



## School Board Briefing/Proposed Action Report

**Informational** (no action required by Board)     **Action Report** (Board will be required to take action)

**DATE:** April 14, 2016  
**FROM:** Directors Rick Burke, Sue Peters

### I. TITLE

**Resolution 2015/16-15** - Resolution to request State adoption of an alternative summative assessments framework and to reaffirm student opt-out rights

**For Introduction:** April 20, 2016  
**For Action:** May 4, 2016

### II. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY

This motion would approve Resolution 2015/16-15, which requires Board action.

### III. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE

No additional funding is needed to pass or implement Resolution 2015/16-15.

### IV. POLICY IMPLICATION

This motion is aligned with Policy No. 1225, Legislative Program & Advocacy, which states, “As a public entity, the Board must operate within the bounds of state and federal laws affecting public education. To effectively meet these responsibilities to the public and students of the district, the Board will work vigorously for the passage of new laws designed to advance the cause of effective schools and for the repeal or modification of existing laws that impede this cause.” In addition, Policy No. 1225 calls for the Board to “develop annual federal and state legislative agendas for the district consistent with the furtherance of the district’s strategic plan.”

Other policies may be impacted depending on the actions of the State.

### V. RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the Board adopt Resolution 2015/16-15, which requests State adoption of an alternative summative assessments framework and reaffirms student opt-out rights, as attached to the Board Action Report.

### VI. BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

This motion was discussed at the Curriculum & Instruction Policy Committee and Executive Committee April meetings. At the Executive Committee meeting on April 7, 2016, the Committee reviewed the item and moved it forward to the full Board with a recommendation for consideration.

This Resolution was originally discussed at the Curriculum and Instruction Policy Committee on April 4, 2016, where suggestions for clarity, specificity, and potential legal language

ramifications were identified, but there was insufficient time during the Committee agenda for refinement. The Resolution was withdrawn and recommendations incorporated, prior to re-introduction through the Executive Committee.

## **VII. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Under *Resolution No, 2014/15-33 on Use of Smarter Balanced Assessment*, the Board of Directors of Seattle Public Schools:

- Asked Congress to support the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- Supported the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn's efforts to suspend the use of the Smarter Balanced 2015 assessment scores for any consequential judgment or purpose such as federal school evaluations (Adequate Yearly Progress)
- Called upon the Washington Legislature to reconsider high stakes graduation requirements until we may ensure assessment scores are interpreted and applied appropriately.
- Called on Congress to continue to permit students to voluntarily opt out of taking SBA tests, but to discontinue the penalizing practice of giving these students' scores of 0%.

In December of 2015, Congress adopted the Every Student Succeeds Act which authorizes states to establish a system which allows districts to utilize alternative, locally selected assessments and provides that school districts may request approval to utilize such assessments as an alternative to the standard state-wide assessments. Seattle Public Schools has a unique opportunity to take a leadership role in establishing an alternative summative assessment framework which provides achievement and growth information while minimizing the impact to classroom education. This Resolution calls upon the state to take all actions necessary to allow Seattle Public Schools to move forward with the use of an alternative assessment.

## **VIII. STATEMENT OF ISSUE**

Whether to adopt Resolution 2015/16-15.

## **IX. ALTERNATIVES**

Do not adopt Resolution 2016/16-15. This alternative is not recommended because the Board and community are supportive of an alternative, nationally normed summative assessment that reduces adverse and disproportionate impact on educational time.

## **X. RESEARCH AND DATA SOURCES / BENCHMARKS**

Obama administration announces new testing guidelines

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/10/24/politics/barack-obama-teachers-testing/>

US Department of Education Fact Sheet: Testing Action Plan

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-testing-action-plan>

Council of Great City Schools Report on assessments: Student Testing in America's Great City Schools: An Inventory and Preliminary Analysis

<http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/87/Testing%20Report.pdf>

**XI. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Upon approval of this motion, the resolution will be approved and posted to the District website and shared with state decision-makers.

**XII. ATTACHMENTS**

- Resolution 2015/16-15 (for approval)



**Draft of 4/7/16**  
**Seattle School District #1**  
**Resolution to request State adoption of an alternative summative assessments**  
**framework and to reaffirm student opt-out rights**  
**Resolution No. 2015/16-15**

**A RESOLUTION** of the Board of Directors of Seattle School District No. 1, King County, Seattle, Washington extending *Resolution No, 2014/15-33 on Use of Smarter Balanced Assessment* to reaffirm our commitment to effective student-focused assessment strategies and to request that the State take all actions necessary to allow districts to use a more equitable and efficient normed alternative to the Smarter Balanced Assessment, and to support students' rights to opt-out of tests.

