



Children's
Institute



LatinoNetwork



OREGON

May 6, 2019

Dear Co-Chairs Smith Warner and Roblan, Vice Chairs Smith and Knopp, and Members of the Joint Committee on Student Success:

We write this letter to share our considerations as you evaluate the merits and implications of the assessment bills before you (HB 2736, SB 157, and SB 456).

As you examine the high school assessments options, we strongly recommend that the committee review the [Oregon Department of Education's High School Assessment Report and Recommendations](#) (June 2018). One of the major takeaways from the report is that **while Oregon's current statewide assessment has challenges related to time in testing and assessment literacy in the field, other nationally available assessments are limited in their ability to best serve students and provide reliable and comparable data for the state.**

In its analysis of available assessment options, **ODE found that Oregon's current statewide summative assessment provides students with the over 50 accommodations and the use of a fully translated assessment for our state's emerging bilingual students, other nationally available assessments have limited accommodations and do not provide a translated version of the assessment.** Shifting to an assessment that removes the full Spanish translation support (currently 14 are available to Oregon's Spanish-speaking, emerging bilingual students) presents concerns about how emerging bilingual students would have equitable access to the required statewide assessment.

Before making large scale changes to Oregon's assessment system -- particularly around summative statewide assessments -- we urge you to carefully consider whether, and how, the proposed changes may impact:

I. Equity

- If the state were to remove or change the statewide assessment, what impact would these changes have on equity in education?
 - How will you examine how groups of students are learning over time at the school, district, regional, and state level, especially students of color, low-income students, students with disabilities and emerging bilingual students?
 - How will you know whether educators, staff, time, and resources are organized and allocated equitably to provide students, especially students of color, low-income students, students with disabilities and emerging bilingual students, with an equal opportunity to succeed and equitable supports that are tailored to meet their needs?

II. Accessibility and Accommodations

- If we were to change the statewide assessment, would the new assessment have comparable accessibility supports and accommodations for students with disabilities and emerging bilingual students across the state?

- How will parents and educators help students with disabilities and emerging bilingual students request and access those accessibility supports and accommodations?

III. Validity, Reliability and Comparability

- If we were to change the statewide assessment, would the new assessment:
 - Yield valid and reliable results in terms of whether students are mastering the learning standards?
 - Allow for comparability if districts choose their own assessment? How will you know how students with disabilities or emerging bilingual students are doing across a region? Across the state?

IV. Alignment

- If we were to change the statewide assessment, would the new assessment be aligned with Oregon's learning standards? Has the alignment been evaluated and affirmed by a third party evaluator?

It is imperative that Oregon continue to strive toward a high-quality balanced assessment system. A balanced assessment system includes three core pillars: 1) formative, 2) interim, and 3) summative assessments. Each of these assessment pillars are critical to one another and serve different purposes:

Formative Assessments (assessment for learning): Processes applied during teaching and include tools a teacher may use to collect feedback about a student to help guide and improve that student's learning, such as observation, homework, and quizzes.

Interim Assessments (can be assessment for learning and/or assessment of learning): Provide mid-point or periodic evidence of performance and are used to identify gaps in student learning, evaluate programs, and predict success on summative tests.

Summative Assessments (assessment of learning): Assessment given at the end of instruction to gather and report evidence of what was learned, evaluate student performance against specific content standards, and, in some cases, assign grades. These tests are designed to provide information regarding the level of student, school, or program success at an end point in time, and include end-of-unit and end-of-year state tests.

Source: ODE's [House Bill 2680 Work Group Report and Findings](#)

In addition to striving toward a more balanced assessment system, Oregon must continue to communicate clearly the *what, how, and why* of assessments; and provide assessment results back to districts, schools, and families in a timely manner.

We are committed to partnering with you on these assessment issues because we understand the value of assessments and are committed to ensuring that assessments are used appropriately so that Oregon's underserved and underrepresented students are seen and provided with an equal opportunity for success and equitable supports to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

Dana Hepper, Children's Institute
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 Kyle Ritchey-Noll, Oregon Business Council
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