

Assessment of Essential Skills Review Panel
Meeting Minutes
Friday, January 17, 2014
Oregon Department of Education

Meeting Facilitator: Cristen McLean

AESRP Members Present: Charlie Bauer, John Bouchard, Buzz Brazeau, Ralph Brown, Steve Christiansen, Lori Cullen Brown, Kathryn Hall, Laurie Ross, Tim Rupp, Jordan Ruppert, Marie Shimer, Tiffany Shireman, Larry Susuki, Marilyn Williams, Chareane Wimbley-Govea, Michelle Zundel

ODE Staff Present: Kathy Brazeau, Derek Brown, Cristen McLean, Bryan Toller, Steve Slater, Carla Martinez

I. Welcome and introduction of members:

The meeting began at 9:00 a.m. Cristen welcomed the AESRP committee. Cristen provided some general ODE updates since October and introduced member and ODE staff in the room.

II. Approval of minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2013 meeting was made by Buzz Brazeau, Kathy Hall seconded, passing all in favor.

III. Essential Skills updates since the October meeting:

Derek updated the committee on the Essential Skills exit code in Cum ADM discussed in the October meeting. The committee had asked ODE to review for adjustments to codes could and other elements could be added to the list of codes in the Cum ADM collection to advise ODE of how students meet their Essential Skills requirements to graduate. As an example, if a student does not receive a 4A, graduation with a regular high school diploma, the essence of the question is that if a student does not receive a regular high school diploma within four years is it because the student has not met the Essential Skill. Derek referred to specific issues listed in the PowerPoint but stated that depending on how the questions are articulated in the data collection, it is very challenging for anyone to validate what the answer is. The four-year graduation date would be difficult for ODE to collect the information without it being biased information and then for ODE to be able to validate the information.

The takeaway from this information is that after discussion within the department and various stakeholders throughout the state adding this functionality within the Cum ADM collection would require considerable advanced notice and would increase workload for districts.

Steven Christiansen agreed with Derek that as one who works with data in CumADM it is a huge deal to add fields. He advises that if we ever do want to add that adding another field should be a slow, meticulous, and thought-out process. Tiffany Shireman agreed. Michelle Zundel added that the reason the question matters significantly is to determine the impact of Essential Skills implementation. AESRP members previously said that there is a need to analyze the casualties before additional Essential Skills are added. Michelle acknowledged there are usually multiple factors in why a student does not graduate, however she stated there are two students in her district who but for not meeting the Essential Skill of writing would have received an Oregon high school diploma in four years.

Derek agrees that the information is critical however; he is not convinced that Cum ADM may not be the way to report.

IV. Smarter Balanced Field Test Update:

Derek updated the committee on the Smarter Balanced Field Test; he reminded members that testing dates are March 18 – June 6, 2014. The purpose of the field test is scale development, achievement level development and item calibration. Oregon still has a large gap in the grade 11 sampling. We still do not have an answer back from US Department of Education regarding the double testing waiver.

V. Concordant Validity:

Cristen explained the concordant validity between OAKS and Smarter Balanced and advised that the evaluation is warranted. She then discussed evaluation of Smarter Balanced for Essential Skills as the replacement for OAKS. She also noted that there is a need to identify the cut score on the alternative assessment that would match the OAKS “meets” score. Cristen reminded the committee that this is a high-level description that should be consistent with previous experiences with concordant validity including the conversation during the AESRP meeting last October.

Because there is a requisite level of knowledge needed for both OAKS and Smarter Balanced, Cristen asked for comments about from the committee about how comfortable they were in preparing students to be successful in Smarter Balanced. Six members who work in K-12 education were somewhat comfortable; two felt they were very knowledgeable.

The discussion questions for the committee are “are the assessments similar enough that they will sort students in similar ways?” or “will students who performed well on OAKS also perform well on Smarter Balanced?”

Michelle Zundel from Ashland stated that the implementation of national standards and a national testing system is a sea change in education and the Smarter Balanced assessment is striving to be a more authentic measure of learning. However, to try to do a crosswalk between state standards, Common Core and

Smarter Balanced is a real struggle and psychometricians could find a way to do that that would make sense. The concern is that these are real children who are caught in the midst of this transition and reform effort whose lives could be damaged because of the change. While Michelle is excited about this “man on the moon” challenge with Common Core and Smarter Balanced she does not think, we will be able to figure out how that relates to OAKS. She acknowledged that the reading assessments have some similarities but the reading on Smarter Balanced also requires some constructed responses there is keyboarding and writing skills. With math, there is a great deal more with application required than OAKS and it will be a stretch for Smarter Balanced to authentically score for writing when it is embedded in short answers and constructed responses.

