



# **SCHOOL BOARD ACTION REPORT**

**DATE:** May 8, 2017  
**FROM:** Dr. Larry Nyland, Superintendent  
**LEAD STAFF:** Dr. Kyle Kinoshita, Chief of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction,  
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**For Intro:** May 17, 2017  
**For Action:** June 7, 2017

## **1. TITLE**

Adopting Policy No. 2080, Assessment

## **2. PURPOSE**

This Board Action Report adopts a new policy that details the purposes and types of assessment in Seattle Public Schools.

## **3. RECOMMENDED MOTION**

I move that the School Board adopt Board Policy No. 2080, Assessment, as attached to the Board Action Report.

## **4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- a. **Background:** Assessments are a critical pillar of the district's instructional approach. Assessments provide necessary data to teachers and school leaders that informs student progress, documents growth and guides future instruction within classrooms and across schools. As teachers and school leaders collaborate, they need common data from which to design successful supports and interventions for students. For this reason, it was determined that a clear statement of the purposes and types of assessments in Seattle Public Schools would be helpful.

This work started with a review of two existing policies that are related to the new policy: Board Policy No. 2090, Program Assessment and Evaluation, and Board Policy No. 2163, Supports and Interventions. These policies showed both duplicative content as well as gaps in guiding language on student assessment. In order to restructure the language of the first two policies, a defining policy on student assessment was deemed necessary to implement first.

The proposed policy includes sections on the philosophy of assessment, the purpose of assessment, the types of assessments, the process for selecting assessments, parent/guardian and student rights related to assessment, the district's commitment to meet state and federal mandates, and an annual review requirement. Staff believe the proposed policy language communicates needed clarity about how assessments play a critical role in providing individualized instruction to each and every student in district classrooms.

Teaching and Learning Division Staff have held multiple rounds of discussions with the Board about assessment policy language in the past year, including discussions at the Curriculum and Instruction Policy Committee on August 16, February 13, March 13, March 16 (a committee of the whole convened on this date), and April 3. Staff have incorporated major themes from board input and community engagement, as described in the community engagement section below.

- b. **Alternatives:** Not adopting a new student assessment policy. This is not recommended, as it provides needed clarity on the role of assessments within Seattle Public Schools (SPS).
- c. **Research:** Existing Seattle Schools policies and Superintendent procedures were reviewed (Policy No. 2090, Program Evaluation and Assessment, Policy No. 2163, Supports and Interventions) in addition to language from the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Seattle Education Association (SEA) pertaining to the SEA-SPS Assessment Steering Committee. District staff researched applicable state and federal laws related to student learning, performance goals, and student testing and records. The contents of assessment policies in other districts both in Washington State and nationally were collected as benchmarks in the creation of the proposed policy.

**5. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE**

There is no direct fiscal impact resulting from this action. The policy outlines Seattle School District’s beliefs around assessment, the purposes and types of assessment, legal requirements and parent/guardian and student rights and does not contain language that mandates resource allocation for new or existing assessments or professional development. Indirect impacts that are described in the policy are from typical activities such as contracting for access to assessments, professional development, technological support, and other work of SPS departments.

Expenditure:  One-time  Annual  Multi-Year  N/A

Revenue:  One-time  Annual  Multi-Year  N/A

**6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

With guidance from the District’s Community Engagement tool, this action was determined to merit the following tier of community engagement:

Not applicable

Tier 1: Inform

Tier 2: Consult/Involve

Tier 3: Collaborate

After completion of the External and Internal Public Expectations Worksheet, Tier 2: Consult/Involve was selected as the appropriate level of Community Engagement. Moderate perceived levels of public impact and high levels of public interest in participation led to high to very high External Public Expectations. However, Internal Public Expectations ranged from very low available funding and media interest to high potential for public influence on decision-making. Internal and External expectations averaged out to a recommended Tier 2 level of engagement. Per this recommendation, district staff obtained feedback and collaborated with numerous stakeholders in the development of the proposed Assessment policy.

A comprehensive community engagement plan was developed and enacted which included convening student focus groups, engaging parents at community meetings, consulting with district staff (teaching and learning leadership, members of the Principals' Association of Seattle Schools [PASS], central office leaders) and engaging the SEA-SPS Assessment Steering Committee.

