

*Since Smarter Balanced was introduced, Oregon's testing expenses have exploded from \$3.5 to \$359-616 million! Yet spending on key student services is only up by \$1 million! To top it off, now the ODE hints at weekly to monthly tests! This contradicts budget needs, the conclusion of another audit and students' learning needs. The legislature must stop this before the SB test contract expires this spring. Instead, let's implement a joint ODE-OEA plan for better tests made two years ago.*

In a recent audit mandated by HB 2713, the ODE inaccurately claims Smarter Balanced only costs \$11 million. Yet school districts bear costs for their own hardware, software, substitutes for setting up and proctoring, records management, tech services, increased bandwidth, etc. A comparison of school budgets from 2010 to 2014 shows districts increased their own test-related expenditures by at least **\$86 mill. At an average of \$22 M annually, seven years total \$154 M.**

The ODE 2014 AIR contract shows the test itself costs **\$27.5 M** for per-pupil fees, consortium dues, scoring, reporting, data storage and help desks. (Unclear if it's annual or bi-annual.) By contrast, the old test totaled only \$3.5 M. Smarter Balanced was developed since 2010 and then piloted statewide by 2013. **The subsequent four years total \$55-110 M.**

An **ODE 2009 grant** application to develop Smarter Balanced outlines ballooning ODE costs for test infrastructure, personnel and training at **\$202 M**. The grant expired in 2014, but costs continue. **At an average of \$50 M annually, three years total \$150 M. That's \$359-414 M out of pocket plus \$202 M absorbed by a grant. We maintain a \$359-\$616 M testing system!**

Is it worth it? The HB 2713 audit of Smarter Balanced concedes dozens of problems and even admits "other tests may be more appropriate." SB report cards don't show if students master specific skills or standards, like fractions, but only if they meet vague goals like "Claim #2 – Students must solve a range of complex, well-posed problems". It admits this can't help teachers teach or students learn, but only ranks schools. It's time to apply the ESSA law allowing states to choose other assessments, as most already have.

***Ironically, the HB 2713 audit then pivots to doubling down on Smarter Balanced! "Consider ... formative and interim assessments" hints at purchasing new Smarter Balanced components that range from "minute to minute, day by day, week by week" or quarterly, according to their ads. Logistically, that would require computer tablets for every student. Can we afford that?***

This would also blatantly ignore the other audit. The HB 2680 audit by teachers, parents and administrators cites even more test dysfunctions and specifically asks the state NOT to jump into purchasing additional SB products. Further, the ODE dodged full input with its teacher survey on school leadership and Common Core, never mentioning the audit topic of Smarter Balanced!

I urge the legislature not to buy any more dysfunctional SB products, especially not interim assessments, but to use the joint ODE-OEA plan *A New Path for Oregon* to choose better, shorter, less costly assessments that focus on learning and put \$\$\$ back into programs and services!

In 2010 Rob Saxton priced OAKS computerized standardized tests at \$3.5 million. Next, Smarter Balanced was implemented in addition to OAKS Science and Social Studies, the ELPA and kindergarten exams, leading to an explosion of state mandated standardized testing expenses at the cost of programs that directly benefit students. Rachel Rich, retired educator, rbeckley58@gmail.com

A comparison of statewide school budget items before and after Smarter Balanced shows test-related expenditures borne by districts themselves rose by \$86 million from the start of test development to the last year of complete budget records: 2010-14. In addition, over the same four years, the ODE underwent massive expansion in personnel, training and infrastructure to the tune of \$202 million. Accordingly, the ODE bill for test fees jumped from \$3.5 to \$27.5 million annually. Yet the state increased key student services by only half a million, barely keeping up with inflation. Sadly, psychological services, Title I reading assistance and talented and gifted programs lost \$7 million, while teacher professional development unrelated to testing dropped by \$11 million. Testing is now grossly out of proportion to learning.

1113 – Elementary extra-curricular	\$50,059
1122 – Middle school extra-curricular	\$3912
1132 – High school extra-curricular	\$160,875
1140 – Pre- K	\$226,488
<b>1210 – Talented and Gifted</b>	<b>- \$196,181 loss</b>
1220 – Restrictive programs for disabled	\$442,655
1250 – Less restrictive programs for disabled	\$1,006,129
1260 – Early Intervention (SPED)	\$974,795
1271 – Remediation	\$518,935
<b>1272 – Title I</b>	<b>-\$6,228,523 loss</b>
1291 – English Language Learners	\$467,229
1400 – Summer school	\$4120
2130 – Health services	\$691,049
2120 – Guidance services	\$1,560,981
<b>2140 – Psychological services</b>	<b>- \$376,844 loss</b>
2150 – Speech pathology and audiology	\$919,983
2190 – Services Directions and Student Support	\$285,341
<b>District budget items for key student services</b>	<b>Statewide gain 2010-14: \$505,003</b>

2210 – Improvement of instruction – typically PD for Smarter B.	\$4,084,000
2660 – Technology services – now typically for testing	\$14,430,357
2240 – Staff development (paid) typically for testing	\$982,613 (Test focused staff mtgs. not included)
2630 – Information Services - manage increased SB data	\$1,500,554
2230 – Assessment and testing - beyond state mandated tests	\$614,948
2670 – Records management	\$93,225
121 – Substitutes-licensed – act as proctors	\$3,887,787
122 – Substitutes-classified – prepare for and proctor tests	\$2,594,894
470 – Computer software – system updates for testing	\$26,804,376
480 – Computer hardware - additional computers	<b>- \$1,095,277 (offset by grants)</b>
380 – Technical services - typically for testing	\$8,262,137
390 – Other tech. services - typically for testing	\$23,896,065
<b>District Test related expenditures</b>	<b>Statewide gain 2010-14: \$86,055,679</b>
<b>310 – Non-test-related professional development</b>	<b>Statewide loss: -\$10,830,571</b>

- ✓ District costs avg. \$22M yearly x 7 years \$154 million
- ✓ ODE – Air contract, \$27.5M (annual or bi?) x 2-4 years \$55-110 million
- ✓ ODE 4 yr. grant to develop SB, add personnel, infrastructure \$202 million
- ✓ Grant expired, ODE costs continue, avg. \$50 M yearly x 3 yrs. \$150 million
- ✓ **No records yet on costs to classroom FTE or course offerings.** School personnel have shifted upward to the ODE and sideways to school test coordinators, data managers, etc., further increasing class size and reducing electives.

**Estimated increased state mandated standardized testing costs since Smarter Balance in 2010 \$359-616 million!**