

RESOLUTION No. XXXX

Resolution on Implementation of the Smarter Balanced Assessment

RECITALS

- A. On July 22, 2014, the Board of Education passed Resolution 4943 on the implementation of the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) affirming that:
- As a School Board, we have high expectations for our students and staff;
 - We believe that all students can succeed academically and we do not shy away from being held accountable for student success;
 - We support the teaching of the whole child and do not support “teaching to the test”. Testing should not dominate the culture or instructional time in our schools;
 - The State needs to provide the necessary funding to implement the SBA effectively;
 - The State should not use the SBA for punitive labeling or sanctioning of students, teachers, schools or districts;
 - The State and Federal Departments of Education should delay the use of SBA results in the teacher evaluation system.
- B. The Oregon Department of Education has continued to move forward with the statewide implementation of Smarter Balanced Assessment this spring with testing scheduled to occur March 10, 2015 through June 5, 2015.
- C. A State workgroup, along with Nancy Golden, Oregon’s Chief Education Officer, is proposing to delay any sanctions to districts and schools due to Smarter Balanced results and for the reduced role of summative standardized testing in our children’s education. These recommendations are in alignment with our July 2014 resolution.
- D. The PPS Assessment Advisory Committee convened this year to conduct a comprehensive review of all types of PPS assessment. This Committee includes classroom teachers, building administrators and Office of Teaching and Learning staff as well as nationally-recognized assessment expert, Dr. Rick Stiggins as an advisor to the committee. The Board would like thank the committee for their work and we look forward to hearing their recommendations.
- E. In February 2015, the Portland Association of Teachers approved a resolution opposing the use of the Smarter Balanced Assessment this year and raising

concerns regarding the reliability and validity of the test.

- F. In order to support the implementation of the SBA for spring of 2015, Portland Public Schools has:
- Added 64 mobile computer labs to 60 schools to ensure each school has the equipment needed for the assessment
 - Provided professional development including assessment training for principals, test coordinators, and teachers
 - Provided scheduling and technical support for building administrators
 - Conducted multiple presentations to PTAs/site councils across the district.
- G. The Portland Public Schools Board supports high standards for all students in order to compete in a global economy. The Common Core State Standards were developed in order to encourage our students to develop critical thinking skills, to be prepared for college and career and to be effective in the 21st century. Portland Public Schools has been teaching to the Common Core State Standards for a number of years now.
- H. The Smarter Balanced Assessment was developed to be aligned to the standards and to demonstrate our progress in helping students meet those higher standards. If valid, the SBA results will show us where we need to accelerate the opportunities for students to strengthen their knowledge. The results should not be used to demean students or sanction our schools but rather as one tool that can provide guidance for where instruction or curriculum needs to be strengthened.
- I. The SBA is a more challenging test than OAKS and, as seen in other states that have administered the SBA, fewer Oregon students will meet benchmark than they did on the multiple-choice OAKS test. This does not mean, and should not be communicated to students and schools, that this is a “failure” but rather as an indication of the areas where we need to provide additional curricular or instructional support.
- J. The Portland Public Schools Board continues to support the elimination of the multiple-choice OAKS and moving toward a more challenging, summative assessment that is just one part of an overall program of assessment for learning and is not deemed “high stakes” or punitive.
- K. However, the Board continues to be concerned by the 7 to 8 1/2 hours of class time that students in grades 3-8 and 11 will spend taking the SBA, as well as the

potential negative impact on schools and students as a result of any state imposed sanctions or labels based on test results.

- L. The Portland Public Schools Board would like to thank the State workgroup for their excellent vision. We support the delay in sanctions as a result of SBA test results and believe it is in the best interest of the whole child to reduce the role of summative standardized testing and develop a greater focus on in-class, teacher/student driven assessments.

- M. The Portland Public Schools Board would like to recognize the work of staff in schools and central office for their hard work during the transition, as well as the students and families for their patience during transition and urge them to communicate concerns to the state so that it make changes in its implementation and accountability for the SBA to better support success for all students.

- N. The Portland Public Schools Board is concerned about the growing movement of families who are opting out of the SBA. While we share concerns about the excessive length of the test and the State's transition to the new assessment, we also understand that we need a measurement of how our schools and students are learning. A more challenging test will not harm our students as long as we as adults, convey to students that it is intended as a learning opportunity rather than a punitive or demeaning experience. We are also concerned that Federal sanctions could be imposed on schools where more than 5% of students opt out and otherwise successful schools could be labeled and negatively impacted.

RESOLVED

- 1. The Portland Public Schools Board of Education calls on the State of Oregon to:
 - a. Reduce the length of the Smarter Balanced Assessment as the testing time of 8+ hours is too long
 - b. Provide adequate funds for the necessary technology and professional development on an ongoing basis
 - c. Provide constructive input and guidance along with support for schools and students with the SBA results
 - d. Provide a report on first year of SBA implementation, including costs and time spent testing, lessons learned, reliability and validity, and an explanation of how the results will be used
 - e. Develop a plan for how to support districts with families opting out of SBA and the negative impact on school report cards

- 2. The Portland Public Schools Board directs the Superintendent to continue to provide balanced information to families about the Smarter Balanced Assessment. These communications should include concerns about, as well as potential benefits of moving from OAKS to a more challenging and multifaceted test. This should also include ways families can provide feedback to the State.

3. The Portland Public Schools Board directs the Superintendent to ensure that administrators and teachers are communicating to students and families that while this is a more challenging test, lower scores than those on OAKS do not mean students or schools have “failed”. We will use scores to inform future instruction and identify where students and schools need additional supports.
4. The Portland Public Schools Board directs the Superintendent to ensure that Portland Public Schools administrators and teachers are not “teaching to the test” and that test preparation is limited to getting oriented to the testing interface rather than practicing or preparing for test content.