Themes from feedback obtained throughout the community engagement process that were incorporated into the policy language were as follows:

- Desire for policy to use strengths-based language
- Desire for policy to clearly articulate purpose of assessment within Seattle Schools
- Desire for policy to provide clear guidance on parent and student rights
- Desire for policy to affirm the importance of a common assessment system

## **7. EQUITY ANALYSIS**

The Racial Equity Analysis Tool was consulted to determine the benefits and unintended consequences of a new assessment policy in Seattle Public Schools. In service of equitable opportunities and outcomes for each and every student, consistent understanding of assessment purposes and practices is necessary. The new assessment policy was reviewed with the aim of creating clarity regarding assessment in Seattle Schools in order to support our goal of closing opportunity gaps.

## **8. STUDENT BENEFIT**

Assessments are an essential component of teaching and learning and ensure that educators, families and staff have the information necessary to support each and every student, while providing students with a means of determining their progress along a learning continuum. An assessment policy will bring clarity to parents/guardians as well as building and district staff to ensure consistent understandings of the purposes and types of assessments used in Seattle Schools, as well as parent and student rights related to assessment.

## **9. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY**

- Amount of contract initial value or contract amendment exceeds \$250,000 (Policy No. 6220)
- Amount of grant exceeds \$250,000 in a single fiscal year (Policy No. 6114)
- Adopting, amending, or repealing a Board policy

Formally accepting the completion of a public works project and closing out the contract

Legal requirement for the School Board to take action on this matter

Board Policy No. \_\_\_\_\_, [TITLE], provides the Board shall approve this item

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **10. POLICY IMPLICATION**

The applicable policies relevant to this motion are Board Policy No. 2090, Program Evaluation and Assessment and Board Policy No. 2163, Supports and Interventions. This motion adopts a new assessment policy, which will allow for a subsequent review of the above referenced policies that currently contain duplicative language on assessment within Seattle Public Schools.

Some district-wide assessments involve contracted purchase amounts of more than \$250,000; any contract for assessment materials over this threshold would continue to require Board approval per Policy No. 6220, Procurement.

#### **11. BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

This motion was discussed at the Curriculum and Instruction Policy Committee meeting on May 8, 2017. The Committee reviewed the motion and recommended this item move forward for consideration by the full Board at the June 28, 2017 Board Meeting.

#### **12. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Upon approval of this motion, Building Leaders and District staff will be updated and provided with a copy of the new Policy and Procedure. The new Policy and Procedure will be posted on the internal and external Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction website.

#### **13. ATTACHMENTS**

- New Board Policy No. 2080, Assessment (for approval)
- New Superintendent Procedure No. 2080, Assessment (for reference)

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**I. Belief/Philosophy Statement**

The Board of Directors of Seattle Public Schools, in alignment with Policy No. 0010, Instructional Philosophy, believes that assessments are a critical component of our education system used to inform instruction through identification of student strengths, assessment of learning growth, and diagnosis of barriers and areas of support.

**II. Purpose of Assessment**

The district utilizes the core principles of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process which combines a district-wide balanced assessment framework, decision-making and a multi-tiered services delivery model to improve educational and social and emotional behavioral outcomes for all students. A balanced assessment framework is a system comprised of multiple assessments (formative and summative), used to gather a variety of types of information in order to support student learning. A common, balanced assessment framework, designed in partnership with the district’s labor partners per the collective bargaining agreement, allows a team of educators to know each student’s strengths and needs.

**Principles of Effective Assessment**

- Allow Families to:
  - Understand their child’s progress
  - Provide support outside of school
  - Celebrate learning and student accomplishments
- Allow Students to:
  - Demonstrate their learning and understanding
  - Reflect on their learning progress and outcomes
  - Guide future action (including setting learning goals)
- Allow Teachers to:
  - Collect data that both informs student progress and documents growth
  - Guide the direction of future instruction in regards to content and differentiation
  - Collaboratively reflect on student needs
- Allow Schools/Districts to:
  - Evaluate the impact of curriculum and instructional practices across school boundaries

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- Identify and respond to the performance patterns over time of schools or groups of student and staff populations
- Follow all legal mandates and contractual obligations

### **III. Types of Assessments:**

Assessments are presented in a variety of formats in order to serve different purposes, all of which may be utilized to inform instruction and programmatic decisions (e.g., curricula, professional development) in order to accelerate achievement for each and every student.

