SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Committee on Academic and Student Affairs

AGENDA ITEM: I – D

DATE: December 12-13, 2012

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SUBJECT: Smarter Balanced Implementation Update

Committee A of the Board was provided with an overview of the state’s efforts to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the related Smarter Balanced assessments. This work, a partnership between the Board of Regents and the South Dakota Department of Education, focuses on the design and delivery of a curriculum that will ensure all students graduate from high school college/career ready. This earlier report outlined the activities that Board staff were undertaking to make sure faculty and staff were engaging with these important initiatives. This is critical because there are expectations that the high-stakes 11th grade summative assessment may be used to determine college/career readiness.

A system leadership team has been formed and this group is meeting monthly. This group includes faculty from math and English/Language Arts, faculty senate leadership, assessment experts, and administrators. The group is guiding and supporting the implementation. Members of this group include:

- BHSU - Curtis Card, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
- BHSU - Erin Holmes, Director, Institutional Research & Assessment
- DSU - Rich Avery, Professor of Mathematics
- DSU - Maureen Murphy, Associate Professor of English
- NSU - Vicki Evans, Director of the Writing Center
- NSU - Jennifer Loefswold, Academic Advisor, Reading
- SDSM&T - King Adkins, Assistant Professor, English
- SDSM&T - Jill Trimble, Instructor, Mathematics
- SDSU - Kurt Cogswell, Head of Mathematics/Statistics Department
- SDSU - Dennis Papini, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
- USD - Dale Pietrzak, Director of Academic Evaluation and Assessment
- USD - Dan Van Peursem, Chair, Mathematical Sciences
- BOR – Sam Gingerich, System Vice President for Academic Affairs
- BOR – Katie Boehnke, Research Analyst for Academic Affairs

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RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Informational.
At this time, the Smarter Balanced Implementation Group is largely focused on Smarter Balance’s Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs). The ALDs are being created to define what it means for students to be “college ready” in their ability to complete a particular skill or set of skills. These descriptors do in fact set the proficiency levels. Once crafted, these ALDs will be used to draft and gauge test items, establishing the assessment levels within the assessment itself. The first draft of the ALDs was released on November 27. These draft statements are subject to review through January 15.

As these ALDs are considered, it is extremely important for higher education to work collaboratively with K-12 education in South Dakota. Recently, BOR staff met with several staff members at the Department of Education to discuss options for higher education and K-12 to provide feedback on the ALDs. It was decided that this January, a series of meetings will take place across the state between higher education faculty and high school teachers. At these meetings, the ALDs and college-readiness definitions will be discussed, with math and English language arts sessions being held separately. It is important for high school teachers to realize what is expected of their students when they go on to college, and it is crucial for higher education faculty to understand how the CCSS will impact incoming students. Currently, meetings are being planned at BHSU, DSU, NSU, SDSU, and USD, as well as the University Centers in Sioux Falls and Rapid City. In this way, we will be able to begin a dialogue between higher education faculty and K-12 teachers from across the state, while still keeping the individual meetings small enough to be productive. We hope to have roughly eight higher education faculty at each meeting, which will be divided among math and English language arts. Working group members from the separate campuses will be responsible for coordinating these meetings.

Going forward, the implementation group will be focused on the main goals from the implementation plan, which include:

- Defining what it means to be “college ready”;
- Determining cut scores for 11th grade assessments that will identify students as college ready;
- Developing strategies for:
  - Students who are college ready during their junior year
    - Opportunities for dual enrollment & college credit will be needed.
  - Students who are on track to be college ready by graduation
    - Senior year course requirements will need to be created to ensure students continue with rigorous coursework and will be college ready by graduation.
  - Students who are not on track to be college ready by graduation
    - Programs must be created to help students bridge the gap between their current proficiency levels and what is required to enroll in college-level coursework;
Smarter Balanced Implementation Update  
December 12-13, 2012  
Page 3 of 3

- Aligning Teacher education with the CCSS so new teachers are prepared to work in schools using the CCSS;
- Working with the Department of Education to develop a common communication strategy.
  - Information about the Smarter Balanced Assessments must be conveyed to stakeholders within the state (teachers, college administration & faculty, students, legislators, business leaders).
  - Since the new standards stress education quality, they will be advantageous for students in the long-term. Initially, more students will likely need remediation simply due to the more rigorous nature of the standards and the Smarter Balanced Assessments.

As this work unfolds, the system’s placement policies and guidelines will need to be redesigned to incorporate the results of the Smarter Balanced Assessments. Recommendations will arise from the working group and these will proceed through the system’s deliberative processes.