

Measuring Student Understanding of the Idaho Core Standards An Alternate Proposal

Boise School District

The Value of the Idaho Core Standards

The Idaho Core Standards (adopted from the Common Core State Standards) are a set of high-quality, rigorous academic standards that will help us to achieve the Idaho State Board of Education's goal that 60% of Idaho high school graduates have a college degree or certificate of value by 2020.

As our students have increased access to rigorous standards and content, their chances of succeeding after high school improve. By their very nature, the Idaho Core standards paired with locally-written curricula prepare Idaho students for the challenges of accelerated coursework, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Dual-Credit courses and college entrance exams such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). **We support the implementation of Idaho's Core Standards.**

Idaho's Participation in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

To facilitate measurement of students' understanding of the Idaho Core Standards, the State of Idaho joined the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) as one of 23 governing states. SBAC is a federally-sanctioned organization charged with developing tests in line with the requirements of the Common Core standards.

In 2010, Idaho was given a seat on the Governing Board of SBAC, provided it adheres to the most comprehensive implementation of the assessment - testing at grades 3 – 8 and 11. Even though no current federal or state laws require implementation of the SBAC, the Idaho State Department of Education has mandated the expansion of SBAC testing to include grades 3 – 11.

Costs of ISDE Mandated SBAC Implementation

Three primary costs are associated with the current ISDE plan for SBAC implementation: Monetary, Instructional Time and Computer Access.

1. **Monetary:** State Department of Education officials indicate that the SBAC will cost no more than the administration of the ISAT. However, if grades 9-11 are not tested with the SBAC, as recommended by the SIC Superintendents, the state will save over \$1 million.
2. **Instructional Time:** ISDE officials and SBAC representatives estimate that it will take each student 7 - 8 ½ hours to complete the test. Over one million hours of instructional time at grades 3-11 will be lost each year in the state of Idaho just for the SBAC. This is over twice as much time as was taken for the ISAT.

It is also important to note that the required SBAC testing window will conflict with established 11th grade college-preparatory coursework testing in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and dual-credit programs. In fact, every day of the final 9 weeks of the 2013-14 11th grade school year will be consumed by testing with the SBAC, SAT, and college preparatory testing such as AP and IB.

Additionally, teachers will receive little valuable feedback from administration of the SBAC. SBAC data will provide broad indicators of student strengths and deficits, not the detailed

information that is needed to improve student learning.

3. **Computer Access:** Across the state of Idaho, every compatible computer will be devoted full time to the SBAC during the testing window. Students will lose access to school computers for any non-testing related activities or assignments.

Alternatives to SBAC Assessment

Any test administered to Idaho students must accurately assess preparedness. At this time, the SBAC is an unproven assessment.

The good news is that there are solid alternatives.

1. **11th grade SAT**
Idaho high school juniors are already required by the state to take a college entrance exam, and cut scores for college readiness have already been established for each of the three subtests of the SAT. In fact, Idaho juniors have twice taken the state-funded SAT, in 2012 and 2013. We already know where we stand in college readiness. We need to move forward in improving our students' preparedness.

Further, the ISDE has also provided funding for the PSAT for 10th graders. This assessment will provide valuable input for teachers as they prepare students for college and career.

2. **3rd-8th grade MAP**
Also available is Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test. NWEA is a trusted global not-for-profit educational services organization that provides educators with an effective accountability system measuring student learning on the Idaho Core Standards. The MAP tests take approximately 4 hours per student and provide specific feedback and student growth information for teachers, students and families.

Summary

Under the current plan mandated by the ISDE for implementation of the SBAC assessments, Idaho students in grades 3 – 11 will lose countless hours of learning time and opportunities to work with technology. **We do not support administration of the SBAC to Idaho's students.**

As superintendents of school districts enrolling over one-third (1/3) of Idaho's students, we recommend:

- **Dropping the SBAC as the measure of attainment of the Idaho Core standards.**
- **Adopting the NWEA MAP tests in grades 3-8, and the grade 11 SAT as measures of the progress of our students.**

The IEA believes:

- Standardized tests, whether norm-, criterion-, or standards-referenced, **can validly assess only a limited range of student learning.**
- Standardized tests should only be used as a supplement to information obtained through school- and classroom-based assessment conducted by teachers for purposes of supporting and strengthening instruction as well as for summarizing and evaluating student learning.
- Standardized tests are most useful when designed by the educational professionals closest to the classroom and integrated with assessment information specific to local programs.
- When a test and/or assessment is mandated at the local, state, or national level, it should be reviewed by a panel of appropriate subject area specialists and teachers to ascertain the relevance of the test to the subject area;

Good afternoon Sen. Mortimer and members of the Senate Education Committee. I am Penni Cyr, President of the Idaho Education Association. Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding SCR 106.

We also appreciate the many conversations we have had with Sen. Thayn about important education issues, including high-stakes testing for student.

The Idaho Education Association stands before you in support of this resolution. We do not agree with every point the sponsor has made in his resolution.

However, we do agree with many of the points, and we acknowledge that testing is an important part of the educational process.

However, we want to be very clear. The IEA believes that tests exist for ONE purpose: To improve the quality of education and instruction for students. Period.

We spent a great deal of time reviewing this proposal and measuring it against our organizational resolutions. The IEA ultimately supports SCR 106 because we know that there is no one test that is appropriate for every student.

- Standardized tests should only be used to evaluate a program's effectiveness toward meeting local, state, or national standards and/or goals
- **We do not believe that any test should be used as a high-stakes measure** that determines whether or not a student should be able to graduate from High School or a teacher should receive a pay raise or lose their teaching job.
- The IEA opposes any tests that are used to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states.
- **Again, tests should be used solely for improving the quality of education and instruction, and to that end, we support the use of alternative tests that provide teachers with the data they need to help them modify instruction based on a student's needs.**

With that, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, we support SCR 106 and I will stand for questions.

Thank you.