



Director of Secondary Education

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Providing Services for Secondary Schools, Curriculum and Assessment, Music, Special Education, and Staff Development

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To Whom It May Concern:

Over the past year, it has come to the attention of many Oregon educators that the state has not yet decided whether to purchase the entire Smarter Balanced Assessment package that includes formative and interim assessment tools. We recognize that during this sustained economic downturn that budgets need to be scrutinized to the bare essentials; however, we believe the formative and interim assessment tools that are being developed as part of the overall Smarter Balanced Assessment system are a critical and necessary element that must be funded. These additional components provide vital tools for teachers that enable and promote individualized instruction and effective progress monitoring for students. Conversely, if the complete Smarter Balanced package is not purchased, the state will have chosen to make the already difficult task of helping all Oregon students to meet Common Core standards, meet Essential Skills to graduate and move onto postsecondary opportunities, that much more problematic.

One of the chief struggles with the current Oregon state assessment system (OAKS) has been that the state has never provided a valid or reliable formative or interim assessment tool for teachers. In the absence of such critical devices, teachers have attempted to use the state assessment itself for the much needed formative information about student progress toward the standards. That practice has, in a number of cases, led to over use of the OAKS assessments and spawned a number of restrictive regulations on the use of the OAKS assessment, further reducing access to any formative or interim tools.

Access to formative and interim tools provides educators insight into the strengths and needs of individual students and classes, before the final (summative) assessment is given. Since the Smarter Balanced assessment system allows only one summative opportunity, this kind of information is crucial to guide overall instruction and individual interventions. A formative assessment tool provides insight into how a student is doing before the student needs to demonstrate proficiency on a learning target. The various curricula purchased throughout the state do provide for assessments for content areas, but such tools are not aligned with the new state assessment and accountability systems. This practice leaves teachers hoping for the best for their students, a practice that has been abandoned in top performing states and nations for decades.

Educators understand the desire to have Oregon students once again lead the nation and the world in academic performance. However, since the passing of Measure 5 in 1990, the state of Oregon has experienced a marked reduction in funding for public education. This reduced investment in Oregon's future has resulted in persistently low performance scores from students across the state. With one of the shortest academic school years in the nation, further shortened in some districts by furlough days due to revenue shortfall, it is clear why our students have continued to fare poorly when compared with other

states. Providing effective tools for teachers is an immediate and effective way to enhance student performance and help teachers use every minute of instructional time in the best way possible. The cost for the additional assessment tools is just over five million dollars per year for the entire state—just a few dollars per student, with the potential for a significant return on that investment in the future. This additional amount is sound investment for Oregon to make to provide such an important tool for teachers and students.

On behalf of the members of the Oregon Assessment Advisory Committee, we strongly encourage the legislators of the state of Oregon to fund the entire suite of tools available through the Smarter Balanced Assessment system for the state of Oregon, which includes the end-of-year assessment, formative assessments, and interim assessments. Immediate and ongoing funding of this package is critical for our classroom educators to have the necessary tools to provide the level of interventions that Oregon students require in order to meet the new Oregon graduation requirements and Common Core State Standards.

As members of the committee, we are more than willing to meet with the Ways and Means Committee to discuss this important matter. Our points of contact are Dr. Todd Bloomquist from the Medford School District or Mr. Bill Stewart of the Gladstone School District. Dr. Bloomquist can be reached by telephone at (541) 842-3626 or by email at todd.bloomquist@medford.k12.or.us. Mr. Stewart can be reached by telephone at (503) 805-8680 or by email at stewartw@gladstone.k12.or.us.

We thank you for taking the time to read through this letter of appeal and we hope that you, like us, believe that this small investment in a complete assessment package will provide teachers valuable tools to help all Oregon students graduate and become the contributing citizens and leaders of tomorrow.

Respectfully,

Todd Bloomquist	Medford SD	Director of Secondary Education
Bill Stewart	Gladstone SD	Special Projects
Brian Bain	Tigard-Tualatin SD	District Assessment Coordinator
Christine Blouke	Parkrose SD	Assessment and Student Information
Linda Brown	Lake Oswego SD	School Board Member
Maureen Callahan	Canby SD	Office of Student Achievement
Catherine Carlson	Salem-Keizer SD	Coordinator Testing & Evaluation/Student Records Dept
Cathy Chenail	CCSS Stewardship Team	Former Curriculum Director
Debbie Connolly	Medford SD	Supervisor of Curriculum and Assessment
Laurie Corliss	Corvallis SD	District Assessment & Data Specialist
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Derek Edens	David Douglas SD	Director of Technology and Assessment
Melissa Goff	Portland Public SD	Executive Director, Teaching & Learning
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Penny Grotting	Hood River County SD	Director of Instruction & Special Programs
Martha Hinman	Redmond SD	Executive Director of Student Services
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Alexa Pearson	North Clackamas SD	Coordinator of Literacy, Teaching, & Learning
Tami Schild	NW Regional ESD	School Improvement Coordinator
Tiffany Shireman	North Clackamas SD	Director, Federal Programs & Assessment
Steven Sugg	Sherwood SD	Assessment and Accountability Coordinator
Joe Suggs	Portland Public SD	Director of Research, Evaluation and Assessment
Jill Sumerlin	CCSS Stewardship Team	Retired K-12 Mathematics Teacher and OCTM President
Aeylin Summers	North Clackamas SD	Assistant Superintendent
Les Willett	Coos Bay SD	Instructional Coach, mathematics
Cheryl Williamson	Centennial SD	Director, Curriculum & Student Learning