



The Informer

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For members of the Ohio Association of Administrators of State and Federal Education Programs

VISION

The OAASFEP provides effective leadership, professional development and legislative information on state and federal educational programs to serve all Ohio's students.

MISSION

In partnership with the Ohio Department of Education, legislators, and other organizations, OAASFEP will facilitate open communication, provide professional development opportunities, promote legislative inquiry, and support Ohio's school communities to foster optimal learning for all Ohio's students.



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From the President

Paul Schneider

Testing and Teaching: *The Right Balance*

As we are very much aware, there are dramatic changes in assessments taking place this year within Ohio as we are transitioning to the new state tests. Obviously, we are presently experiencing our move to the PARCC assessments (Partner for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) and coming soon, the science and social studies tests created by the American Institutes of Research (AIR). Changes like these inevitably increase anxiety to district and school staff, students, and parents. It also brings on feelings that there is too much testing required in public schools and that we don't have enough time to actually teach.

However, when we think about the purpose of assessments, we must acknowledge that they do have their place. Teacher tests that are formative in nature drive daily instruction and give parents and students feedback on student progress. District tests measure the achievement toward district goals such as how students in given grade levels and content areas are doing across the district. Other district tests can be used to meet a state requirement such as gifted student identification. And, state tests are used to meet federal requirements.

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2015 OAASFEP Title I/Federal Programs Spring Conference

Imagine.....Fifty Years Later Our War on Poverty Continues
Hyatt Regency at The Greater Columbus Convention Center

March 17-19, 2015

Imagine. Student Success, nothing less.

From the *President* from page 1

Paul Schnieder
OAASFEP President

The problem is that it's difficult to have a test that serves every purpose well. Despite their shared goal of monitoring and improving student learning, the natural tension between the needs of teachers, the state and the federal government can lead to increased testing. It's crucial that the state have a balance between testing and instruction time. To this end, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Richard Ross, submitted his "Ohio Testing Report and Recommendations" to Governor John Kasich and the 131st General Assembly on January 15, 2015.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) surveyed districts and community schools across the state during 2014. The department spoke to teachers, administrators, and stakeholders to analyze teacher evaluation data and state testing times. From this analysis, they found that the average student spends approximately 19.8 hours taking tests each year and 15 additional hours practicing for tests each year.

In his report, Dr. Ross made a very bold statement. He said, "I am committed to improving testing efficiency and reducing the testing burden on students while maintaining accountability in our schools. As you will see, we have an opportunity to reduce the amount of time students spend testing by almost 20 percent." He then recommends the following legislative changes based on their analysis of the data collected and their conversations with stakeholders:

**Limit the amount of time a student takes state and district tests to 2 percent of the school year, and limit the amount of time spent practicing for tests to 1 percent of the school year.*

**Eliminate the use of student learning objectives as part of the teacher evaluation system for teachers in grades preK-3 and for teachers teaching in non-core subject areas in grades 4-12.*

**Eliminate the fall third-grade reading test, but provide a summer administration of the test for students who need it.*

**Eliminate the state's requirement that districts give math and writing diagnostic tests to students in grades 1-3.*

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To bring this about, ODE developed eight action steps as system improvements to significantly impact student testing. As stated in the report, the action steps are as follows:

Action Step 1: *The department will take part in a national conversation regarding federal testing requirements. Any change would potentially create an opportunity to transform Ohio's testing system, reducing the amount of time students spend taking tests. Until federal law is changed, Ohio has very little flexibility; it must administer state tests to comply with federal testing requirements.*

Action Step 2: *The department will monitor the implementation of the new state tests and evaluate the performance of the test vendors. The department also will continuously track the implementation of the new online and paper test be applied immediately.*

Action Step 3: *Streamline the many approved lists, testing alternatives and substitute exams at the state level to focus on how a single test can be used for multiple purposes when feasible. The department will have new models and testing lists for schools and districts to use by May 1, 2015.*

