



Testimony on House Bill 4128
House Education Committee
February 5, 2020

Chair Doherty, Vice-Chairs Alonso Leon and Helt, and members of the Committee. My name is Kyle Thomas and I am the Director of Legislative and Policy Affairs for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 4128.

HB 4128 requires institutions to utilize a comprehensive set of multiple data points when considering placing a student into coursework below the introductory collegiate level in math and writing, and not rely solely or primarily on a single point-in-time test to make that determination. The good news is that most institutions in Oregon already use such a system of multiple measures to determine student placement.

Institutions admit a wide range of students with varying levels of college readiness. Students, prior to the proliferation of multiple-measures systems on campuses, were placed in either developmental or college-level courses based on their performance on standardized assessments in math and English. These placement determinations affect 2/3 of community college students, according to a recent report from Education Commission of the States.ⁱ The same study found that placement practices using standardized assessment tests are highly problematic because they are poor predictors of student performance, resulting in the misplacement of up to 1/3 of all test takers.ⁱⁱ

This misplacement often results in students taking developmental math or English, which cost students money, slows down their progress, and forces students to enroll in courses that don't carry college-credit. Nationally, remedial coursework overall costs \$7 billion annuallyⁱⁱⁱ and at least in math, only about half of students who begin remedial courses ever finish the series.^{iv}

A growing body of research on multiple measures placement has shown that a combination of measures, such as high school GPA, SAT or ACT tests, years since high school graduation, and more qualitative assessments, are better predictors of student success (as measured by student grades).^v For example, a five year study conducted in seven community colleges in the State University of New York (SUNY) systems, randomly assigned 13,000 students to be placed in math and English courses using either a multiple measures placement formula or using existing placement practices. Students, who began in fall of 2017, are still being tracked, but as of 2018 students using multiple measures were more likely to be placed in college-level courses (math students were 5 percent more likely to be placed in college-level math and more than 30 percent more likely to be placed in college level English than their peers in the control group), and they were more likely to pass those courses compared to control group.

In part, based on the promising extant research on multiple measures, many states are developing or implementing policies mandating the use of multiple measures placement, such as California, Minnesota, and North Carolina.^{vi} Currently, 19 states have either state or system use of multiple measures policies.^{vii}

Multiple measures policies are student friendly policies, because this early research shows that well-designed approaches place students out of developmental education and into introductory coursework more often than single measure approaches, and those additional introductory level students perform at a satisfactory level – having saved time, money, and frustration in the pursuit of their degree or credential.

Thank you for your time today.

ⁱ (Ganga and Mazzaariello, 2019). <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Modernizing-College-Course-Placement-by-Using-Multiple-Measures.pdf>

ⁱⁱ (Ganga and Mazzariello, 2019). <https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Modernizing-College-Course-Placement-by-Using-Multiple-Measures.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ according to Scott-Clayton, Crosta, and Belfied (2012), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w18457.pdf>

^{iv} (Chen and Simone, 2016) <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016405.pdf>

^v Implementation of multiple measures varies—some institutions use a waiver system, some use decision rules, and some use placement formulas.^v

^{vii} ECS. 50-State Comparison: Developmental Education Policies
<http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/MBQuestDEP?Rep=DEP1801>