

## ND State Assessment Task Force

### Meeting Minutes

<b>Date:</b>	September 3, 2015	<b>Location:</b>	Brynhild Haugland, State Capitol, Bismarck	<b>Time:</b>	10:00 am – 4:00 pm CST
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<b>Attendance:</b>					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kirsten Baesler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Joseph Chiang	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ned Clooten
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Hoverson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cory Steiner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stacy Murschel
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jennifer Weber	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aimee Copas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Linda Hoag
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brain Johnson representing Jon Godfread	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scott Faul	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dave Wheeler
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ryan Townsend	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tracy Friesen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nick Archuleta
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Patty Barrette	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Representative Cindy Schreiber-Beck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Representative Dennis Johnson
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Senator Nicole Poolman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Senator Joan Heckaman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stacey Castleman
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gene Modin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tammy Owens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vanessa Anderson
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brenda Goettle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Lind	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lyn Hendry
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carrie Weippert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jim Kasper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wayne Trottier
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Robert Kaspari	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greg Gallagher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Laurie Matzke
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ann Ellefson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gerry Teevens		

#### Opening Comments – Superintendent Baesler

- Welcomed the task force members and thanked them for serving.  
This task force has important issues to discuss: 1) the state assessment and 2) the number of assessments students are taking throughout the year.
  - What do we value and receive from assessments and what do we want to maintain?
  - What are other states doing in regard to assessment?
  - What could we do differently in North Dakota and what do we want to do in North Dakota?
- We are a large diverse group of people and based on the members list, you can see which stakeholder group each individual represents. It is important for the group to remember we are all coming at this with a different perspective, but our goal is all the same...to do what is best for our students in North Dakota. It is Supt. Baesler's hope that the task force takes back to their respective stakeholder groups what we as a team are doing, collect their feedback, hear their voices, and share their perspectives with the team.
- Introduction of Dr. Rick Melmer

#### Opening Comments – Dr. Rick Melmer

- Welcomed the group and is looking forward to working with them. Hopes to help the state of North Dakota work towards a permanent solution to assessment.
  - Provided an overview of the day's agenda
  - Each member provided a brief introduction of themselves: name, where they live, what role they play in the North Dakota education system, why they are you here today, and what is their interest in the North Dakota assessment
  - Dr. Melmer provided a brief introduction/background of himself
- Review of Task Force Objectives
  - Developing a foundational knowledge of assessment
  - What is assessment and what can assessments provide

- All team members will receive foundational knowledge of assessment
- All team members will receive knowledge on past and current North Dakota assessment
- Team members will be provided/use common assessment vocabulary
- Design the components of assessments
- Task Force will recommend to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction an assessment system that it believes will best serve the state going forward
  - Group will provide a design of assessment and what components the assessment should have
  - Group will form the ground work and the foundation
- Establishment of Task Force Guidelines
  - Task force will meet through fall and into winter. Group will meet two or three times this fall.
  - The group should have established a good foundation by December, and the Task Force will need to make a decision on whether or not to have small group work and come back together as a large group in the spring.
  - Reminded the group it will be a challenge to get deep work done with 35 members.
  - Open to Webinar meetings.
  - By the end of the calendar year, we will have better of idea the future of the Task Force, how many times to meet, and in what context.
  - The hope is the final recommendation will reflect the deliberations and conversations of the Task Force, and provide a framework to support either legislation, if necessary, for future assessments or amendments to existing legislation.
  - There are laws in place today to guide the assessment system, so if laws need to be changed the Task Force will need to provide framework for the legislature when it meets in 2017.
  - Request For Proposal (RFP) could be involved and it is up to the Task Force to provide the framework for the RFP regarding student assessment
  - Top Three Task Force In-Scope of Authority
    1. Recommend purposes and uses of state assessment
    2. Recommend design characteristics the state assessment should have (for example formative, summative, interim, and end-of-course)
    3. Make recommendation for the process and supports needed to transition to a new assessment system in North Dakota

A question was posed wondering if the selection of Smarter Balanced has already been pre-determined.

The initial decision to use the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium came after a long and careful review of the various assessments that are out there for our use. The review was done in consultation with teachers, school administrators, higher education officials and Department of Public Instruction staff, including me.

Smarter Balanced is the assessment we chose to use in North Dakota and it is the assessment tool that is in place today. We have legal requirements to use some type of assessment and we don't have the kind of quick turnaround time that would allow us to drop one test and go to an alternative test. The procurement/selection process takes a full year.

June would have been when we would have needed to start securing a new assessment process for a state the size of North Dakota. There were things we learned from the test and its challenges

and things we are still learning. We are now getting the results about the impact experience. It would have been premature to make a decision in June about what we are going to be doing for next year about state assessment without having the information necessary to make a solid and informed decision.

