

Recommendations for Creating a Highly Effective Assessment System

Revised DRAFT, 7/15/15

The following recommendations identify factors that should be incorporated into a new, more relevant system of assessment for student learning. These recommendations were developed by educators from the Oregon Education Association (OEA), Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and school district advisors, who worked more than a year to research best practice in student assessment to develop a white paper titled, *A New Path for Oregon: System of Assessment to Empower Meaningful Student Learning*. These recommendations were reviewed by a variety of stakeholders and were revised based on collective feedback from assessment forum participants, individual educators, citizens and students.

PAVING THE PATHWAY: POLICY FOUNDATIONS

Recommendation #1 - ESEA Reauthorization: Actively engage in the reauthorization of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to allow states flexibility to develop a system of assessment that accurately reflects student learning through greater emphasis on developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive, valid, reliable and unbiased high quality classroom and interim (i.e. periodic) assessments. Each state will be accountable to provide annual disaggregated information for all student groups to hold the school, district, and state systems accountable for all students' learning and growth.

Recommendation #2- Student's Assessment Bill of Rights: Make the "Student's Assessment Bill of Rights" operational in schools and classrooms to ensure students and their families know and understand the purpose of assessments, the learning targets that make up the assessments and how the results will be used. Ensure students and their families understand how to self-assess and to use assessment results to track progress and know what progress and success means.

CREATING CONDITIONS FOR SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENT TRANSITION AND SUCCESS

Recommendation #3 – Assessment Literacy: Develop, fund, and implement multi-year differentiated professional development programs to enhance the understanding and use of assessment for pre-service and in-service educators' (administrators, teachers, and education support professionals), and other assessment users (students, parents, local and state policy makers, community members, etc.). The educator-led effort should focus on high quality classroom, interim (i.e. periodic) and annual assessments, for both formative and summative uses that are culturally responsive, have a clear purpose, support state standards and address well defined learning targets.

Recommendation #4 – Assessment Audit: Create a taskforce including educators at all levels to conduct an audit of the type and number of assessments currently administered in Oregon schools including the additional testing given to special education and English language learners. The report will include the amount of instructional hours currently devoted to preparing for and administering classroom, interim, and annual assessments for both formative and summative purposes, evidence of their impact on student learning, effect on students and progress monitoring. The report should also summarize the impact of testing on teaching and learning time for all groups of students, a cost analysis of resources used in the current assessment system, and be used for the purpose of informing the new path for Oregon's system of assessment.

Recommendation #5-Accommodation of Learning Needs: Examine all assessments for cultural, linguistic and developmental appropriateness to accommodate the learning needs of all students. A variety and appropriate level of assessment should be used to honor the diverse language and developmental learning needs of students in order to identify and assess the growth and achievement of each and every student.

Recommendation #6 – Assessment Resource Bank: Seek grants, state and federal funds to create and support resource banks of standards-based assessments for formative or summative use in classroom, interim or annual assessment context. These optional assessments should be developed and supplied by teachers, local school districts, state agencies or assessment publishers, but must include an evaluation of their quality (validity, reliability and freedom from bias). The use of these assessments will be optional for teachers, schools and districts, and could possibly be a comparable source of disaggregated data for all groups of students in districts with common assessment

Recommendation #7 –Technology Use: Invest equitably invest in the technological infrastructure that supports access for overall teaching and learning to ensure all students are ready for college, career and life. Invest in developmentally appropriate technology to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of assessment development, storage, administration, scoring, recordkeeping and reporting results for classroom, interim and annual assessments used both in formative and summative contexts. Transparency and confidentiality of the data must continue to be a priority.

CONSTRUCTING A NEW SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENT

Recommendation #8-Frequency of Assessment: Research the feasibility of reducing the frequency of required annual statewide standardized summative assessments while ensuring the availability of accurate, yearly disaggregated information for all student groups by effectively utilizing valid, reliable and unbiased formative and interim (i.e. periodic) assessments.

Recommendation #9-Opt-in: Allow high school students to opt-in to the Math or ELA section(s) of the statewide standardized summative assessment earlier than 11th grade so that they take the assessment as it coincides with their actual academic course load rather than the current system which may have students taking a test on content they have not studied for two or more years. Allow students to “bank” portions of the assessment.

Recommendation #10-Assessment of Essential Skills: Enhance and expand options to demonstrate essential skills. Determine if other measures of essential skills exist, promote them as options for students and allow students and families more control over ways to demonstrate essential skills and college, career and life readiness.

CREATING TIME TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #11-Suspending Use of Smarter Balanced: Suspend the use of Smarter Balanced Assessment results during 2015 for school ratings on report cards, but allow students to use their 2015 Smarter Balanced Assessment results to demonstrate essential skills for high school graduation. Allow time for comprehensive analysis of Smarter Balanced to determine the value in relation to student learning. Continue to suspend the use of Smarter Balanced Assessment results for educator evaluation during 2015-16 while developing a more balanced system of assessment.