



March 18, 2021

For Immediate Release

Ashland School Board Addresses State Assessments During COVID

On Monday, March 15, the Ashland School Board passed a resolution making a one-year change of practice in mandatory state SBAC (Smarter Balance) assessment administration. For the full text of the resolution [click here](#)

Ashland students will not participate in state testing this year unless parents respond to an email to “opt-in.” By default, students will not participate in state assessments this year. If a family wants their student to participate in the state assessment, an opportunity will be provided.

The resolution is in keeping with the state of Oregon’s request to the US Department of Education seeking a waiver for state assessments this year due to the impact of the pandemic and the limited opportunity for students to experience school on-site during the pandemic. If administered, state assessments could take up a significant amount of the remaining on-site class time for students that have returned in hybrid. Students just now returning to classrooms would come back to find themselves participating in hours of formal assessments.

In a typical year, Oregon law requires students to participate in state testing unless a parent specifically chooses to “opt-out”. Educators encourage all students to take the state SBAC assessment because the annual assessments provide valuable feedback on student progress as well as program efficacy and deficits. School Board Chair Eva Skuratowicz notes, “This year is different. Kids are just now returning to school and now testing is required? They should be reconnecting and experiencing school in person. We already have growth data through local assessments that provide teachers with important information on supporting learners – the state assessment doesn’t do anything for kids this year.”

The Oregon state Board of Education is expected to vote as early as March 18 to waive the essential skills graduation requirement for current Juniors in the class of 2022. Last year, the state Board of Education waived the state assessment requirement for the classes of 2020 and 2021.

Parents will receive an email notice allowing them to opt-in if they feel their child will benefit from state testing. By default, the choice will be not to test. Parents that do not want their child to test do not need to respond to the opt-in notice. Board Chair Eva Skuratowicz shared, “We believe most parents want their kids in class and learning this year, and not taking valuable class time with the state assessments.”

For More Information:

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