Four general types of assessments within the balanced assessment framework are used in Seattle Public Schools:

1. **Formative:** A range of formal and informal assessment procedures conducted on a short-term and frequent basis during the learning process in order to modify teaching activities to improve student learning. Formative assessments are generally classroom-based and integrated into the instructional process. (e.g., exit slips, observations of students, teacher questioning, short quizzes)
2. **Interim/Benchmark:** Administered periodically at set intervals during the school year to evaluate where students are in their learning progress toward attaining end-of-year learning standards. Interim assessments are more formal than classroom assessments. However, interim assessments play a formative role in helping educators make decisions about instruction. Interim assessments demonstrate which standards have been learned over time, and may be predictive of performance on summative assessments. Interim assessments may be standardized, normed against a comparative population, or judged against a set of criteria. (e.g., formal assessment of oral reading or computer scored assessment administered at the end of a quarter or trimester)
3. **Summative:** Used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement of learning standards at the conclusion of a **defined** instructional period such as the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year. Summative assessments may be standardized, normed against a comparative population, or judged against a set of criteria. (e.g., end-of-year state-mandated assessments)
4. **Performance:** Typically require students to complete a complex task. Performance assessments measure the acquisition of large bodies of diverse knowledge and skills over a period of time. (e.g. rubrics to assess

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writing assignment, science experiment, speech, presentation, performance, or long-term project)

#### **IV. Assessment Selection**

The School Board recognizes the need to select both formal and informal assessment tools that are high-quality, culturally responsive, provide valuable data, and are free from bias. All assessments for district-wide use will be reviewed by the School Board, with the exception of any test that is mandated for state or federal accountability. District-wide assessments are those that are funded centrally and used by all district schools for which they are intended. All assessments that have contracts exceeding the threshold set forth in Policy No. 6220 will be reviewed for approval by the School Board. Assessments should be reviewed with input from stakeholders, in alignment with any applicable procedures outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, with consideration for how each assessment reflects our district’s commitment to a balanced assessment framework.

The SPS-SEA Joint Assessment Steering Committee will review and identify standardized or common assessments to recommend for building, regional, or district-wide use, as well as developing recommendations for reducing the impact of testing on instructional time and student access to resources. Assessments recommended by the SPS-SEA Joint Assessment Steering committee will contain a discussion of why the assessment was chosen, including why the test is valid, reliable, and unbiased, with consideration for the needs of students receiving special education and English Language Learner services. In order to implement a balanced assessment framework, the SEA-SPS Assessment Steering committee will consider the time and impact of assessments on students. In addition, an Assessment Advisory Committee will be formed annually with representatives from Teaching and Learning, SEA, PASS and the community to provide implementation recommendations to the SPS-SEA Joint Assessment Steering Committee. In service of transparency, an annual assessment report will be prepared for the full board which indicates all assessments being used district-wide within Seattle Schools, as well as an overview of the selection process being utilized for assessments not mandated by State or Federal Requirements.

#### **V. Legal requirements:**

The District will implement and comply with the administration of all student assessments required by Washington state and federal law.

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**VI. Parent/Guardian & Student Rights Related to Assessment:**

The Board of Directors of Seattle Public Schools, in alignment with Policy No. 0010, Instructional Philosophy, believes that students have a right to a safe, secure, and supportive environment for instruction and assessment. Students have a right to participate in an assessment environment that is conducive to their best performance. Students who do not participate in district or state assessments for any reason have a right to appropriate learning activities and shall not be subjected to punitive treatment for non-participation.

Seattle Public Schools recognizes that families have a right to be informed of the assessments being utilized to support student learning and measure progress along standards. In addition, the School Board recognizes the right of parents/guardians to be notified of all state and district-mandated student assessments, including objectives and educational benefits, rights of refusal and effects of non-participation, and to receive the results from these assessments in a timely manner.

