



February 3, 2022

To: House Committee on Education
From: Oregon Education Association
Re: Support for HB 4124

Dear Chair Alonso Leon and members of the House Committee on Education,

The Oregon Education Association represents over 41,000 educators and education service professionals across the state, from pre-k to community colleges. Our members are teachers, bus drivers, custodians, teacher assistants, nutrition specialists, community college professionals and more.

OEA supports House Bill 4124 and the -1 amendment you see before you.

House Bill 4124 allows ODE to survey testing practices from districts and creates report of recommendations and best practices from results of survey to go to state board of education and to Oregon legislature.

The bill also requires ODE and the board of education to review standards related to disclosure and transfer of student education records and if necessary, amend related rules to ensure an educational institution receive the most recent and relevant records for a current student.

The -1 amendment to the bill outlines a number of narrow changes to clarify the focus of the survey to k-12 and adding stakeholder engagement to both pieces.

The Oregon Department of Education and State Board of Education do not mandate the bulk of the tests students engage in each year. State mandated tests include:

- Smarter Balanced English Language Arts
- Smarter Balanced Math
- OAKS Science
- English Language Proficiency Assessment (for students learning English only)
- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (suspended for 2021)
- Essential Skills graduation requirement (suspended through 2024)

School districts add additional assessments on top of these state mandated tests. Some are required, such as those required by IDEA for students identified for special education services. However, many are used by districts for the purpose of seeing how students are related to the state summative assessments (language arts, math, and science). Districts added these assessments in the years following the implementation of No Child Left Behind because the consequences of not meeting Adequate Yearly



Progress under that bill were extreme and districts were doing all they could to avoid being labeled as “not meeting AYP.”

These layers of commercial tests put out by many of the same companies that then turn around and sell intervention and remediation materials to school districts have led to an increase in the time students spend on tests in schools – but these commercial tests have not increased student outcomes or student learning.

As many of us have seen or experienced, the legacy of overemphasis on testing from decades ago still has effects on our systems and process today. We know from decades past that the traditional forms of standardized tests to measure a student's progress at one snapshot in time doesn't account for the full picture of student learning potential. And yet, we also understand the real value of assessment in and throughout a student's academic learning.

Effective education inspires students' natural curiosity and love of learning. But effective education can only occur in the presence of a balanced and sound assessment practice. No single assessment can meet all informational needs and measure all levels of student experience, however, it is in our best interest to understand our current picture in Oregon. And a perfect time to consider this given the experience of students, educators and parents in a hybrid-learning world brought on by covid-19.

It is important to look at current inventory we have of the assessments we currently administer--- at which times of instruction, how long it takes to complete, what the purposes are and who has access to this data---- in order to fully understand our landscape toward the balanced assessment system we seek. I want to highlight the report that was done in conjunction with the Oregon Education Investment Board, ODE, Governor's Office and OEA in 2015 titled A New Path For Oregon. This report has also been submitted through OLIS to you and shares some critical vision, approach and recommendations related to assessments in Oregon, of which includes the impetus for HB 4124.

HB 4124 allows for the kind of surveying needed to help us understand where the gaps are in our current assessment system and strategies for improved student experience.

Having a balanced system of assessment allows educators, in partnership with students and their families, to access data that can inform instruction, helping students accomplish their learning goals. That's why OEA is supportive of HB 4124 with the -1 amendment, and we encourage the committee's support and passage of this bill.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Michele Ruffin

Oregon Education Association