

Equitable Use of Aptitude & Interest

Assessments in Public Schools

This document is created as a reference to help guide schools as they use these tools in an equitable manner for all students. Interest and aptitude assessments and surveys can be important tools to help students learn more about themselves and identify career possibilities they might like to explore. They can be used to help broaden student interests and help schools understand which programs, courses, and/or activities to consider adding to their offerings. The data provided may also help students to develop self-knowledge as they relate the identified interests or aptitudes to courses or potential careers. Both interest and aptitude assessments have benefits and pitfalls, and understanding the principles behind them can provide valuable insights into their equitable use.

DO...	DON'T...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize multiple methods (career assessments, career connected learning experiences, coursework, etc.) to support students in making their career pathway decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rely on the results of one assessment, including career aptitude or interest surveys, to advise students towards a class, activity or career pathway.¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the validity of career aptitude and interest assessments through your institution's equity lens or the Oregon Equity Lens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discount the inherent cultural bias in many career aptitude and interest assessments and their reporting, because they have been normed to the dominant culture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center your decision making in equity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the assessment available in multiple languages? Is it accessible for students with varying abilities (hearing, vision, reading, comprehension, attention)? Is it accurately normed for the population being assessed? What is the potential positive and negative impact of the assessment results? Are there limitations to how the reports are received, or how it should be used? Are accommodations available? (Such as extra time or a quiet place to complete the assessment.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discount the importance of equity and access in career aptitude and interest assessments, and the method by which students receive the information.

DO...	DON'T...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have an awareness of your own biases, identity, intersectionality, and privilege when advising students on making career decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow biases to affect advising practices, including course selection, field trips, activities, and work-based learning opportunities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember there is no one 'right' answer. The whole world of work is evolving and career assessments can become outdated. Results students receive are not fixed and can change over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steer students in any direction or away from opportunities, activities and benefits to gain more awareness about themselves and potential careers, such as field trips, classes, internships, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the information provided to consider systemic improvements to policies, adult practices, student experiences, and desired outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret results about students' aptitude or interest (or a group of students' aptitudes or interests) as a deficit.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote opportunities that help all students explore their interests and build their aptitudes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the results of an assessment to make decisions about activities that students are able to participate in.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider that students' results may not be what they actually want or may not be culturally valued by families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't discount student voice and cultural assets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage students to pursue careers they are passionate about while expanding curriculum and instruction to help them develop the skills needed for careers in high wage, in demand jobs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disregard students' interests in a career area even if an assessment suggests their aptitudes don't align.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach any uses of assessments and results in an equitable and culturally responsive manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discount the needs and requirements for access with student focal groups.²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support students with multiple opportunities to build their education plan and profile with connections to any assessment results, goals, course-taking, experiences and engagement in activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use assessments and their results without student follow-up to assess and discuss the results, for them to make meaning from it, and to make connections between the results with their current and future goals and aspirations.

Footnotes

1. [OAR 581-021-0030](#) discusses the restrictions for utilization of assessments in public schools.
2. [OAR 581-021-0045](#) discusses what is considered discrimination in Oregon