

RACE TO THE TOP ASSESSMENT GRANT

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Department of Education has created several competitive grant programs for states as part of its \$4.35 billion Race to the Top Fund. One of the programs is a competition of \$350 million for the Race to the Top Assessment program. The competition winners are expected to design new ways to show what students have learned, student growth over time, and whether students are on track to succeed in college and careers. There will be two categories of grants: comprehensive assessments for up to \$160 million each (for two grants) and high school course assessments for \$30 million (for one grant). The U.S. Department of Education will fund state consortia of 15 or more states with five states designated as lead partners for the comprehensive assessments. These assessments must be aligned to the Common Core Standards for math and English Language Arts and implemented, in each partner state, by 2014-2015. All students will be expected to be assessed, including ELL students and those with disabilities. Collaboration and alignment with the state's higher education system is highly encouraged.

Tests are expected to provide data that can be used to determine:

- School effectiveness under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act.
- Individual principal and teacher effectiveness for purposes of evaluation; professional development; and teaching, learning, and program improvement.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

Washington plans to be one of the five state leads in the SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENT CONSORTIUM to compete for one of the two comprehensive assessment grants. The SBE Chair, Governor, and Superintendent are required to sign the grant application. Dr. Willhoft will provide further information on the specifics of the SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENT CONSORTIUM at the Board meeting.

Applications are due June 23 and grants will be awarded in September.

EXPECTED ACTION

The SBE will consider authorization of the SBE Chair's signature on the grant application.