

Overview: Oregon’s Lumina-Hewlett-Gates grant-project—Placement Proficiency Aligning Standards (PPAS)—supplements the current work being done in the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to significantly improve student success in college, and ultimately career. PPAS brings college readiness fully into the work of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) by making sure a direct correlation exists between the Standards (and their related assessments) and higher education’s placement tests into college math, writing and reading. This alignment of assessment helps guarantee a student is actually prepared to begin college-level coursework, regardless of their area of study and unifies placement testing in higher education. PPAS also furthers the work of CCSS alignment between K-12 and higher education by providing teacher education and development for both high school and postsecondary instructors—educators across levels will create shared bonds and develop a common understanding, language, rubric for proficiency, and vision of the state’s CCSS work.

PPAS within the larger framework of college readiness work: Oregon has a strong cross-sector team from Early Childhood, K-12 and Postsecondary partners and a history of collaboration among its divergent learning organizations—Department of Education, seventeen locally-governed community colleges and the Oregon University System.

The College Readiness Partnership: Oregon began working on the K-12 efforts through CCSSO’s Implementing the Common Core Standards (ICCS) meetings funded through our partnership with SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) (the College Readiness Partnership). The collaborative effort between AASCU, CCSSO and SHEEO is to promote broad implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA), with a focus on those issues at the intersection of K-12 and higher education systems. The state leadership teams are comprised of individuals representing the membership of each of the three partner organizations.

The Partnership will work directly with the selected state leadership teams to achieve the following three objectives:

1. Identify how the Common Core State Standards should be implemented in each participating state in order to actually improve college and career readiness for all students;
2. Define how leaders and faculty across K-12 and higher education need to work together to improve both teaching and learning in ways essential to achieving the goal of college and career readiness; and
3. Delineate the specific steps that higher education and states must take together in order to make effective implementation a reality; in other words, to make college and career readiness expectations more transparent, to align curricula, to assess student performance more effectively, and to improve teacher preparation and professional development.

This work flows smoothly into the work of PPAS, with the same individuals representing Oregon in College Readiness Partnership as working toward meeting the objectives of PPAS. The intentional overlap of CRP and PPAS team members will insure a coordinated effort and clearer communication boosting the successful implementation of the CCSS . The Partnership work is a broader approach, with several states involved and will likely result in higher-level implementation strategies—ones that can fit the wider range of state’s needs. PPAS takes a few of the elements described above, and begins to make focused, specific progress toward the goal of implementing CCSS and its assessments in Oregon’s community colleges and universities. PPAS incorporates #2 through its convenings and workgroups. PPAS will also support #3 as the three education organizations in Oregon work to align math and ELA curricula, find ways to making college readiness expectations more transparent, and as faculty across educational levels

discuss how to improve teaching in ways to achieve the goal of college/career readiness. The combination of these opportunities and initiatives will allow Oregon to study best practices in other states, thoroughly engage Oregon partners at each level to identify what will work, and value the high school assessments as career and college ready placement information.

Current structure of CCSS implementation: A nine-person Steering Committee currently leads the implementation of the CCSS and assessment work, guiding efforts at the policy level and serving as the main point of contact between ODE and the field. The 38-member CCSS Stewardship Team's tasks include: finalizing Oregon's transition timeline; helping plan informational CCSS workshops; identifying funding sources for implementation and transition work; and helping develop the state's blueprint for long-term implementation. Communication is another important goal: to share information on the new standards and to receive input from the field that will inform the implementation blueprint. The Stewardship Team will accomplish its work through Work Groups that examine specific issues and suggest workable strategies. Four work groups have been identified: Teaching and Learning; Instructional Materials; Professional Development; and Communications. *State Board Document, May 19, 2011*. CCSS implementers have been working to expand familiarity with the Standards across the state, and to develop systems and tools to continue implementation work and include conferences and meetings to inform stakeholders; developing resources; and developing communications. Thus far, this work has happened primarily within the K-12 system, with little, direct involvement from higher education (hence the work of PPAS to fully integrate higher education into the work).

SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Along with 30 other states, Oregon is a governing state of SBAC which is developing an assessment with three major components: (1) a summative assessment; (2) an interim assessment; and (3) formative assessments and tools. These assessments are a natural continuation of the work already underway in Oregon and builds on our current assessment system and the work of the Oregon DATA Project.

PLAN FOR USE OF FUNDS

State's overall desired outcomes for CCSS work is to prepare all students to be: college ready in literacy and mathematics no later than the end of high school, and to be competitive in a global workforce.

Postsecondary Institutions use CCSS assessment to determine readiness for credit bearing course enrollment in writing, reading and a special focus on mathematics. This desired outcome supports the state's larger goal of increasing student success in college. A direct correlation between high school math, writing and reading assessments and a college's placement exams will reduce the amount of student remediation and failure in college. PPAS focuses on writing and reading with an enhanced focus on math. Oregon has chosen this design for several reasons. First, PPAS needs to give extra support and focus on mathematics (rather than reading/writing/math equally) because math alignment and math readiness lags behind the work already done by the state in writing and reading (for example, college math faculty report that college's assessments for math are not sufficiently effective for student success in college-level math). Oregon's current reading and writing high school assessment is already closely aligned to the current community college placement proficiencies. The ELA at the K-12 discussion has more connection to the colleges in part because many of high school instructors also teach WR 121 for their local college, and have been working for stronger alignment.

Another reason Oregon is choosing to bring math work "up to speed" immediately (rather than perhaps completing ELA work first, then using it later as a template for mathematics) is that

for over a decade, international achievement comparisons have shown the United States to have mediocre achievement in mathematics. PPAS will use the excellent analysis and clear recommendations from “Designing Common Assessments”¹, as a framework to arrive at the project desired outcome, and current longitudinal and assessment data.

PPAS’s extra work around math in the first part of the grant period will not result in different objectives for the various subject areas—the ultimate objective for all subjects is to have a CCSS assessment used in secondary education that is the same as the placement tests for these subjects at Oregon’s institutions of higher education. Faculty and leaders from all the disciplines will be involved at all stages of the grant, attending convenings and workshops and developing decisions about curriculum and assessment. PPAS merely provides extra work-time for mathematics folks to bring themselves up to the same level as ELA in terms of understanding CCSS and discussing its related assessments.

K-12/ Postsecondary alignment to CCSS in teacher development and education. PPAS includes the optional activity of deepening and expanding current high school-college faculty collaboration to better understand CCSS, its assessments and the direct connection to being college ready. Frequent statewide workshops (in person and online) with higher education faculty in math, reading, writing, and teacher-education faculty, and secondary school teachers will be a key professional development deliverable. Specialized workgroups will provide an additional venue for bringing together educators from across the state, and across education-levels, to develop relationships, and ensure all stakeholders are a vital part of implementing CCSS. Furthermore, collaboration between postsecondary faculty and K-12 teachers and administrators around the CCSS will provide opportunity for reflection on the necessary and sufficient preparation (both content and pedagogy) that teachers need to align their practice with the CCSS. These workgroups will address all seven design elements in *Designing Common Assessments* discussed above.

Progress Indicator #1: 17 community colleges, representatives from Oregon University System (OUS) Institutions and teacher-education programs, and representatives from K-12 districts will have sent representative to the majority of PPAS Convenings each year.

Progress Indicator #2: Colleges/universities conduct a beta-test of a new math assessment alignment strategy by second year of grant.

Progress Indicator #3: The seven design recommendations from *Designing Common Assessments* will have framed the work and be represented in the design of Oregon’s testing and implementation plan by year two.

Progress Indicator #4: By Fall 2015, half the entering college freshman in Oregon will use new writing, reading and math CCSS assessment as their “placement test” at their institution.

Added Value: PPAS adds value to CCSS plans underway because the colleges in Oregon will actually use the assessment for placement into college classes. Oregon will have consistent, well-designed and tested reading, writing and math assessments that provide reliable analysis of skills and knowledge necessary for success in college-level work. The practical result of PPAS (using the same assessments) will reduce remediation because the proficiency levels, assessments and connections are aligned.

Alignment Director: The Alignment Director will be housed in the department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD). The decision to locate the Director at CCWD is a strategic one: CCWD has historically worked closely with both K-12 partners and the Oregon

¹ Analysis report by David Conley (UO Center for Education Policy Research and the Education Policy Improvement Center).