The district will make available a public calendar of required state and district assessments by August 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. Parents/guardians have the right to view their students state testing records per guidelines by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and appeal assessment scores required for graduation. Student information as related to assessment is protected under the guidelines of the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

**VII. Annual Review:**

The Superintendent shall annually review the assessment processes and procedures to determine if the purposes of the program are being accomplished.

Adopted: to be adopted

Revised:

Cross Reference: School Board Policies 0010, 2090, 2163

Related Superintendent Procedure: Superintended Procedure 2090SP

Previous Policies: N/A

Legal References: RCW 28A.230.095 Essential academic learning requirements and assessments

RCW 28A.655.010 Washington commission on student learning; RCW 28A.655.100

Performance goals—Reporting requirements; WAC 392-500-020 Pupil tests and records—

Tests; WAC 392-500-025 Pupil tests and records—Pupil personnel records

Management Resources:

# Superintendent Procedure 2080SP

## Assessment

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Larry Nyland, Superintendent



### **I. Policy Statement**

The Board of Directors of Seattle Public Schools, in alignment with Policy No. 0010, Instructional Philosophy, believes that assessments are a critical component of our education system to inform instruction through the identification of student strengths, assessment of learning growth, and diagnosis of barriers and areas of support.

### **II. Definitions**

Four general types of assessments within the balanced assessment framework are used in Seattle Public Schools:

- **Formative:** A range of formal and informal assessment procedures conducted on a short-term and frequent basis during the learning process in order to modify teaching activities to improve student learning. Formative assessments are generally classroom-based and integrated into the instructional process. (e.g., exit slips, observations of students, teacher questioning, short quizzes)
- **Interim/Benchmark:** Administered periodically at set intervals during the school year to evaluate where students are in their learning progress toward attaining end-of-year learning standards. Interim assessments are more formal than classroom assessments. However, interim assessments play a formative role in helping educators make decisions about instruction. Interim assessments demonstrate which standards have been learned over time, and may be predictive of performance on summative assessments. Interim assessments may be standardized, normed against a comparative population, or judged against a set of criteria. (e.g., formal assessment of oral reading or computer scored assessment administered at the end of a quarter or trimester)
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- **Performance:** Typically require students to complete a complex task. Performance assessments measure the acquisition of large bodies of diverse knowledge and skills over a period of time. (e.g. rubrics to assess writing assignment, science experiment, speech, presentation, performance, or long-term project)

### **III. Considerations**

- Classroom assessment involves collecting high-quality evidence of learning, calculating it accurately, and reporting it clearly. Learning requires clear targets, plenty of practice, and helpful feedback.
- Teachers create learning targets so students know where they are going. The learning targets are the learner outcomes defined by the Washington State learning standards.
- Students need clear feedback about how they are doing in relation to the learning targets. This comes in the form of verbal and written feedback, class discussion, feedback on assignments and formative assessments. Report cards provide a summary about how each student is doing in relation to the learning targets.
- Students need helpful advice and strategies to hit the expected learning targets. This learning advice is given in conversations, as verbal or written feedback on assignments, and in communication to parents (e.g. Parent/student/teacher conferences, report cards).
- Teachers have a legal responsibility to teach and assess the learner outcomes. Measuring learning is a significant responsibility; it is also complex work, enhanced by nuanced decision-making.
- Teachers' professional judgment is a vital ingredient in effective classroom assessment.

### **IV. Implementation**

#### **A. *Selection, Approval, and Communication of Assessments***

- Assessments administered to students in the system will be on the approved assessment list.
- Assessments are placed on the approved list according to the following guidelines:
  - State-mandated assessments are automatically placed on the approved assessment list;
  - District-selected and district-designed assessments will align with current SPS initiatives and Superintendent Goals.
- At the outset of an assessment adoption process, key stakeholders including the School Board, district staff, SEA and PASS should be informed of the following:
  - Intended purpose of the assessment
  - How results of the assessment will be reported/utilized
  - How families/community members will be engaged throughout selection process
- An Assessment Steering Committee comprised of Seattle Education Association (SEA) and District administrators will use, but are not limited by, the following criteria for evaluation and selection of approved assessments:
  - Alignment with the Washington State learning standards;
  - Support attainment of goals outlined in the SPS strategic plan and Continuous School Improvement Plans (CSIPs);
  - Validity and reliability of the assessment;
  - Alignment to Board Policy No. 0030, Educational and Racial Equity;