Cristen asked for clarification from Michelle on writing, is it as it relates to reading or the breaking up across different sections?

Michelle’s response is that in AESRP in looking at the Essential Skill of writing we have only allowed those things that are authentic writing tasks of certain duration to qualify for demonstrating writing. Therefore both the length of the writing assessment required and the other variables involved that could impact the score on writing.

Steve Boynton noted that students who perform well on OAKS may not perform to the same level on Smarter Balanced. Tim Rupp thought students will struggle with the new formats of Smarter Balanced especially with the open-ended part of the test. Steven Christiansen agreed with Steve Boynton and is concerned about students on the “bubble” who barely pass the OAKS tests.

Tiffany Shireman noted that the assessment will not sort students the same way. Fundamentally, the ELA Smarter Balanced assessment is going to require writing skills that OAKS reading has not and the Smarter Balanced math assessment is going to require evidence of how a student is thinking about the math, not just the answer.

Buzz Brazeau acknowledged that although he felt knowledgeable about both forms of assessment. His concern is that when we try to do the crosswalk as Michelle was talking about, that OAKS is not nearly as application based. Since application based is talking about integrating several different skills into one skill, it will be difficult to bird-walk one into many. This will be particularly difficult because of the lack of longitudinal experience we have with Smarter Balanced. The concern is the first groups of students that will be tasked with Smarter Balanced have not grown up with the experience of having had that type of evaluation and assessment. Consequently, this will be the first time these students have done this, as we get further down the road we will have more years of experience and then we would have some opportunity to do some bird-walking. In the beginning, it is going to be a difficult thing to do based on the different types of assessments that OAKS and Smarter Balanced are. In many ways it is like comparing a sprinter and a long

distance runner, are they both runners, are they both athletic ...absolutely. However, both runners need to be trained in different ways, they both need to be evaluated in different ways, and they both have multiple yet different strengths. It would be difficult to take a training regimen and make it work for both.

Ralph Brown commented that in every school there is a group of students that no matter what is thrown at them they will do well, the students that are on the cusp may struggle. The biggest fear is for the group of kids who have to do the assessment, they have to pass it, they have to perform and the initial group of students who have not had the background may be "casualties" as referred to above. In the future Ralph looks forward as the students get geared up, our kids get used to change, they are resilient, the performance level will get better and our teachers will get better. Ralph agrees with Buzz and Michelle and has fear with the initial test because the tests are so different.

Larry Susuki also noted that OAKS is primarily a multiple choice test and in Smarter Balanced, especially in math there are open ended or non-multiple choice so we may actually be assessing a processing choice.

Steve Boynton chatted that if we frame this comparison with Bloom's Revised Taxonomy the bulk of the questions in OAKS fall in the understanding level with some questions falling in the applying level. The Common Core State Standards are written beginning with the applying level and crossing into analyzing and evaluating and the Smarter Balanced assessment mirrors those standards in their approach.

Vicki Van Buren agreed with everyone who has commented. Remembered a workshop with Derek when there was discussion about looking at two different types of benchmark and looking at what Smarter Balanced would look like if it benchmarked with the NAEP. Cristen noted to Vicki that will be the next discussion, step 3. Vicki again raised the concern for students who is "kind of" in the range of the benchmark the belief is that they will not perform well on Smarter Balanced. She also agreed that OAKS and Smarter Balanced are radically different assessments.

A final comment on this topic from Steve Boynton is that there is not predictive validity from OAKS to Smarter Balanced.

Discussion began about step 3 that is to identify the cut score on the alternative assessment that would match the OAKS "meets" score. Cristen introduced Derek and Steve Slater, ODE psychometrician for this discussion.

