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Recommendations for Creating a Highly Effective Assessment System

The following recommendations identify factors to consider in transitioning to a new system of assessment for student learning. These recommendations were developed by members from Oregon Education Association (OEA), Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and school district advisors, who worked more than a year on researching, studying and developing a white paper titled, *A New Path for Oregon: System of Assessment to Empower Meaningful Student Learning*. These recommendations will be vetted with a diverse group of stakeholders and will be revised based on their collective feedback.

PAVING THE PATHWAY: POLICY FOUNDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Advocate and prepare for reauthorization of ESEA that allows states to develop a system of assessment that truly supports student learning through greater emphasis on valid, reliable and unbiased high quality classroom, interim assessments and addresses the role of accountability in the system.

Recommendation #2: Support the “*Student’s Assessment Bill of Rights*” to ensure students know and understand the purpose of assessments, the learning targets that make up the assessment and how the results will be used; and also to ensure students understand the differences between good and poor performance on pending assessments and learn how to self-assess and track their progress.

CREATING CONDITIONS FOR SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENT TRANSITION AND SUCCESS

Recommendation #3: Develop, fund, and implement extensive professional development, with a commitment to a multi-year program, to develop and enhance assessment literacy of educators. The effort should focus on high quality classroom, interim, and annual assessments, both formative and summative uses that have a clear purpose and support state standards and well defined learning targets. Utilize federal funding as a result of Representative Bonamici’s recent bill that would advance funds to states around assessment practices. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hr5807ih/html/BILLS-113hr5807ih.htm>

Recommendation #4: Create a taskforce to conduct an audit of the type and number of assessments currently administered in Oregon schools. Include the amount of instructional hours being devoted to formative, interim, progress monitoring and summative assessments to determine the impact on teaching and learning time.

Recommendation #5: Advocate for state and federal funds to initiate and maintain statewide classroom and interim assessment banks for formative and summative use. These assessments will also be vetted as valid, reliable, and unbiased, and made available for districts and individual educators to use.

Recommendation #6: Invest in the technology necessary to administer high quality formative, interim and summative assessments focused on learning not just for administering standardized tests, and to ensure students have access to technology for college and career readiness.

Recommendation #7: Examine the current state of accommodations for special education students, English language learners, and other populations of diverse students to determine the impact of the additional testing and determine an appropriate level of assessment for every subgroup of students.

CONSTRUCTING A NEW SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENT

Recommendation #8: Research the feasibility of reducing the frequency of administering the Smarter Balanced Assessment while ensuring accurate yearly disaggregated data by subgroups through enhancing the use of valid and reliable formative and interim assessments. These formative and interim measures will be predictive of students’ success on the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

DRAFT

Recommendation #9: Advocate for state and federal funds to develop and use high quality formative and interim assessments chosen by educators from a menu of options vetted at the state and district level that meet the needs of their students and high standards of quality. These assessments will be standards-based, vetted as valid, reliable, and unbiased. Students may also develop, in conjunction with educators and administrators, work samples to demonstrate their learning and progress toward common core and other academic standards.

Recommendation #10: Allow high school students to opt-in to the Math or ELA section(s) of the Smarter Balanced 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 haven't studied for two or more years. In essence, allow students to "bank" portions of the test.

Recommendation #11: Enhance and expand options to demonstrate essential skills. Determine if other measures of essential skills exist and promote them as options for students.

CREATING TIME TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #12: Suspend the use of Smarter Balance Assessment results during 2015 for school ratings on report cards, but allow students to use their 2015 Smarter Balance Assessment results to demonstrate Essential Skills for high school graduation and allow for comprehensive analysis of Smarter Balance to determine the value in relation to student learning. Continue to suspend the use of Smarter Balance Assessment results for educator evaluation during 2015-16 while developing a more balanced system of assessment.