University system. Additionally, the Education Division is the primary agency connection to the Oregon Department of Education, K-12 education leaders and teachers, and to post-secondary academic programming and leadership. Locating the Director at CCWD ensures that the position will be able to leverage the appropriate personnel across the education continuum to achieve effective implementation of the CCSS.

Oregon does not have a uniform, statewide education system (such as Florida). Rather, K-12 is overseen by a separate entity than Oregon University System, and the seventeen community colleges are “locally governed” with state oversight by the same Board that oversees k-12. This structure requires excellent communication, discussion, and agreements between all players to come to equitable and student-supporting policy. Decisions about program and policy changes are communal, and implemented by each partner within their own respective “system”. Oregon has a history of success in this communal decision-making process. And Oregon has history of creating consistency through that is led by the 17 colleges.

Qualifications for the Director—full-time position (1.0 FTE) housed at the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development with primary responsibility for implementing the plan; knowledge of and working relationships across all of the involved systems; immediately productive in the Director role; extensive experience in the design and implementation phases of new initiatives requiring policy and operational alignment across diverse systems and organizations. *Program Coordination and Grant Management*—Ensure grant deliverables are met on time and on budget; Monitor work plan and adjust as necessary; Review and evaluate work plan achievements; Monitor budget and adjust as necessary; Monitor key stakeholder engagement and adjust processes to ensure adequate participation as necessary; Monitor contractor activities and deliverables, review and evaluate and adjust as necessary. Assume primary responsibility for communication and dissemination of information about planned grant activities and outcomes and for CCSS implementation in the state. This will include: 1.) assuming primary responsibility for coalescing the ideas and outcomes of the various work groups into a coherent statewide agenda; 2.) provide regular briefings on project accomplishments to state and local stakeholders; 3.) provide regular briefings to the State Board of Education, the Oregon University System board and other policy boards, as appropriate and necessary. *Staff support and leadership*—Design and implementation of processes to maximize engagement and participation of project participants; interpret current situation, including identification of gaps in systems, policies, programs and institutional practice to ensure effective integration of the standards alignment across the education enterprise; develop support to create and provide leadership to achieve a shared vision of an integrated implementation plan for the CCSS and aligned assessments; Conduct a policy audit to identify policy issues; determine evaluation and continuous improvement approaches; create an overall plan for implementation; Design, and facilitate meetings/Convenings of project participants; Design and/or support delivery of professional development activities for participants to build foundation of shared knowledge and skills to support implementation plan; serve as liaison to key groups involved in the initiative as needed; Coordinate efforts with and develop and maintain productive working relationships with all education partners involved in the initiative; contract technical assistance and coaching from the funding source to maximize capacity development. The position will be a direct report to the CCWD Education Division Director and will have the full support of the Director, the Deputy Commissioner and the Commissioner to ensure that this position has the authority to move the state’s agenda forward. The Director will be centrally involved in the

statewide implementation of the CCSS, including but not limited to participation in developing the implementation plan and informing policy discussions.

YEAR ONE ACTIVITIES (Exploration Stage—alignment discussions)

Activity #1.1: Hire Alignment Director. The Department of Community College and Workforce Development will be in charge of hiring and housing the director. *Leverage/ integration of current work SBAC:* Director will work closely with SBAC as PPAS seeks to align assessments for writing and reading and in particular math, to higher education's placement testing.

Activity #1.2: “Convenings”. PPAS will conduct two meetings during the year, and will include invites to all writing, reading, math and teacher-education faculty, and high school teachers. Attendees will develop shared understandings of the current gap between high school preparedness and college course placement in mathematics, reading and writing. Strategies for leveraging CCSS curricula and assessments to close the gap will be brainstormed and vetted. Convenings also serve as an education piece for all higher education players in Oregon re: CCSS-work, and the purpose of the PPAS project. Finally, these Convenings provide a venue for bringing together educators from across the state, and across education-levels, to develop relationships, and ensure all stakeholders are a vital part of implementing CCSS.