Action Step 4: *The department plans in spring 2015 to coordinate professional development for teachers and administrators on how to make testing more efficient and less disruptive to instructional time, how to explain the purpose of each test to parents and students and how to ensure test results are being used to improve instruction. The impact of this on the time students spend taking tests is unknown, but training teachers should reduce some of the disruptions associated with testing.*

Action Step 5: *Reduce the number of questions on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and administer a concise, representative set of items that are the best predictors of later academic success. The department has begun reviewing the test questions and is currently seeking feedback from kindergarten teachers. It will reduce the length of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment by May 1, 2015, for the 2015-2016 school year.*

Action Step 6: *Streamline the method of collecting student results, including converting more existing questions so a student's answer given on a notebook or computer automatically uploads results for the teacher to see. The department also will provide more technical assistance and professional development to teachers and schools to help them best use technology and shorten reporting time. The department will have this streamlined method in place by Aug. 1, 2015, for the 2015-2016 school year.*

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Action Step 7: *The department will study how districts can reduce the need for additional tests by developing a way to use the new state tests to identify gifted students in certain tested areas. The new state tests are designed to have a higher upper limit that may allow for the proper identification of gifted students. Using state tests for this purpose could save a notable amount of testing time in the early grades. These tests will include components for screening all students, including student groups that are sometimes underrepresented. The department will release its study findings by Jan. 31, 2016.*

Action Step 8: *Implement and expand the innovative school waiver pilot program to allow districts and schools to develop new, innovative alternative assessment systems that could be expanded statewide. The department is finalizing the application guidance for the pilot program and will grant waivers to eligible districts and schools this spring. The department will closely monitor and evaluate these districts and schools to identify ways to scale up their initiatives and alternative testing methods. This can potentially reduce student testing time in the near future.*

I commend Dr. Ross and the Ohio Department of Education for their commitment to trying to find the balance between the need for meaningful, limited assessments and the need for effective instructional time. With reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind) on the horizon, Ohio can have an important voice in shaping this law to have improved efficiency of testing requirements.

To see the entire 20 page testing report, go to ODE's home webpage and type in Ohio Testing Report and Recommendations. ♦

Paul Schneider
OAASFEP President

From ODE CCIP Federal Timeline Tips:

March 2015

March 30 - deadline to complete Annual Title-I Part A Comparability Report. Remember to maintain reliable source documentation that supports the data in the report for audit purposes.

**For the complete Federal Programs Timeline visit the ODE website, CCIP Documents Library.*

OAASFEP SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Ruth Ninke, Scholarship Committee

The OAASFEP SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM has generated considerable interest and participation this year. We are pleased to report that many applications have been received and are currently being reviewed.

Four \$500 scholarships will be awarded to qualifying high school seniors who fulfilled the Selection Process criteria. The criteria included a 300-word essay, 1st semester High School Transcript with GPA, extracurricular and leadership activities, and three letters of recommendation.

We appreciate the encouragement and support that has been given by OAASFEP members and other school staff that have recommend their students for this scholarship initiative. We especially look forward to the OAASFEP SPRING CONFERENCE, when the OAASFEP Scholarship recipients will be announced, presented and honored. ♦

ATTENTION OAASFEP MEMBERS!

Consider for the 2015-2016 School Year

OAASFEP is proud to continue the tradition of the OHIO ASSOCIATION OF ADMINISTRATORS OF STATE AND FEDERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS scholarship award. As an OAASFEP member, you may nominate one candidate for the OAASFEP state scholarship program from your school/district. The qualifying candidate is an Ohio high school senior who plans to attend a college/university located in the state of Ohio for the fall semester.

For more important information about the OAASFEP Scholarship Program, go to the OAASFEP Scholarship link below to download and print a copy of the application.

<http://www.oaasfep.net/Home/Assets/OAASFEPScholarshipformJune2013.pdf>



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**If you are interested in serving OAASFEP
in a leadership capacity,
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