



# SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item 5.2

**Meeting Date:** June 30, 2021

**Subject:** Update on Student Common Assessments

- Information Item Only
- Approval on Consent Agenda
- Conference (for discussion only)
- Conference/First Reading (Action Anticipated: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Conference/Action
- Action
- Public Hearing

**Division:** Academic, Legal, Strategy and Continuous Improvement, and Continuous Improvement and Accountability Services

**Recommendation:** N/A

**Background/Rationale:** In accordance with SCUSD’s core values and guiding principles, which recognize that our system is inequitable by design and that we vigilantly work to give all students an equal opportunity to learn, grow, and reach the greatness, the District seeks to update the Board on the history, rationale, and status of student common assessments.

In 2016, former Superintendent Jose Banda signed an MOU requiring the District to obtain agreement from SCTA prior to implementing any District-wide assessments of students that are not state mandated (hereinafter referred to as “student common assessments,” “District common assessments,” and “common assessments”). Following numerous efforts to meet with SCTA and reach a consensus regarding student common assessments to no avail, in 2019, the District implemented its system of common assessments and SCTA filed a grievance. In January 2021, an arbitrator found the MOU was enforceable.

For the 2020-21 school year, end of year (EOY) assessments in ELA and Math were administered in lieu of the SBAC per flexibility related to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic as provided by the California Department of Education, to provide English Learner students with additional opportunities to be reclassified as fluent English proficient (RFEP) students, and to be used to help inform math placement recommendations. EOY assessments in ELA were administered to students in grades K-11, and EOY math assessments were administered to students in grades 3-8 and 11.

**Financial Considerations:** N/A

**LCAP Goal(s):** College, Career and Life Ready Graduates

**Documents Attached:**

1. Executive Summary

**Estimated Time of Presentation:** 60 minutes

**Submitted by:** Christine Baeta, Chief Academic Officer  
Vincent Harris, Chief Continuous Improvement and Accountability  
Raoul Bozio, In House Counsel  
Dr. Ed Eldridge, Director, Strategy, and Continuous Improvement  
Mikila Fetzer, Coordinator, Math  
Jeannette Schroeder, Coordinator, English Language Arts

**Approved by:** Jorge A. Aguilar, Superintendent

# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Academic, Legal, Strategy and Continuous Improvement, and Continuous Improvement and Accountability Services

Update on Student Common Assessments

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### I. Overview/History of Department or Program

In 2016, former Superintendent Jose Banda signed an MOU requiring the District to obtain agreement from SCTA prior to implementing any District-wide assessments of students that are not state mandated (hereinafter referred to as “student common assessments,” “District common assessments,” and “common assessments”). Following numerous efforts to meet with SCTA and reach a consensus regarding student common assessments to no avail, in 2019, the District implemented its system of common assessments and SCTA filed a grievance. In January 2021, an arbitrator found the MOU was enforceable.

In recent years, the state of California has adopted more rigorous college and career focused curricular standards in English Language Arts (ELA), English Language Development (ELD), mathematics, and science and has made substantial changes to state level assessment. As a result, districts have had to critically evaluate their local assessments and assessment practices. An analysis of current District-administered assessments reveals that the District is overly reliant on assessments provided by the state for information on how students are progressing. These assessments are only administered on an annual basis and often there is a lengthy timelag from when the assessments are administered to when data are available for use which makes it difficult for this information to be used to impact instruction for students.

The District has developed a comprehensive system of District common assessments, which are designed to be administered three to four times a year and include foundational reading, English Language Arts, and math. The assessments at the start of the year are designed to assess unfinished learning of the previous year’s learning. The remaining assessments are designed to provide stakeholders with ongoing information about student performance and progress on grade level standards.

For the 2020-21 school year, end of year (EOY) assessments in ELA and Math were administered in lieu of the SBAC per flexibility related to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic as provided by the California Department of Education, to provide English Learner students with additional opportunities to be reclassified as fluent English proficient (RFEP) students, and to be used to help inform math placement recommendations. EOY assessments in ELA were administered to students in grades K-11, and EOY math assessments were administered to students in grades 3-8 and 11.