Alignment Director and the other key stakeholders will create, plan and facilitate these meetings. The *Designing Common Assessments* will guide the outcomes and deliverable of these Convenings. *Leverage/ integration of current work SBAC Consortium:* Members of consortium will present material about their work and will work directly with college writing, reading and mathematics faculty representatives as they develop assessments.

Activity #1.2.1 To bring math up to the same level as reading/writing in the implementation of CCSS, PPAS will have some specialized, math-focused meetings. Meetings will have math faculty from K-12, Oregon University Systems, and community colleges and SBAC representative working together to bring players up to speed. The math focus-teams will be invited to meet intentionally every other month with SBAC and placement testing providers to ensure a placement proficiency assessment that meets the needs of college ready course placement. Faculty will also be include in the larger Convenings with the intention of teaching these educators about CCSS and PPAS and SBAC, so that all writing/ reading/ math assessments stay aligned with what SBAC is creating for assessments.

This math team will use the *Designing Common Assessments* recommendations as their working guidelines. They will bring together their issues with current math assessments that are used and do not meet the needs and work together to identify what is needed. The math team will all be math faculty or faculty that uses a high level of math in their entry college courses. They will all have direct daily experience with the entry level math students of Oregon. This team will seek outside assistance from ACT, The College Board and EPIC.

Activity #1.3: Dissemination and Education. Oregon has many education groups that meet on a regular basis (e.g., institutional researchers, registrars, student affairs administrators, chief academic officers, presidents, etc.). These groups will be asked to incorporate a CCSS update into their regular meetings. The Alignment Director is responsible for sending quarterly updates to these groups informing them of PPAS and CCSS progress.

Oregon also has all math faculty and writing faculty meeting quarterly, and they will include this effort as part of their work. These groups will be asked to ensure that the work is from an evidence based design and the assessment framework encourages and elicits deep connections

across the secondary and post-secondary education continuum in Oregon. Teacher-education programs can disseminate what they've learned from Convenings to their students, and K-12 contacts.

Activity #1.4: Building Relationships. Alignment Director will attend *CCSS Stewardship Group's* meeting to build relationship and ensure alignment between PPAS and the work planned by ODE for implementing CCSS. Teacher-education faculty's working knowledge will also be a bridge between K-12 and higher education as they help facilitate conversations at Convenings and workgroups. *Leverage/ integration of current work SBAC Consortium:* Consortium will keep the Alignment Director up to date and informed about the development of assessments, and the Director can support Consortium members as they work with writing, reading and math faculty to align with higher education.

Activity #1.5: Sub-work group. High school math instructors and math faculty from community colleges and OUS will conduct monthly and as needed working meetings to debate and discuss elements needed to be "math ready", ensuring assessments will align directly from high school math, to college-level math. Faculty may use current information on student success to help inform the improvement of placement proficiency process. Part of the work is to ensure Standards and related assessments align with the timing of entering college. In other words, what standards do students need to be "proficient in" at the time of entry to college? Currently, students need to be proficient in writing conventions and basic math complex problem solving. Furthermore, community college faculty can use this opportunity to discuss the inconsistencies of math numbering for pre-college-level math courses. Alignment Director will plan and facilitate these meetings. *Leverage/ integration of current work SBAC Consortium:* this detail and application level of CCSS to a college level placement into classes is the needed link to ensure that the CCSS results in being "really" college ready.

Activity #1.6: Incorporate K-12 in PPAS's work: The way CCSS work has progressed in Oregon thus far has been somewhat lop-sided, with K-12 stakeholders highly invested, involved and educated to the issues. Higher education has not yet entered the work to any significant degree, and so has a much vaguer sense of the standards, the developing assessments, and how these fit into future plans for state education. In order to "level the playing field" PPAS allows an initial period of bringing institutions of higher education (both the University System, and the collective community colleges) up to the same level of knowledge, understanding and engagement that currently exists in the Department of Education/ K-12 arena.

Once post-secondary partners are up to speed on CCSS work, and they have begun collectively analyzing their current assessments, PPAS will bring the larger K-12 community into activities such as the Convenings and educational groups described above. PPAS's design is one of efficiency—K -12 need not spend time on information and meetings that would be redundant for them, while higher education is not left scrambling to catch up to their K-12 colleagues.

