

To: Members of the Oregon State Board of Education Date: Sept. 17, 2015

From: Jon Bridges, Beaverton SD; Bill Stewart, Gladstone SD and supporting districts (listed at the end)

Re: Recommended cut score for Writing essential skills

As members of the Region One Assessment Consortium, we are keenly aware of the complexity of establishing essential skill graduation standards and all the detail involved in the process. We appreciate the time devoted by the AESRP group in crafting the Essential Skills score recommendations. We also appreciate the role of the State Board in the adoption of new Essential Skills criteria that will impact thousands of students this year and annually from here on.

We, and the co-signing districts, believe that the recommendation of 2610 as the cut score for Writing essential skills creates significant implementation problems for districts. From our perspective, the highest appropriate cut score in Writing should be no greater than 2583, the score established as 'meets' on the ELA portion of the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA). This score also has been described as the level of performance needed to be college and career ready.

For a number of years, and as noted in the ODE recommendation document, it has been both practice and policy that all diploma requirements be established during the spring of a cohort's 8th grade year, and that those requirements wouldn't be raised during a student's high school career. The *commonly understood* standard for all current high school classes, with regard to essential skills, has been that passing the appropriate state assessments would ensure completion of the essential skills requirement. By setting the required score in Writing to be higher than 'meeting' (level 3), a student or parent could infer that the requirements for a diploma for the classes of 2016, 17, 18 and 19 have been raised after their entry into high school. Whether that inference is correct or not, it is a reality that high schools across the state will have to deal with.

Communication with parents and students by schools and districts, based on the best information available, has consistently reinforced the concept that meeting the score required for federal accountability on the state assessment ensures completion of the essential skills requirement. A standard above 2583 in Writing would require that schools and districts tell some students that they have 'passed' the new, more challenging SBA, are college and career ready, but still don't qualify for a diploma.

Using the information available and their best understanding of essential skills practice, many districts scheduled students, and assigned staff, for essentials skills support, in part on the assumption that students who earned a score that 'met' on SBA would be credited with their

essential skills. A score of 2610 would require that a number of additional students be rescheduled into support classes/activities after they have already started the school year.

Our common goal is to graduate students who are prepared for college and the workforce. Our colleges and universities will use Smarter Balanced scores as evidence that students are ready for entry-level, credit-bearing courses and may be exempted from remedial courses. We respectfully suggest that creating a differential between the Writing essential skill requirement for graduation recommended by AESRP and the college readiness expectations potentially undermines our collective work toward the state's 40-40-20 goal. As a result, we strongly recommend establishing the Writing essential skill at the level 3 threshold of 2583 for the classes of 2016 through 2019.

Thank you for your service to our students and consideration of our recommendation and rationale.

Sincerely,

Jon Bridges, Beaverton SD
Bill Stewart, Gladstone SD

Co-signing districts –

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|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Scappoose SD | 25. Crow-Applegate-Lorane SD |
| 2. Centennial SD | 26. Creswell SD |
| 3. Reynolds SD | 27. McKenzie SD |
| 4. Corvallis SD | 28. Marcola SD |
| 5. Newberg SD | 29. Junction City SD |
| 6. Lake Oswego SD | 30. Pleasant Hill SD |
| 7. Canby SD | 31. Mapleton SD |
| 8. North Clackamas SD | 32. Bethel SD |
| 9. Hillsboro SD | 33. Springfield SD |
| 10. Neah-Kah-Nie SD | 34. Fern Ridge SD |
| 11. Nestucca SD | 35. Lane ESD SD |
| 12. Tillamook SD | 36. PPS SD |
| 13. Forest Grove SD | 37. Tigard-Tualatin SD |
| 14. Sweet Home SD | 38. Colton SD |
| 15. Gresham SD | 39. Hood River County SD |
| 16. Umatilla SD | 40. Hermiston SD |
| 17. Sheridan SD | 41. Central SD |
| 18. North Wasco County SD | 42. Parkrose SD |
| 19. Dallas SD | 43. Oregon City SD |
| 20. Eugene 4J SD | 44. David Douglas SD |
| 21. South Lane SD | |
| 22. Lowell SD | |
| 23. Siuslaw SD | |
| 24. Blachly SD | |