

Springfield Board of Education

Statement Supporting the Opt-Out Option for Smarter Balanced Testing

We, the Springfield Board of Education, given our responsibility to safeguard and guide the education of Springfield students, find that the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium test (known as the SBAC) is an ineffective measure of student growth and accountability.

The problems with the Smarter Balanced tests are well-documented. Here are a few:

- The test is too long. The minimum test time for 3rd graders is 7 hours, for 10th it's 8.5. In actuality the test often takes hours longer. This does not take into account the many hours that are spent in preparation for the test.
- The test is expensive. The state of Oregon currently spends \$27.5 million dollars on the SB test. The previously used OAKS test was only \$3.0 million. These dollars could be spent in other, more productive areas for our students.
- The test is technologically unfair and discriminatory. Sophisticated typing and computer skills are needed to take the test and it assumes a level of expertise that many of our students, particularly those in poverty, do not have.
- The test results are not timely. It is accepted wisdom that to be effective for student growth assessment results must be received as soon as possible after the test has been given. Results from the SBAC are received 10-12 months after the test. At this point students have moved up a grade-level and are enrolled in new classes, therefore negating the value of informing a student's education.
- The test is unfair and discriminatory for our special-needs students. Students with handicaps are still required to take the test and accommodations for these individuals are often insufficient or inadequate. Additionally, the time spent taking the SB test takes away from other IEP-appropriate testing.
- The test content and format is dissimilar to other nationally-recognized tests like the SAT, ACT, ASFAB, and NAEP. Therefore the SB test is not predictive of success with other accepted assessments.
- The test is highly stressful for many of our students. Under the SB test rules teachers are not allowed to prepare students for test content and many of the questions are years above grade level. There are numerous reports of students becoming physically ill as a result of being required to take this test.

In summary, the Springfield Board of Education finds that the Smarter Balanced test is neither smart nor balanced. It is poorly designed, discriminatory, often punitive, and is of little benefit to our students. It does not inform student learning and furthermore does not make the best use of limited classroom time. It encumbers teachers and staff to focus both time and resources on an assessment that has shown little, if any, value.

It is therefore the Board's recommendation that Springfield parents and guardians strongly consider exercising their right, under House Bill 2655, to opt out their student from the Smarter Balanced test.

Because the Springfield Board of Education does indeed value the importance of well-designed student assessments we encourage the Oregon Department of Education to pursue, with all due haste, alternative tests that will support student growth and learning for all students in the state of Oregon.

Sincerely,