OUS Teacher Education programs will work with K-12 districts to continue integrating CCSS into existing programs and develop new certificates/endorsements to better ensure that teachers have the knowledge needed to prepare students to reach the goals of college ready. The Alignment Director will ensure Oregon's Consortium members, CCSS Steering Committee, and CCSS Stewardship Team attend meetings and workgroups.

Activity #1.7: Teacher Education: Math, writing and reading faculty are invited to Convenings and smaller sub-work-groups for the purpose of teaching these educators about CCSS and PPAS,

and the assessment Consortium so writing/ reading assessments by high school teachers and postsecondary faculty stay aligned with what the Consortium is creating for assessments.

YEAR TWO ACTIVITIES (Development Stage—beta testing)

Activity #2.1: Beta-test. PPAS will run small pilots at a few colleges (in either fall or winter term) and evaluate the new assessment alignment’s efficacy. The intent is to ask the SBAC to help do the evaluation. Alignment Director, SBAC Consortium, and a working group of faculty/ colleges are responsible for the beta-testing of the assessment alignment. This ties directly into the work of CCSS and SBAC as it uses assessments to prepare students for college and career readiness.

Activity #2.2: Dissemination. Math faculty involved in the beta testing will relate the information to the larger community college/OUS communities. Alignment Director will create dissemination plan/ timeline for faculty to present at “like meetings,” CCSS Steering Committee and Stewardship Group meetings. OUS Teacher Education programs will work with K-12 districts to continue integrating CCSS into existing programs. *Leverage/ integration of current work SBAC Consortium:* The information gained from the accuracy of the placement /proficiency testing will help SBAC ensure a level of proficiency that is more than CCSS—it is college ready for Oregon colleges and no additional placement test is needed. The work will also inform SBAC of how to create a system that can upload the scores into colleges’ placement testing databases.

Activity 2.3: “Convenings”. As in the first year, PPAS will continue to conduct two meetings during the year that include participants from higher education and K-12 (PPAS and CCSS groups). The Alignment Director and stakeholders will create, plan and facilitate these meetings. *Leverage/ integration of current work SBAC Consortium:* Oregon members of the Consortium will continue to present and educate involved parties.

YEAR THREE ACTIVITIES (Execution Stage—large-scale implementation)

Activity 3.1: Evaluation. Hire a consultant as needed for evaluation and facilitate the needed changes to the assessments being used and implementing the plan of the work-groups/ beta testing. The Alignment Director is responsible for researching/ hiring consultants with input from faculty workgroups, Consortium members, and CCSS groups. *Leverage/ integration of current work SBAC Consortium:* Creates a crosswalk to the other college placement test currently in use (and that need to be in use) for all of the adults going to college who are not coming directly from high school.

Activity 3.2: Scale up of beta-tested assessment alignment. Implement beta-tested program/work into multiple colleges in order to reach progress indicator #3. Alignment Director, beta-test-faculty and new math faculty at expansion-sites are responsible for implementation of this activity. The Consortium works closely with all groups as assessments go into place.

Activity 3.3: Technical Support: Consultants help implementation through technology fixes, systems and processes.

Activity 3.4: Integration of State-wide Student Success Initiatives. Inform education experts in Oregon about ALL the ongoing work around student success (e.g. LearnWorks, Win-Win, DQP, Foundations of Excellence). Determine how all initiatives fit within the framework of state’s goal to improve student success from pre-school, through graduate school. Alignment Director plans and facilitates conference for all players from various initiatives, invites experts

and key partners and players to align and sustain this effort. *Leverage/ integration of current work SBAC Consortium:* This type of informational gathering supports the expansion of knowledge of SBAC’s work and how it fits into ongoing work across the state.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Localized Faculty Engagement: As discussed in the main application, Oregon has not yet had good engagement and discussion between secondary and postsecondary instructors regarding the CCSS and related assessments. Higher education administrators and faculty are just beginning to engagement with CCSS, where K-12 educators have been developing the standards for some time. Oregon seeks to actively create specific, specialized high school and college faculty interaction through the optional activity to help these instructors develop a deeper knowledge of the common core as it relates to local assessments in their classrooms, and to document their process for use by other areas around the state.

