



Ohio House Finance and Appropriations Committee
Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee
Testimony of Melanie Elsey
HB1
March 11, 2009

Chairman Dyer, Ranking Member Morgan and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education, we appreciate the opportunity to provide a bit of a look-back to similar state assessment proposals and counterviewpoints to testimony previously delivered by the Ohio Department of Education.

The testimony provided by Superintendent Delisle has expressed clear intention to shift the focus of the State's assessment system to evaluate and score each student's interpersonal characteristics as a means of earning a high school diploma. On February 11th she stated, "During the past 18 months, the State Board of Education developed an insightful series of steps in a report issued by the Education in the Global Economy (EDGE) Subcommittee, *Educating Ohio's Students for Success in the Global Economy*. The EDGE Subcommittee was created to engage business and industry in **identifying skills, attitudes, and behaviors students would need to have as they exit high school** and continue traveling life's road in an increasingly complex world."

The work of the EDGE subcommittee included materials and research from a number of external organizations. From the subcommittee's work, we suspected that measurable 21st Century Skills would include: adaptability, managing complexity, curiosity, creativity, risk taking, collaboration, interpersonal skills, social responsibility, civic responsibility, ability to prioritize, global awareness, etc. This has now been confirmed with the policy changes proposed in HB1.

3301.079(A)(1) would require the State Board to **adopt academic standards** that would include the development of "skill sets" for EACH grade level K-12: *creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, flexibility, adaptability, initiative, self-direction, social skills, cross cultural skills, productivity, accountability, leadership, and responsibility, etc.*

3301.079(C) would require that "assessments" be developed and **aligned with the academic standards required in division (A)(1) which includes the affective "skill sets.**

3301.0712 (B) The proposed assessment system would consist of 4 parts:

1. nationally standardized assessment selected by the SPI and Chancellor (NOT the State Board of Education, which would be a public process);
2. series of end-of-course exams selected by the SPI and Chancellor (NOT the State Board of Education, which would be a public process);
3. *community service project which will assess the student's civic responsibility, leadership skills, collaboration skills, cultural awareness, global competence, flexibility, adaptability, and self-direction;*
4. *senior project* (individual or group) which *will assess the mastery of core knowledge in a subject area chosen by the student, written and verbal communication skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, real world and interdisciplinary learning, creative and innovative thinking, technology and media skills, personal management, self-direction, time management, work ethic, enthusiasm.*

3301.0712(C)(1) The State Superintendent and the Chancellor (NOT the State Board of Education, which has a public process) will jointly designate the scoring rubrics and required overall composite score for the assessment system to assess whether each student is college or career ready.

The effort to **expand graduation standards to include the affective domain** is not new. How could anyone establish objective graduation standards to *measure* the student's interpersonal qualities and social skills? How can these highly intuitive areas be measured fairly and without discrimination or bias?

These are the same questions we asked 16 years ago when similar reforms were proposed to be amended into the state's budget [HB 152, 119th General Assembly]. It was inappropriate in 1993 and rejected by the Democratic majority at that time. It continues to be inappropriate and constitutionally suspect today.

February 1992: The Ohio General Assembly passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 53, which created the Education Goals and Strategy Commission [15 members]. It was charged with "developing a consensus for articulating shared education goals for Ohio and for the initiation of systemic change to meet these goals." It was also directed to appoint two education panels, which would – 1) **develop specific measurable outcomes Ohio expects for its children** as a result of participating in the public school system; and 2) identify barriers to change within the education system and creative ways to overcome these barriers.

April 9, 1992: State Superintendent Ted Sanders issued a memo to the committee responsible for restructuring the minimum standards for elementary and secondary schools. His charge to the committee was three-fold:

1. Address individual student performance, accountability and school and student improvement.
2. **Focus on the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that students will need** to live, learn, and work in a global society.
3. Identify state and local outcomes, standards, and indicators.

December 1992: The ODE published a document entitled, "Removing the Barriers: Unleashing Ohio's Learning Power." In part it stated, "A performance based education system cannot simply mean teaching to one particular type of test. The challenge is to **design and implement an assessment system that provides multiple indicators including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains**, e.g. thinking skills, social skills, and physical skills." (p. 10)

February 1993: The ODE conducted regional meetings and sent out more than 55,000 surveys entitled, "An Invitation to the Future: Raising Expectations and Achievement." The purpose of the surveys was to generate public input on the 11 education goals drafted by the Education Goals and Strategies Commission and the 25 outcomes (based on the goals) drafted by the Ohio Learner Outcomes Panel.

The Leader's Guide to the survey had a glossary, which included the following definitions:

Learner Goals = statements describing what will be **expected of those who graduate** from Ohio schools

Learner Outcomes = statements that **define what students graduating from high school should know, be able to do, and be like**; descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can be achieved through a variety of subject matter disciplines

Performance Indicator = one measurement of the status of a learner outcome from an authentic assessment of student learning **to ensure that the required knowledge, skills, and attitudes have been met.**

[review 1993 attached materials / lists of sample outcomes]

In 1993 parents asked, how does the state establish a standard for a student's attitudes and behaviors? What would the cut-off score for a student's capacity to exhibit an optimal sense of well being or ability to demonstrate open-mindedness? What does that rubric look like?

In the second portion of the attached materials I have provided examples of how the standards based system has *not* served Ohio students well, contrary to previous testimony provided by Department staff.

[review sample assessments]

For these reasons we respectfully ask that you reject the proposed expansion of the state assessment system. It will be a significant disservice to thousands of Ohio graduates and their families



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