



Responsible Office: Office of Academics

BOARD POLICY 6400

ASSESSMENT

PURPOSE

The Board of Trustees, through its Core Beliefs, is committed to ensuring all students graduate college- and career-ready, through the consistent application of high-quality effective instruction, balanced assessment, and a rigorous accountability system. The Board of Trustees is further committed to closing the achievement gap by implementing culturally responsive practices throughout the District, as well as engaging families and the community. The following policy, guiding principles, and practices support these commitments.

The Board of Trustees, consistent with the District practice, recognizes that an ongoing balanced assessment system is necessary in order to maximize student success on the Pathway to College and Career Readiness. Such an assessment system provides valid and reliable data from multiple measures to inform curricular and instructional decisions and facilitates the judicious use of assessment information by a variety of users to problem solve and answer questions about student progress as needed.

POLICY

1. Guiding Principles

- a. All pupils are assessed using multiple and varied evaluative tools that measure their academic growth and proficiency over time and that align with the academic rigor and high-quality effective instruction they receive in the classroom.
- b. Washoe County School District supports the use of a research-based balanced assessment system that:
 - i. Encourages analysis of results and assists in planning for instructional improvement as established by the District Strategic Plan, school performance plans, and best practices for Tier 1 of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS/RTI), research-based core instruction in the general classroom that is explicit, differentiated by student need, and includes flexible grouping and active student engagement;

- ii. Identifies student needs based on Nevada Academic Content Standards to inform school and classroom decisions on differentiated instruction and intervention;
 - iii. Gathers and reports data that are accurate, meaningful, and professionally sound;
 - iv. Fulfills accountability requirements as established by state law and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA);
 - v. Tracks statistical data in order to view trends or patterns of performance or deficiency and sets meaningful school, teacher and student performance targets; and
 - vi. Establishes comparisons among students in the District, in the state, and in the nation.
- c. Washoe County School District, in conjunction with the Nevada Department of Education, systematically applies professional development and technical training, communication and support to teachers, administrators, support staff, and families at all schools to ensure that assessment practices are culturally responsive and standardized. Further, Washoe County School District partners with the Nevada Department of Education to ensure that practices within the balanced assessment system reflect 21st Century Competencies.

2. Guiding Practices

- a. Administer all assessments in accordance with federal, state, and District laws, statutes, and policies:
 - i. In accordance with state statutes, all students in attendance during Nevada State assessment administration shall participate in the testing process.
 - ii. All District staff, students, and parents/guardians will follow the professional and ethical requirements of assessment administration and use of results as outlined in the following annual publications:
 - 1. Procedures for the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program (Nevada Department of Education);
 - 2. Washoe County School District Plan to Ensure the Security of State and District Mandated Assessments;

3. A Primer for Testing: Policies and Professional Expectations (Washoe County School District); and
 4. All administrator and test coordinator manuals associated with each Nevada and Washoe County School District assessment, as well as those of national tests such as ACT, SAT, PLAN, PSAT, and Advanced Placement Exams
- b. Provide professional development and communication at all levels of the District, including families, giving all teachers and leaders the skills and knowledge they need to develop and use high quality assessments with students, and appropriately respond to data from the balanced assessment system.

DEFINITIONS

1. A Balanced Assessment System includes a variety of ongoing assessments both for and of learning to provide teachers and students with the information they need to progress along the Pathway to College/Career Readiness and is comprised of:
 - a. Summative Assessments – federal, state, District, and classroom assessments given at a point in time to measure and monitor student learning. They provide feedback to educators, students, parents/guardians, and community members and are used to make adjustments in instructional programs, report student progress, identify and place students, and grade students. They are assessments of learning.
 - b. Interim Assessments - assessments designed to coordinate with large-scale state assessments and administered at defined intervals—often quarterly—to gauge student progress. An interim or benchmark test is one that is administered periodically (perhaps once every two or three months) to measure students' status with respect to mastery of important curricular outcomes. They can be assessments of or for learning.
 - c. Formative Assessment - "...a [planned] process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes." (FAST SCASS & Popham, 2008). It is a learning partnership that involves teachers and their students taking stock of where they are in relation to their learning goals. It is an ongoing, dynamic process that involves far more than frequent testing, and measurement of student learning is just one of its components. They are assessments for learning.

2. College and Career Ready: A high school graduate who is ready to pursue preparation for a highly-skilled career and is admissible to and prepared to succeed in first-year, credit-bearing classes without remediation at a 2- or 4-year college, technical or trade school, or apprenticeship program. A “career” differs from a “job” in that a career offers the opportunity to advance and develop professionally (Education Alliance of Washoe County, June 2012).
3. 21st Century Competencies: The skills and abilities deemed essential for a person to lead a successful life in the context of the demands of the 21st Century, such as the applied skills of critical thinking, creativity and innovation, communication, and collaboration (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2009; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011).

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. All Nevada and Washoe County School District summative assessments shall be administered in a standardized manner.
2. Students, teachers, administrators and support staff at all District schools use data from the balanced assessment system to improve student achievement and maximize student success on the Pathway to College and Career Readiness.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

1. This policy reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan and is aligned to District initiatives, resources, guidelines and documents.
2. This policy aligns with the following WCSD governing documents:
 - a. Board Policy 6200, Literacy
 - b. Board Policy 6300 Mathematics
 - c. Board Policy 6500 Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Classes
 - d. Administrative Regulation 6201, Literacy
 - e. Administrative Regulation 6300, Mathematics
 - f. Administrative Regulation 6500, Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Classes
3. This policy aligns with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapters 385, State Administrative Organization, and 389, Examinations, Courses, Standards, Diplomas, and specifically:
 - a. NRS 385.3455 – 385.451, Statewide System of Accountability

- b. NRS 389.004 – 389.648, Examinations, Courses, Standards and Graduation
 - c. NAC 389.048 – 389.083, Examinations, Courses, Standards and Diplomas
4. This policy complies with federal laws and regulations, to include:
- a. Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.
 - b. Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which emphasizes equal access to education and establishes high standards and accountability.
 - c. Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, a federal law which protects the privacy of student education records.
 - d. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities that are like those provided to individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion.

REVIEW AND REPORTING

- 1. This document shall be reviewed as part of the bi-annual review and reporting process, following each regular session of the Nevada Legislature. The Board of Trustees shall receive notification of any required changes to the policy as well as an audit of the accompanying governing documents.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
6/24/2014	1.0	Adopted