The optional activity brings together a cadre of specific, localized high school instructors and college faculty who will endeavor to align their local assessments for math courses, to the CCSS. The faculty cadres will review assessments from eleventh grade, through sophomore year of college. Cadres will be identifying, discussing and sharing the points/connections of alignment, points/connections of assistance and pinpointing such connections that provide *no* value. Cadres will help clarify where assessments are formative and where they are summative of high school standards, and college placement (i.e., providing a reliable reflection of classroom skill of the student). This project will draw on the expertise of Education Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) which has performed a significant amount of assessment of alignment work around the nation. They are a neutral party (not a provider of assessments) and are highly respected and local to Eugene.

This effort not only expands and strengthens high school / college instructor relationships in Lane, Tillamook and Benton county school-teams, but has the other practical result of modifying and/or creating assessments in the range of class-levels (11th-14th) that will directly align with the summative assessments resulting from SBAC’s work—a deliverable that can eventually be used across the state.

Cadre Locations: Instructors from Tillamook Bay Community College, Tillamook High School and Oregon State University will comprise one group (though OSU is about 90 miles from Tillamook, Tillamook Bay Community college and OSU have an established program “Open Campus” with a full time coordinator from OSU who assists students and the college with anything related to OSU related who can dedicate time to the project as needed). The other group will be made up of Lane Community College, Springfield High School and the University of Oregon instructors (representing the Springfield/Eugene metro). Each team will consist of a coordinating faculty from the colleges, universities and the high schools who will be responsible for the local workgroup coordination for their education-level. In addition, two more faculty from each institution of higher education, and one or two more instructors from each high school will make up the teams.

Program: Both teams will focus on mathematics. Faculty will gather their assessments from grades 11 through 14 and then begin conversations about student preparedness and alignment with CCSS as well as a summative evaluation. Each discussion session will be documented so that when it comes time to scale-up the project, other groups will have guiding documents. This endeavor will become a study of the transformation of local assessments that occurs at both the secondary and post-secondary level.

Meetings and Workgroups: The faculty cadres from Lane County and Benton/Tillamook Counties will meet in person twice yearly, and twice virtually. The two cadres will share with each other as they progress through the work, determining what has worked well, and what has not, fine tuning deliverables and clearly documenting the groups process. EPIC will be involved in these larger meetings to support both groups with their research expertise. The faculty cadres will share their insights and learnings thru a virtual repository, as well as in person, which will allow communities outside this focused project to benefit from the work. Each “local” faculty workgroup will meet multiple times at their own locations—twice per quarter –fall, winter and spring and once in the summer.

By the end of the second year, the teams will actually serve as pilot sites for the revised local assessments, testing how well assessments were aligned. All findings and discussions will be made available statewide through a virtual community so that groups may share with each other about the different populations in their regions (e.g., Elluminate). The repository could be expanded as the scale-up occurs. An end of year evaluation report will review to what extent assessments have been changed or created to match the needs of all parties in relation to the CCSS and its assessment, as well as survey faculty to see how the new assessments are working in their classroom with their students. During the final year of the project, the cadre will continue to “test and assess” and offer their learnings at statewide conferences. The plan for this roll out will be coordinated and developed in consultation with the Alignment Director.

Grant Budget: The grant for the optional activity will fund \$40,000 annually as follows: Class release for the four “coordinating faculty” from each college/ university at \$4000 each for, plus \$4000 total OPE for a grand total of \$20,000); substitute teachers for high school faculty, \$10,000; and consultation with EPIC \$10,000.

Leveraged, non-grant funds: Lane Community College will host the virtual repository to post assessments (\$30,000). The President and Vice presidents time from community colleges at 2% (\$4800). Colleges and Universities will pay: 1) the travel, facilities and food needed for the annual, in-person meetings of both cadres (\$5000); 2) faculty release time for the other team players (20 hours a term, four terms, at \$30/ hour—two faculty from each community college, and at least one from each university (\$14,400). CCWD will be actively involved in dissemination as the project expands to statewide level. CCWD’s Communication and Research Director will also provide support to the project as it progresses, as needed. Finally, the Alignment Director will work to ensure incorporation of the cadres’ work into the larger work of PPAS.