**WHEREAS**, the School Board recognizes that formative assessments can be a critical component of teaching practices and instructional materials to improve learning, and summative assessments can provide a valuable tool to measure student achievement and growth; and

**WHEREAS**, Seattle's current summative assessment strategy relies on the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA), given once annually to students in grades 3-8 and 10 and 11, to meet state and federal accountability requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, a recent (Oct 24, 2015) statement and new testing guidelines from President Obama, as well as recent research by the Council of Great City Schools, acknowledge that American public school students are taking excessive and unnecessary tests  
<http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/87/Testing%20Report.pdf>;  
and

**WHEREAS**, Washington State students are already among the most tested in the nation, and Seattle School District students are already administered numerous state mandated and additional assessments, including: Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Amplify, the End of Course exams (EOC), SBA English Language Arts (ELA) and SBA Math, SAT, PSAT, ACT, COMPASS, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), to demonstrate achievement and/or identify college placement; and

**WHEREAS**, during the first year of implementation in Seattle in 2014-2015, the SBA presented a number of challenges, including:

- The online delivery and entirely computerized format posed challenges to students and schools due to lack of uniform equipment, unequal student familiarity with computers, and unequal student keyboarding skills.
- The delivery and format also created scheduling challenges in schools, occupying computer labs and library spaces for weeks at a time.
- Although the SBA assessments were given in spring of 2015, results were not released to schools until the fall, too late to guide intervention plans and placement decisions.
- The Smarter Balanced assessments are significantly more time consuming than other tests, each requiring 5 hours or more to complete;
- It has been reported to the Board that significant amounts of instructional time was lost to test preparation (both practicing for content and acclimating to the technology) leading up to and during the administration of the Smarter Balanced assessments in 2015;

**WHEREAS**, early feedback from 2015-16 indicates that implementation of the computerized Smarter Balanced assessment has identified ongoing challenges at school sites; and

**WHEREAS**, the Smarter Balanced tests showed a disproportionate amount of failing scores attributed to students of color, students with special needs, English Language Learners, and economically disadvantaged students; and

**WHEREAS**, the Seattle School District is a richly diverse community of 145 nationalities and 128 languages/dialects, comprised of 12 percent English Language Learners, 38.5 percent students of color, 14 percent students with special needs, and 39 percent of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch; and

**WHEREAS**, Board Policy No. 0030 establishes that “The Seattle School Board is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools” and to “fostering a barrier-free environment” in the name of educational and racial equity; and

**WHEREAS**, the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by the United States Congress in December 2015 reduces federal oversight requirements of public education and provides additional flexibility for states and districts to implement localized accountability mechanisms through normed High School Assessments and a state-level Innovative Assessment System pilot; and

**WHEREAS**, the ESSA authorizes states to establish a system which allows districts to utilize alternative, locally selected assessments and provides that school districts may

request approval to utilize such assessments as an alternative to the standard state-wide assessments; and

**WHEREAS**, RCW 28A.655.070 grants the Superintendent of Public Instruction with authority to propose modifications to the statewide assessments; and

**WHEREAS**, the ESSA also explicitly directs state or local educational agencies to inform parents of the policy, procedure, and/or parental right to allow students to opt out of state assessment.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Seattle School Board requests the State Legislature, Board of Education, and Superintendent of Public Instruction to promptly amend or adopt all laws and regulations necessary for Seattle Public Schools and other districts to implement alternative locally selected assessments in lieu of the Smarter Balanced assessments.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the School Board requests the Superintendent to include in the Seattle Public Schools state legislative agenda adoption of an alternate summative assessment framework to allow use of assessment other than the currently mandated Smarter Balanced Assessment.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the School Board requests approval from the Superintendent of Public Instruction to administer a locally selected, nationally-recognized normed high school assessment in 2016-17 or subsequent years, per Section 1111(B)(2)(H) of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, the School Board calls on the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish an Innovative Assessment System per Section 1204 of the Every Student Succeeds Act, based on nationally recognized normed assessments to maximize instructional time, and reduce adverse impacts on students.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, the Seattle School Board recognizes the right of parents/guardians to be notified of all student assessments including objectives and educational benefits and to receive the results from assessments in a timely manner.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, the Seattle School Board recognizes the right of students to voluntarily opt out of standardized assessments without penalty or retaliation.

ADOPTED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016

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Betty Patu, President

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Sue Peters, Vice-President

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Stephan Blanford, Member

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Richard Burke, Member

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Jill Geary, Member

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Leslie Harris, Member

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Scott Pinkham, Member

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Larry Nyland, Superintendent  
Secretary, Board of Directors  
Seattle School District No. 1  
King County, WA