Derek noted the discussion that a couple of years ago we put some NAEP items into the OAKS assessment to develop the scales, particularly in the OAKS math assessment. In reading both NAEP and OAKS have been linked to SAT so through a bridge assessment we have a good understanding of OAKS and NAEP. Instead of using a direct linking approach where students have taken both OAKS and Smarter Balanced assessments we can look at the number of students who are

meeting certain achievement standards to use that to find the equivalent level of rigor would be to the current OAKS cut scores. Derek and Steve are producing documents for proposal to the AESRP committee and then begin to make public for feedback. We will look at a proportional approach, we know that last school year approximately 70% of Oregon students at the high school level met the 236 on the OAKS math assessment however to be NAEP proficient those students would have had to have scored a 245 which significantly dropped the percentage. What we can find out is at what is the cut score that about 70% of our students hit on the Smarter Balanced math assessment, is that the equivalent level of rigor. However, as has been brought up these are two very different assessment so the constructs are different, the construct variance has to be part of the conversation. Steve Slater added that the comments around the comparability of the two constructs come into play when you are doing a linking study. To the extent that the constructs do not overlap all that well for the correlation between scores on the two assessments is fairly low then there is a greater ambiguity in setting an equivalent cut score on Smarter Balanced. Steve said we have seen this before in an attempt to link some of the alternate assessments. Cut scores will become a combination of professional judgment by teachers and curriculum experts and by the data derived from the Smarter Balanced field test. A decision will be made on what can be done with the two streams of information in the spring of 2015. At this time Steve is adopting a “wait and see” approach.

Michelle Zundel asked if psychometricians believe this task is possible and can be done with any validity and integrity for the Class of 2016 who will be in 11th grade in the 2014-15 school year. Michelle then agreed with Steve’s “wait and see” approach. We are implementing an assessment process with little correspondence to the previous assessment and we do not have enough information to make good decisions. Michelle asked Steve at what point next year with too few 11th graders testing will the data be available. According to Steve, we are expecting a file from Smarter Balanced in December 2014 of students who took the field test.

Michelle then asked, for the class of 2015 who do not pass OAKS we are not going to wait until the spring of their senior year to test them to determine if they met the Essential Skills. We are going to be giving them alternate assessments so this is cut score setting for the class of 2016 isn’t it? Cristen responded that practically this is a gigantic issue in that we cannot adjust the number of assessments that are available to a cohort. If the policy remains in place there has to be a statewide assessment option for the class of 2015. Cristen noted that she is only clarifying the legal side of the discussion. If the options are reduced for a cohort, the cohort must be notified by their 8th grade year. There was general concern from the committee about the class of 2015 and their access to the state assessment test.

Buzz made a statement that he is in favor of our moves and work in getting better curriculum alignment, better assessment and raising the State of Oregon from its current position to a new and prosperous position. When he first became part of AESRP, he understood that although AESRP does not make policy they do make

recommendations. An earlier comment about OAKS and Smarter Balanced is now we are not only trying to change our assessment tool but at the same time change the entire way we are preparing to take the assessment tool. His concern is that there were a bunch of really good ideas that have been shot down because they were implemented inappropriately time-wise. Would there be an interest amongst the AESRP colleagues looking at part of their recommendation in continuing to move forward but we look at it on a timely basis so we have information. He noted that there is not anyone that this will be recommended to, be it a legislator, the governor, or an executive who would buy something before knowing the price. This decision is being made before we know the price and what the value is. Is part of what we need to do is continue our work but add the component time implementation. It is weird that we are going to hear about the potential cut scores after or just prior to our administering the test in 2015. If AESRP has been created by the Department of Education at the request of the governor to provide him with professional and pertinent suggestions then we need to add the suggestion of time implementation. We are not requesting change or saying let's not do it rather we are saying let's do it in a way that is going to offer us an opportunity to be successful and have something longitudinal. If we look at the data, I know that a student who does not earn a high school diploma has a life expectancy of 10 years less than someone who does earn a high school diploma. This information is put out by OSBA. If that is the case, we are not only talking about screwing up students it is a life and death situation for some people. We need to add time and implementation into our conversation this does not change our conversation with regards to depth and appropriateness, it simply puts it into a more prudent perspective.

Michelle agreed with Buzz via chat. She suggested creating a timeline that supports student and allows the committee to complete the work with substantive information. She noted that one of the "brilliant" AESRP members brought up that we do not want the Smarter Balanced roll out to be the new Cover Oregon.

Cristen reminded the committee that at this meeting ODE would not be making policy decision or final recommendation. ODE is gathering information from highly invested and knowledgeable group of people. Cristen asked two questions of the committee.

The first question is what is your overall confidence? She asked members to make a note in the chat window. The two members present in the room voted "not confident" and the chat window showed 10 "not confident", one "guardedly confident" and one "confident in Smarter Balanced but could see the value in allowing district to choose their testing mechanism for a period of time to continue to make the transition".

