

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

“The Oregon Education Association believes that student evaluation should include performance assessments, performance outcomes, classroom observations, and testing programs. All assessment should be developmentally appropriate, bias-free and provide meaningful data in a timely manner. The overall objective of assessment should be to improve instruction and learning for the benefit of students.

“The information derived from state assessments should not be used to compare one student to another nor one teacher, school or district to another. Student promotion should not be based solely on standardized assessment results.

“The Association believes that when standardized tests are used, they should have a correlation to what students have learned or what they have experienced. Tests should be bias free, process-oriented and allow a student an opportunity to explain his /her choice of answers and to show his/her work and thinking. *(continued on reverse)*

We can't be dependent on standardized tests as a sole means of measuring student progress. Standardized tests are only one piece of the assessment tools utilized in the classroom.

There is indeed a difference between tests and assessment. A test is one piece in a robust assessment system. While a test is an end point and a snapshot in time, assessment is an ongoing means to evaluate learning. Assessment is much broader in scope with the purpose of helping teachers understand the gaps in learning, to monitor student progress and adjust instruction.

Oregon has been a leader in aligning student assessment to state standards. Oregon was one of the first states to establish testing online. This has given educators more flexibility in administering the Oregon's statewide student assessment system, known as the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS).

We should, however, develop better assessment tools. For example, we should work across school districts to develop common formative assessments within all subject areas. This would ensure consistency of content. It would also provide teachers with a larger pool of assessments to utilize, rather than having to develop their own assessment tools.

“Academic testing programs should be monitored and emphasis should be placed on making the results usable by teachers, rather than as informational pieces for the general public.”

--OEA Legislative Objectives

TALKING POINTS

- Standardized tests often do not test what students really know, and worse, they often test lower-level skills.

- Standardized tests are imperfect measures. They are often not fully aligned to what is taught in the classroom.
- Current large-scale assessments are only indirectly linked to student learning. Much money has been poured into those assessments, but there is no research evidence that they improve student learning.
- Formative assessments offer one of the most effective ways of building the capacity of teachers to analyze student work; plan and adjust instruction that focuses on the progression of learning and student needs; and understand the nature of education goals.
- As stated in OEA’s Resolutions, assessment is more reliable and useful when developed, administered and interpreted by teachers and other trained personnel. According to Linda Darling-Hammond, evidence shows that teacher involvement in producing and scoring formative assessments helps develop capacity for analyzing student work and performance and making instructional decisions based on complex student learning data.

“Tests are more reliable and useful when developed, administered and interpreted by teachers and trained personnel. Students should be permitted a post-test review of all standardized test questions, scores and rationale for correct answers. Testing results should be received in time to facilitate a modification of the instructional program.”

--OEA Resolution

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