bigger than any situation and we ultimately answer to Him

- God has not given us a spirit of fear but of love, power and a sound mind (1 Timothy 1:7).
- And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). We are asking that we do what we can through the tools and resources God provides.

2. Fulfilling our obligations

- We do not operate under the same premise as the public-school system. Christian schooling is structured around a set of commitments made to families, and families in turn make to schools.
- Ultimately parents are contracting with the school to deliver an appropriate grade level education. We can still deliver that!

3. What we decide to do this year will impact students for years to come

- At the end of this unusual time, schools and families will want to know where their students are academically. Standardized testing and classroom assessment can help schools know what was accomplished and what students are lacking.
- Standardized testing will be the same across the country. It will be an accurate comparison because everyone is basically in the same situation.

4. Re-envisioning how we do school

- We are on a path that some, if not all, states will waive state mandatory attendance standards of seat hours or days of instructional standards. When that happens, Christian schools will have more flexibility than ever to use this school year to create the educational system you have wanted but could not implement.

We want to encourage you as you take one step in front of the other that daylight is ahead, and when we reach it, let's keep in mind where we want to finish. We must not look at this from a standpoint of "how do we simply get through" this year. We will finish this race!

We are actively seeking ways to faithfully support you during this time of need. For the most current information on Iowa testing options, please see the update from our Purposeful Design Publications team included with this email. We will also be hosting an upcoming webinar on solutions for Summative Assessments on March 27, 2020. We will continue to provide you with regular communications to provide connection and resources in this time of uncertainty.

In this together,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry Taylor, Ph.D.

ACSI President

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March 17, 2020

Dear Colleague,

As many of you are adjusting to the recommendations from the CDC and the decisions of state and local governments that impact your school, ACSI and Riverside want to alleviate concern about spring testing and provide helpful information regarding next steps schools can take to reschedule spring testing either this school year, over the summer, or next fall.

At a minimum, these options provide schools with data to plan for curriculum adjustments, reteaching, intervention, course adjustments for high school students, etc. But they are not the only options. We are convening a panel of school leaders to both brainstorm additional options as well as connect leaders to one another to share information and support one another. While testing is not the highest priority for you at this time, it is important enough to the big picture of your school's mission that it deserves deeper consideration.

Below are options that have been solidified at this time.

Option 1: Extended Spring Testing Window and Back to School Testing Option

1. Schools may reschedule spring testing. It is not necessary to communicate this to ACSI or Riverside.
2. Riverside Insights has extended the spring testing window allowing schools to test at any time now through Wednesday, September 23, 2020.
3. Schools who have completed testing are encouraged to mail test booklets/documents in at any time.
4. Schools who are not able to complete testing by the end of the 2019-2020 school year can set materials aside and administer testing anytime during the extended test window- over the summer or during a Back-to-School testing option at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.
 - Simple Steps for Back-to-School Administration
 - Schools using this option should administer within the first 2—3 weeks of your school start date with the students' 2019-2020 grade level so that existing spring 2020 norms can be used to evaluate students.
 - Complete testing by Wednesday, September 23, 2020.
 - Mail answer booklets/documents to the Riverside Scoring Center by Friday, September 25, 2020.
 - Scoring turnaround time will remain the same with results being received within 10 business days or less from receipt of answer documents at the Riverside Scoring Center.
 - Order for Scoring Services (OSS)
 - Order for Scoring Services—schools do not need to register for OSS again.
 - Scoring Services Packets—schools can use existing Spring 2020 packets, including the UPS labels provided for shipping.

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- o Barcode Labels—schools can use existing barcode labels because students will be tested at the grade level indicated on the barcode label. Schools will not need to upload new rosters.

5. Benefits

- Easily plan the first two weeks of school and help teachers prepare for the new 2020-2021 school year instruction.
- Use the 2019-2020 grade level test materials.
- Quickly pick-up with testing when school starts.
 - o Begin testing that has not taken place.
 - o Complete subtests that have not been completed if spring testing was interrupted.
 - o Allow students to start fresh.
- Receive actionable data with a continued scoring turnaround time of 10 business days or less.
- Keep spring 2020 scoring and materials pricing.
- Continue with Spring testing in 2021 to track growth data.
- Receive CSP norms for all Christian schools testing within the ACSI program.

Option 2: Fall 2020 Testing

Schools also have the option of participating in our ongoing fall 2020 testing program with fall norms. Please contact us if you would like additional information about this option.

Key Reminders:

- Do not send tests home to be administered by parents to maintain current test security.
- An emergency test administration cancellation will not affect ACSI Accreditation requirements.

We will provide regular updates as we know more. Do not hesitate to contact us as you have questions by email: assessmentsupport@acsi.org.

Sincerely,



David Smitherman
ACSI Student Assessment Program