VI. Statewide Assessment and Essential Skills

In an AESRP survey, several AESRP members described that the statewide assessment and Essential Skills are coupled because of the report card. Cristen explained what we at the state look at in School/District accountability and what we

look at for student accountability. She sees these lines blurring. Cristen asked for the pro/con for the assessment of district accountability is also used for student accountability. Chats are listed below:

From Steven Christiansen to Everyone (10:25:37 AM):

PRO: Students take the test more seriously.

From Laurie Ross to Everyone (10:25:43 AM):

Pro: The ability to see trends

From Tim Rupp to Everyone (10:25:52 AM):

Reality is that if students believe that they this it tied to graduation, we get a better test result

From Kathy Hall to Everyone (10:26:31 AM):

Pro: Less time taking multiple tests of the same material

Comment from Buzz in the room, he understands what the department does with regard to the two different areas of accountability, but as far as people are concerned, the districts are held accountable for student accountability. So these two are tied together by the people we are sending the report card too. By keeping the two coupled, the students take them more seriously.

From Michelle Zundel to Everyone (10:26:54 AM):

A few years ago, AESRP discussed the importance of motivation among students. The current system has us in a somewhat symbiotic relationship with students. They work hard to do their best work on assessments that reflect on their schools. It's important to keep them paired together.

From Steven Christiansen to Everyone (10:27:06 AM):

CON: When students pass the test after the year of accountability, there is no "reward" for the District.

From Laurie Ross to Everyone (10:27:16 AM):

Con: There are multiple methods, but those are not matched in the report card. This is confusing for students. They experience a sense of relief when they meet their essential skill by a work sample, but they are still tested. We, in the classroom, must maintain the intensity of the test. It forces us to put more pressure on the tests than the work samples.

Cristen asked for comments from teachers in the group.

From Marilyn Williams to Everyone (10:27:43 AM):

Pro: helps to coordinate and direct instructional planning. Not "teaching to the test" but determining important skills and strategies and levels of proficiency.

From Michelle Zundel to Everyone (10:27:53 AM):

AESRP discussed that we wanted students to persevere on OAKS before accessing alternate assessments and our district actually doesn't give work samples formally for Essential Skills until spring of Junior year.

From Tim Rupp to Everyone (10:28:04 AM):

If a student meets "proficiency" via another method... why not give district "credit" for student meeting the standards?

From Laurie Ross to Everyone (10:28:18 AM):

YES! to Tim's comment

From Steven Christiansen to Everyone (10:28:25 AM):

Yes to Tim's comment!!

From Kathy Hall to Everyone (10:28:47 AM):

Con: Testing that is redundant and slows down class advancement rates. There is often a bit of "teaching to the test" in almost all classes

From Marie to Everyone (10:28:48 AM):

There should be accountability at all levels but are throwing this at several cohorts of students that were not taught at this level is not fair to the students or the teachers that have been following the rules throughout.

From Michelle Zundel to Everyone (10:28:53 AM):

Tim's idea is really interesting. We could uncouple SBA and Essential Skills if meeting on any assessment reflected the same on the state report card.

From Kathy Hall to Everyone (10:29:04 AM):

I also support Tim's comment

From Ralph Brown to Everyone (10:29:09 AM):

If it is tied to District and student accountability, I believe both groups will do their very best to see that students have the tools to pass.

From Larry Susuki to Everyone (10:29:19 AM):

OAKS allows a statewide comparison of our classroom students. Sometimes I lose a sense of where my students compare. OAKS gives me this comparison.

From Steven Christiansen to Everyone (10:29:35 AM):

I mentioned this same thing in the survey yesterday--because only the test counts toward the report card standard, of course all of our emphasis is toward the test.

From Marie to Everyone (10:29:40 AM):

I also agree with Tim's comment.

From Steve Boynton to Everyone (10:30:01 AM):

To Tim and others: How would you maintain validity and measure accountability in work samples. I have seen many across several districts and they would not meet my definition of proficient.

Cristen asked Tim for clarification on his comment; he noted that districts are held accountable for students who pass OAKS, why not give districts “credit” for meeting in reading or math proficiency? That would take the focus off of OAKS and put it on whatever it takes to make students accountable. Lori Cullen expressed a concern that districts are not consistent between districts in how work samples are scored.

VII. College and Career Readiness

Cristen advised the AESRP committee that there will be a 1 million dollar grant to be distributed to between five and eight districts who will receive technical assistance to develop a bank of proficiency based assessment with student work.

VIII. Essential Skills Report

The Essential Skills report will be released on January 30, 2014. Cristen explained the data that will be included.

IX. Special Committees

X. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m.