The 2016 assessment will be the Smarter Balanced assessment. At the end of 2016, we will have two years' experience and results with Smarter Balanced that will allow us as a task force to make an informed decision on the future of North Dakota assessments. In addition, there is a current challenge in our district courts that may result in a different decision about the Smarter Balanced assessment. We as a team are here to make recommendations.

Only two tests are required by the federal government: 1.) State Assessment, and 2.) NAEP test grades in 4 & 8.

The State Legislature requires two additional tests: 1.) Formative (NWEA) once during the year, and 2.) ACT for 11<sup>th</sup> graders

All other assessments given in the districts are a school district decision.

What do local districts value or gain by giving additional assessments? Some Task Force members wondered if those valuable components could be incorporated to possibly create a state assessment to eventually minimize the time students are spending on assessments.

A question was posed if information would be provided to the Task Force on how much prep time and actual test time was used to give the Smarter Balanced assessment.

Laws state that the accountability assessment must be aligned to the standards being taught.

There were two test start delays and one 20-minute outage that caused disruption to assessment time. A validation study is being done to see how those disruptions influenced test results. Smarter Balanced is spending resources to ensure this type of disruption will not happen again.

The same technology challenges and scheduling adjustments existed when NWEA first rolled out.

If the required federal government tests are not given, it would put schools in jeopardy of losing their Title I funds and we would be breaking the ESEA law. The ESEA law is operating under an expired reauthorization act since 2007.

Two versions of NCLB reauthorization of both the House and Senate were provided by the facilitators to the Task Force. Both versions still require state testing.

A question was posed if the group will be asked look into actual assessment questions and content. There is a possibility of the development of smaller, subgroup work to dive deeper into assessment questions and content area and report back to the large group.

- Outline of the Task Force Norms provided
- Establishment of Group Rules provided
- Meetings will be recorded and minutes will be taken by NDDPI and posted for viewing

- Focus is on the consensus of the group
- Agendas and presenters will be approved by NDDPI with the input of facilitators and Task Force members

Tonette Salazar and Julie Rowland Woods from Education Commission of the States (ECS) gave a presentation on Overview of Assessment Practices. ECS PowerPoint is available on our website at <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/about/taskforce/>.

Discussion was held on the difference between high stakes vs. low stakes assessment

A **high-stakes test** is any test used to make important decisions about students, educators, schools, or districts, most commonly for the purpose of accountability—i.e., the attempt by federal, state, or local government agencies and school administrators to ensure that students are enrolled in effective schools and being taught by effective teachers. In general, “high stakes” means that test scores are used to determine punishments (such as sanctions, penalties, funding reductions, negative publicity), accolades (awards, public celebration, positive publicity), advancement (grade promotion or graduation for students), or compensation (salary increases or bonuses for administrators and teachers).

A **low-stakes test** would be used to measure academic achievement, identify learning problems, or inform instructional adjustment, among other purposes. What distinguishes a high-stakes test from a low-stakes test is not its form (how the test is designed) but its function (how the results are used). For example, if test results are used to determine an important outcome, such as whether a student receives a high school diploma, the test would be considered a high-stakes test regardless of whether it’s a multiple-choice exam, an oral exam, or an essay exam. Low-stakes tests generally carry no significant or public consequences- the results typically matter far more to an individual teacher or student than to anyone else and scores are not used to burnish or tarnish the reputation of teachers or schools.

#### Summative Assessment Required Testing

- English/Language Arts grades 3-8; once in grades 10-12
- Math grades 3-8; once in grades 10-12
- Science once in grades 3-5, 6-9, 10-12
- NAEP: reading/math in grades 4 & 8 for states receiving Title I funding