### II. Driving Governance:

SCUSD Core Value:

We recognize that our system is inequitable by design and we vigilantly work to confront and interrupt inequities that exist to level the playing field and provide

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opportunities for everyone to learn, grow and reach their greatness.

SCUSD Guiding Principle:

All students are given an equal opportunity to graduate with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options.

Vital to actualizing this core value and this principle is having a “comprehensive, coherent and continuous system of assessment” (CA ELA/ELD Framework, 2014) to monitor student progress and ensure that students graduate with the requisite knowledge and skills to meet the demands of any post-secondary option they choose. The District has established the expectation for monitoring and reporting on student progress in various Board policies, including BP 5121, BP 5123, BP 6162.5. California Education Code also specifies that districts use an assessment of academic achievement in English language Arts along with the state’s English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) to make decisions about English Learner reclassification (EDC TITLE 1 GENERAL EDUCATION CODE PROVISIONS [1. -32500]).

#### III. Budget:

District common assessments are intended to monitor student achievement and inform academic, social-emotional, and career and college readiness intervention efforts.

#### IV. Goals, Objectives and Measures:

The District needs to have a comprehensive system of assessments to monitor student progress and to be able to provide objective information to students, parents, teachers administrators, the superintendent and the board of education on whether or not students are making adequate progress towards grade level readiness and meeting standards. Having regular, reliable information on student progress will enable the District to provide timely interventions to students as a necessary part of a multi-tiered system of support.

#### V. Major Initiatives:

Each of the assessments the District administers provides valuable information on student achievement. However, there are significant limitations in relying heavily on assessments that are required by the state, are administered only in certain grade levels, and where data are only reported annually.

A single spring administration of an assessment also means that there is no system-wide and objective information being provided to educators, administrators, parents/guardians, and students regarding whether or not students are making adequate progress towards grade level readiness and meeting standards. The ability to provide meaningful and aligned interventions

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and supports is also compromised.

For English Learners, the problem is even more acute and impacts their opportunities to qualify for reclassification.

#### **VI. Results:**

The District is to convene an assessment committee with SCTA to agree upon common assessments to provide critical information to monitor student progress, inform teaching and learning and cycles of continuous improvement, and support programmatic decision making.

#### **VII. Lessons Learned/Next Steps:**

As SCUSD has worked to expand its assessment practices and increase opportunities to provide stakeholders with information on student academic needs, we have learned several lessons including but not limited to the following:

- District common assessments need to be aligned to a guaranteed and viable curriculum for each and every student.
- District common assessments give vital information pertaining to whether students are learning the necessary standards of the guaranteed and viable curriculum in each grade level.
- District common assessments are necessary to provide timely interventions to students on an as needed basis as part of a multi-tiered system of support. These interventions could be site or District-based. An example of a District-based intervention is the Expanded Learning Summer Program.
- District common assessments are necessary to give English Learner students multiple opportunities to reclassify. This is especially pertinent in the grade levels which are not assessed by the SBAC, who would have no opportunity to reclassify without District common assessments.
- As per the Office of Civil Rights, District common assessments are necessary to give students equitable opportunities to be GATE identified.
- District common assessments are necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and programs.
- District common assessments are necessary to provide school teams with regular, objective data to inform cycles of continuous improvement.
- District common assessments are necessary to provide the District with information on where the curriculum is weak, so we can provide targeted professional learning to teachers.
- Building an effective assessment system is an ongoing endeavor and must be carefully monitored.
- Building the capacity of educators, administrators, and support staff to be skillful users

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of assessment data is of utmost importance and is ongoing work.

Our next steps include the following:

- To convene an assessment committee with the SCTA to agree upon District common assessments.
- Provide ongoing professional learning for administrators and educators on data analysis and using assessment results to inform instruction.
- Finalize communication protocol for stakeholders.
- Finalize student reporting for parents and guardians.
- Evaluate the assessment items annually and revise as needed.