

## Memorandum



Sisters School District

### **Smarter Balance and High Education Opportunities**

Results from the new Smarter Balanced tests tell Oregon students (and their parents and educators) whether they are on track learning the skills and knowledge needed for success in college. Agreements adopted by Oregon's public colleges and universities will allow students who score well to use the results to enroll directly in credit-bearing courses once they get to college. They also give all students an incentive to try their hardest throughout high school to prepare for college success.

Students in the class of 2016 are the first to be eligible to take advantage of the agreements when they get to college, should technical requirements be resolved as expected in the coming months. Until now, most first-year college students have been required to take placement exams to determine whether they are ready to enroll in transferable college-level, credit-bearing courses.

The agreements allow high school juniors who score a 3 or 4 on the Smarter Balanced tests and meet additional requirements for academic rigor in classes during grade 12 to enroll directly in college credit-bearing classes. Students with lower scores will get information about areas where they need to improve and can work with their teachers and counsellors to make a plan for boosting their skills before arriving at college.

To take advantage of these agreements, students will need to choose to proactively share their Smarter Balanced scores and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade coursework with their prospective college and enroll the year after graduation. Students should contact the institutions to which they are admitted next spring for more information about these policies and the process for taking advantage of these agreements.

Oregon co-created the Smarter Balanced tests with 20 states, and five others so far have developed similar placement exam waiver policies for the test results, including California, Delaware, Hawaii, South Dakota and Washington. In all, these new policies are in place at nearly 200 higher education institutions nationwide, including 47 public universities, 10 independent colleges and universities, and 140 public technical and community colleges. More information about Oregon's policies is available at [www.oregoncoretocollege.org](http://www.oregoncoretocollege.org).