## Required Test by Law

- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
- State Assessment

	<b>NAEP Assessments</b>	<b>State Assessments</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>Measure student performance nationally and report changes over time</p> <p>Provide results for the nation, states, and some urban districts</p> <p>Allow comparisons between states and the nation</p>	<p>Measure progress of schools, districts, and states toward adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals as required by federal law</p> <p>Provide state, district, school, and individual student data</p> <p>Track progress toward state education goals</p> <p>Measure performance according to each state's content standards</p>
<b>Frameworks</b>	<p>Are developed by the National Assessment Governing Board to specify what students should know and be able to do in each content area at a given grade level</p> <p>Are not aligned to any particular content standards</p> <p>Reflect the knowledge and experience of subject area experts, school administrators, policymakers, teachers, parents, and others</p>	<p>Are set and defined by each state based on its content standards</p> <p>Include input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including policymakers and educators</p>
<b>Achievement Levels (also referred to as "Performance Standards")</b>	<p>Are measured according to three specified achievement levels—<i>Basic</i>, <i>Proficient</i>, and <i>Advanced</i>—set by the National Assessment Governing Board</p> <p>Define <i>Proficient</i> as "competency over challenging subject matter"</p>	<p>Are measured by achievement levels that are set and defined by each state individually</p> <p>Define <i>Proficient</i> as "at grade level" performance</p>
<b>About the Assessments</b>	<p>Include multiple-choice, short constructed-response, extended-response, and computer-based questions</p> <p>Assess students with disabilities and English language learners based on NAEP-allowable accommodations</p> <p>Are administered by NAEP field staff during regular school hours</p>	<p>Consist of a variety of formats, which vary by state, such as multiple-choice, constructed-response, performance events, portfolios, alternative assessments, and computer-based assessments</p> <p>Assess students with disabilities and English language learners according to the state's accommodation policy</p> <p>Are administered by school and district personnel during regular school hours</p>
<b>Assessment Participation</b>	<p>Assess representative samples of students in grades 4 and 8 from each state in reading and mathematics every other year</p> <p>Periodically assess national and state samples of students at grades 4, 8, and 12 in other subject areas such as science and writing</p> <p>Do not require student participation but highly encourage it</p> <p>May exclude students with disabilities and English language learners who require test accommodations other than those allowed by NAEP</p>	<p>Assess all students in grades 3 through 8 every year in reading and mathematics</p> <p>Assess students in grades 3 through 8 in science at least once in elementary school (3-5) and once in middle school (6-8)</p> <p>Assess high school students at least once in reading, mathematics, and science</p> <p>Offer alternative or modified assessments to students with disabilities and English language learners when necessary</p> <p>Require participation by all schools</p>
<b>Assessment Results</b>	<p>Are used by the President, Congress, and state leaders to develop ways to develop educational improvements in the nation</p> <p>Allow comparisons between states and the nation</p> <p>Allow trend comparisons over time</p> <p>Do not report performance for individual schools, students, or most school districts</p>	<p>Are used by governors, state legislatures, state leaders, and state educators to set education policy and examine school and group performance</p> <p>Are used by teachers, parents, and other school staff to review individual student performance</p> <p>Aid in making local decisions about curriculum and instruction</p> <p>May also be used for promotion/retention decisions and/or graduation requirements</p> <p>May be used to inform state accreditation decisions</p>

A more detailed explanation is given in a handout on the 2014-2015 Statewide Assessment Grades 3-12 by each State. This handout is available at <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/uploads/1263/9031550Ways.pdf>.

### North Dakota is a Non-Waiver State

The Obama Administration awarded waivers under the No Child Left Behind Act to adopt certain education ideas, such as teacher evaluations tied to student test scores. In exchange, states would get flexibility from some of the core tenets of the law, such as that 100 percent of students be proficient in math and reading by 2014. Therefore North Dakota as a Non-Waiver state is not operating under and ESEA Flex Waiver.

Discussion was held on states that opt out of standardized testing vs. states that do not opt out.

Junella Feickert – Summary of the Assessment picture in North Dakota. (PowerPoint is available on our website at <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/about/taskforce/>).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): Measures and provides a report on how well a school is doing. The students' scores are the measurement.

This year AYP report are based on three categories:

- Participation Rate
- Graduation Rate
- Attendance Rate

Student scores will not be used this year due to the AYP Freeze.

Program Improvement funding is available to those districts. Currently North Dakota has an estimated 180 schools in program improvement and 120 districts in program improvement.

If reauthorization does occur, control will be returned to the states regarding their accountability plan. The reauthorization of ESEA is significantly overdue. Both the House and Senate have passed bills and now a conference committee is being created to work out the differences.

Referred team to our State Assessment website for additional resources:  
[https://www.nd.gov/dpi/students-parents/state\\_assessment/](https://www.nd.gov/dpi/students-parents/state_assessment/)

Provided Smarter Balanced website: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/>

### Task Force Input

Results of today...      What did you learn?  
Future topics or issues you want to talk about?  
What you still need to know?

### Parking Lot

Hours of required testing time  
Document of ESEA currently view  
Current statue of guiding assessments in North Dakota  
List of assessment acronyms  
Cross Walk between Smarter Balanced and PARCC  
Statewide side-by-side comparison of the tests each North Dakota district is taking

<b>Next Meeting:</b>					
<b>Date:</b>	October 6, 2015	<b>Location:</b>	Bismarck Kelly Inn – Embassy Room	<b>Time:</b>	10:00 am – 4:00 pm CST