

August 20, 2012

Good Morning,

When talking to school leaders across the state about the changes coming with the implementation of the new learning standards and assessments beginning in 2014-2015, the response often includes excitement for the fewer, deeper standards mixed with plenty of questions about what the new assessments will look like for Ohio's students.

I am pleased to let you know that we are now able to provide a glimpse of the future with the release of sample test questions in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. These samples offer an early look at the next generation of assessments and how critical content from the standards will be used.

Last week, ODE released sample online testing questions for science and social studies, which can be found [here](#) (username: airitemdemo, password: shoelaces). Today, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) will release a set sample test items for English language arts and mathematics, which will be available this afternoon [here](#).

These prototypes offer a first look at the transition to online testing in your district. I encourage you to take some time to review the samples and share them with your staff to generate professional conversations regarding the instructional shifts necessary for continued implementation.

I wish you all a successful year as you welcome students back to the classroom this week and next. Your role in enriching the lives of Ohio's students does not go unnoticed. Thank you for all you have done and will continue to do as the 2012-2013 school year officially begins.

Sincerely,



Michael Sawyers

Note: Below are news items of interest to all superintendents and principals. Please share these items as appropriate with other suggested educators who will benefit from the information.

For School superintendents and treasurers – USDOE RttT District Competition application process announced-First deadline Aug. 30, Law addresses changes to Body Mass Index waiver requirements, Federal policy on immigration may prompt increased requests for school records, Seminar offered for families with blind or visually impaired children

For curriculum directors, teachers and school counselors – Professional learning series focuses on Moving Standards into Instruction, ODE seeking participants in Performance Assessment Pilot

For School superintendents and treasurers

USDOE RttT District Competition application process announced – first deadline Aug. 30

The U.S. Department of Education has announced the application process to apply for the 2012 Race to the Top (RtT) District Competition. USDOE has nearly \$400 million available to support school districts as they implement reforms that personalize learning, close achievement gaps and take full advantage of 21st century tools that prepare students for the demands of college and careers. USDOE plans to award 15-25 school districts across the nation between \$5 and \$40 million each over four years. Applications from school districts in states currently participating in the Race to the Top program, including Ohio, will receive priority consideration.

Interested districts must submit their intent to apply to USODE by **Aug. 30**. Technical assistance on this process in the form of webinars and conference calls will be offered over the coming weeks. Applications are due **Oct. 30**, with awards being announced no later than Dec. 31, 2012. More information, including the application, can be found [here](#).

Law addresses changes to Body Mass Index waiver requirements

School districts, community schools, STEM schools and chartered nonpublic schools are no longer required to conduct Body Mass Index (BMI) screenings for students. The passage of the Mid-Biennium Budget Bill (Sub. S.B. 316) changed the language to allow BMI screenings to be optional, not mandatory.

Since the screenings are no longer required by law, schools do not need to obtain a waiver from ODE if they do not elect to conduct the screenings. Please do not submit any further waiver requests to ODE, since they are no longer necessary. If your district elects to conduct the screenings, please remember to send your data to the Ohio Department of Health.

Federal policy on immigration may prompt increased requests for school records

Because of recent federal actions to defer deportation proceedings for undocumented immigrants who meet certain criteria, schools may be receiving requests for copies of school records from some students.

In June 2012, the federal government announced that it will offer “deferred action” to immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and who meet other specific requirements. The program grants two-year deportation deferrals and work permits to illegal immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children.

Starting last week, individuals are allowed to apply for “deferred action.” Part of the application process requires individuals to show evidence of having lived in the U.S. continuously since June 15, 2007. It also requires them to show that they are currently in school or have graduated, obtained a certificate of completion from high school, or a GED. The application also may include proof of diplomas, GED certificates, report cards and school transcripts.

Click [here](#) for more information about the “deferred action” policies. The website also contains information about enrolling students in public schools, regardless of their citizenship or the immigration status of their parents, a fact sheet, and questions and answers for school districts, parents and community members.

Seminar offered for families with blind or visually impaired children

The American Council of the Blind in Ohio and the Ohio Lions Foundation will present the sixth annual *Building Blocks for a Brighter Future* on Sept. 29 at the Ohio State School for the Blind (OSSB) in Columbus. The seminar provides parents the tools they need to advocate for their children who are blind or visually impaired and to acquire knowledge about adaptive equipment. Teachers for students with visual impairments (VI) also are welcome.

Participants will be able to get hands-on experience with the latest technology. Colleen Miller, former state coordinator for the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, will be the keynote speaker.

Registration begins at 9:30 a.m., with the program running from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The cost is \$10 per family, which includes lunch. Some stipends are available for families who would need to drive long distances to attend and for teachers to purchase supplies to support their VI programming. The

registration deadline is **Sept. 24**.

To register, contact Ann Gazelle at (800) 835-2226 or email acbo.director@gmail.com.

For curriculum directors, teachers and school counselors

Professional learning series focuses on Moving Standards into Instruction

Teachers throughout Ohio are looking at how Ohio's new learning standards will change classroom teaching in the 2013-2014 school year. To support this shift in instruction, ODE is offering four training sessions for curriculum and instruction supervisors, professional development facilitators and other district leaders on how to implement the shifts at the district and classroom levels.

Participants will learn about the common instructional shifts expected for all subject areas and types of learners, as well as shifts within specific subjects. They also will take away modules they can use to facilitate implementation in their districts; examine examples of model classroom units based on the instructional shifts; and join fellow educators in designing their own high-quality instruction.

Information, including an overview of the series and details about the four trainings are available [here](#). To register for the regional sessions, see the dates, times and locations in [STARS](#).

ODE seeking participants in Performance Assessment Pilot

ODE is seeking teachers to take part in a new phase of the Ohio Performance Assessment Pilot Project (OPAPP). The Phase 4 study will focus on testing of online professional development modules that can be accessed either in the teacher's classroom or their homes.

Participants will learn how to:

- Give feedback in the context of the learning task;
- Develop strategies for re-engaging students to improve their work products;
- Write learning tasks;
- Align assessment tasks with learning tasks; and
- Score tasks.

The program has a limited number of openings for high school teachers in the areas of English language arts (grades 9 through 11), Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, trigonometry/pre-calculus, chemistry, physical science/earth science, biology, physics, U.S. government, world history, economics, U.S. history, agricultural science, business and family and consumer science. This cohort is NOT limited to RttT LEAs.

Districts will be provided funds to reimburse teachers for travel to Columbus in either May or December 2013 for scorer training and scoring of the assessments.

For more information, please contact Lauren Monowar-Jones at Lauren.Monowar-Jones@education.ohio.gov. For more information about OPAPP, click [here](#) and scroll down to the Video Newsletters to see what teachers say about how OPAPP is transforming their classrooms.

ODE is interested in your thoughts about how EdConnection fulfills your information needs. Please send any comments or suggestions to Superintendent@education.ohio.gov.

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