- Number of students impacted by the assessment;
- Time and resources required for administration;
- Effects of the assessment on delivery of instruction;
- Cost of the assessment; and
- Feasibility and utility of the assessment data.
- The Assessment Steering Committee's recommendations will be presented in writing to the Superintendent or designee for review and approval. School staff and administrators may adopt additional assessments as identified in their Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP).
- All assessments for district-wide use will be reviewed by the School Board's Curriculum and Instruction Policy Committee, with the exception of any test that is mandated for state or federal accountability. District-wide assessments are those that are funded centrally and used by all district schools for which they are intended. All assessments that have contracts exceeding the threshold set forth in Policy No. 6220 will be reviewed for approval by the School Board.
- A communication plan will be implemented to notify district employees, families and students about any newly approved assessments prior to implementation.

**B. *District-wide assessment calendar***

- District-mandated assessments are identified from the approved assessment list and scheduled within the District-wide annual assessment calendar by the Assessment Steering Committee.
- The Assessment Steering Committee reviews the District's annual assessment calendar, range of offerings within a balanced assessment framework, ease of application (i.e., logistics, technology, procedures, etc.), impact on instructional time, and utility related to informing instructional decisions.
- The calendar should include anticipated timeline for receiving results.

**C. *Assessments that are not governed by these procedures***

- Teacher-made assessments (classroom-based assessments) designed to assess achievement in individual classrooms;
- Assessments provided with approved SPS instructional materials or curricula;
- Assessments designed and selected by the teacher aligned to specific unit and learning outcomes (progress monitoring assessments, summative assessments); and
- Diagnostic tools administered by Special Education and Student Support Services.

**V. Roles and Responsibilities**

**A. *The Superintendent or his/her Designee will:***

- Appoint a central office administrator who serves as the Assessment Development Program Manager, and is responsible for the oversight of the implementation of state and local assessment administration and data reporting policies within SPS.

**B. *The Assessment Development Program Manager will:***

- Be the sole individual authorized to procure assessment materials for SPS;
- Create and publish the SPS assessment calendar which will include all testing windows for assessment administration and serve as the official document to guide school planning for such administration;
- Make available to the public the approved assessment list annually and no later than August 15th of each year;
- Coordinate all state-mandated assessments and related activities at the district level;
- Direct and coordinate the distribution of assessment materials to, and collection of assessment materials from, schools;
- Develop implementation procedures for state-mandated and district-selected assessments; and
- Investigate and report testing violations.

**C. *School Leaders will:***

- Ensure that teachers are aware of and adhere to the guiding Principles of Effective Assessment as described in Board Assessment Policy No. 2080, Assessment;
- Implement school and site level practices that ensure parents receive regular communication and timely access to information about student growth and achievement;
- Implement school and site level practices that ensure the assessment policy and procedures are communicated to parents/guardians and students;
- Designate a site-level assessment coordinator;
- Release the assessment coordinator to attend required training meetings;
- Distribute testing results as required and safeguard electronically stored data and assessment items within their schools;
- Provide ongoing notification to the school staff and community of the school's assessment calendar/schedule;
- Ensure that teachers receive training, professional development and support regarding assessment purposes, practices and application of assessment data to inform and tailor instruction; and
- Develop a plan that provides learning activities for students who do not participate in an assessment.
- Students shall not be subject to punitive treatment for non-participation in assessments.

**D. *Teachers will:***

- Communicate regular and timely information to parents and students regarding growth and achievement of students;
- Maintain confidential and accurate records documenting student progress;
- Use assessment results to modify programs and instructional strategies and approaches in response to student needs and abilities;
- Engage students in the assessment process; and

- Provide learning activities for students who do not participate in an assessment.
- Students shall not be subject to punitive treatment for non-participation in assessments.

Approved:

Revised:

Superintendent Procedure 2080SP

Cross Reference: School Board Policy No.