

**Executive Numbered Memo 001-2018-19**  
**High School Assessment Update for 2018-19**

**TO:** Superintendents and Principals  
**FROM:** Colt Gill, Director of the Oregon Department of Education  
**DATE:** July 11, 2018  
**RE:** High School Assessment Update

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) spent much of the 2017-18 school year developing and reviewing high school summative accountability assessment options with stakeholders.

After review of stakeholder input, ODE will *not* pursue a change from the current high school summative accountability assessment to a nationally-recognized college entrance examination.

**Reaching a Decision**

The process to reach this decision included extensive notice, research, and stakeholder engagement.

In April 2017, ODE first announced the possibility of replacing the current high school assessment with a nationally-recognized college entrance test, such as the SAT or ACT, as one way of addressing stakeholder concerns regarding student assessment at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

In January 2018, ODE provided an update that identified several challenges with this approach, including insufficient evidence of alignment to Oregon’s content standards, accessibility limitations, equity concerns, limited evidence of compliance with state and federal requirements, test scheduling limitations, and increased costs. The challenges were identified through a Request for Information (RFI) process conducted in May 2017.

Also in January 2018, ODE began a new round of stakeholder engagement to evaluate these challenges and consider other available options to address stakeholder concerns. Based on the feedback received through this renewed stakeholder engagement process, ODE has determined that it will not pursue a switch to a nationally-recognized college entrance examination as our statewide high school summative assessment.

Between January and May 2018, ODE met with a number of advisory groups representing a wide range of perspectives from across our education system and around the state and engaged impacted stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. Given ODE’s commitment to ensuring that whichever options pursued will equitably serve all of Oregon’s students, ODE was intentional in seeking out voices representing Oregon’s historically underrepresented student populations, including English

learners, African American / Black students, American Indian / Alaska Native students, students in rural areas, and students with disabilities. ODE provided participants in this process an opportunity to discuss the information gained through the RFI process, reflect on available options moving forward for Oregon's high school summative assessment, and identify which of those options or others developed by stakeholders could best meet the needs of Oregon students, communities, and the education system.

## Next Steps

Through this engagement process, participants largely affirmed ODE's concerns with switching assessments outlined above—concerns which were externally validated by national measurement organizations and experts. Instead, most participants supported the following course of action to address stakeholder concerns regarding Oregon's statewide summative high school assessment. ODE will pursue the following steps:

- 1) **For implementation in 2018-19:** ODE will allow additional scheduling flexibility for 11<sup>th</sup> graders who might be ready to take the state test earlier in the school year. This no-cost change will allow districts to test 11<sup>th</sup> graders as early as January, alleviating some of the scheduling conflicts and overtesting that can otherwise occur in late April/early May of students' 11<sup>th</sup> grade year.
- 2) **For implementation in 2019-20 (if needed):** ODE would pursue a policy to allow testing at 10<sup>th</sup> grade for students in advanced courses who have received appropriate instruction aligned to the high school content standards. To implement this recommendation, ODE would convene a committee of stakeholders in the summer of 2019 to develop guidance and criteria for determining student eligibility for 10<sup>th</sup> grade testing. The effort would also require additional funding support from the legislature to account for the additional students taking the test as 10<sup>th</sup> graders in spring 2020.

To further address stakeholder concerns about testing at 11<sup>th</sup> grade, ODE has committed to pursuing the following strategies:

- 1) ODE is actively working with Oregon's Higher Education Commission and Institutes of Higher Education to share college success indicator data. Access to these data would allow ODE to conduct predictive validity studies that may lead to use of Smarter Balanced assessment scores for college admissions decisions in Oregon.
- 2) ODE will continue to work with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and other consortium member states to develop additional resources to assist educators in interpreting and using test results.

- 3) ODE will renew efforts to support schools and districts in encouraging participation in the statewide assessment system. These efforts will include an analysis of Oregon's current opt-out trends and development of guidance and resources to support parents and adult students in making informed decisions about the purpose of the tests and whether to participate.

The complete [Oregon's High School Assessment Options: Report & Recommendations](#) report, summarizing the RFI process, the stakeholder engagement process, and the resulting recommendations, is available for those who want more information. Please feel free to contact [Dan Farley](#), ODE Director of Assessment or [Colt Gill](#), Director of ODE with questions or comments.