

Summer Assessment Institute Plans Gather Steam

An exceptionally full slate of activities is planned for ODE's 2011 Oregon Summer Assessment Institute. The three-day conference, "Leading and Planning for Literacy," will be held August 3-5 at the Eugene Hilton, with pre-conference sessions on August 1 and 2.

Featured speakers for the event include: Dr. Rick Stiggins, founder of the Portland-based Assessment Training Institute, will speak on assessment literacy; Dr. Kevin Feldman, an authority on improving content area literacy and student engagement, will speak on reading/writing assessment and instruction; and Peter Pappas, of Designs for Learning, will talk about school and district team planning.

Other speakers include literacy consultant Yolanda Westerberg; Krista Parent, superintendent of South Lane School District; and Colt Gill, superintendent of Bethel School District.

More than 20 breakout sessions are planned, on topics including EasyCBM; OAKS updates and results; SPED–Achievement Gap; Reading; Writing; Proficiency-Based; Data Teams; Secondary Literacy; Interim Assessment; and Closing the Achievement Gap.

A pre-conference session on August 1, "**Working to Stop What Stops the Work,**" is designed to support the work of coaches trained through the Oregon DATA Project. If space allows, others can register for the training as well.

National participants are encouraged to attend the pre-conference session on August 2, "**Moving from Lucky to Leading: How to Replicate Oregon's Statewide System for School Improvement.**" This session provides information to attendees from other states that want to learn more about the Oregon DATA Project model.

Interested educators and school teams are urged to register now, as a special room rate at the Hilton is available only until July 12 or the room block is sold out.

For more information, including registration and lodging links, visit the [Confederation of Oregon School Administrators' page](#).

Oregon Contributes to National SLDS Efforts

The Oregon Department of Education has had several opportunities lately to contribute to the resources available to states receiving Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grants from the Institute of Education Sciences. The "Best Practices Brief for Stakeholder Communications" offers communication tips for states as they plan, develop, and implement longitudinal data systems. ODE staff contributed suggestions and feedback, and several of Oregon's best practices are mentioned in the publication, available for download at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/best_practices.asp and from the [DATA Project website](#). Oregon is one of seven states participating in the pilot phase of the national Public Domain Clearinghouse, an online resource for states developing longitudinal data systems. Oregon contributed one of eight tools used in the rollout of the site—an architecture map of the Oregon DATA Project website.



And finally, this July, Oregon will host a team of state education officials from Kansas to learn more about Direct Access to Achievement, an SLDS grant project. During their three-day visit, the Kansas team will meet with their Oregon counterparts to discuss data issues, talk to Oregon DATA Project personnel, and develop a 100-day plan of action to take back with them. The visit is courtesy of the Personnel Exchange Network, a U.S. Department of Education-sponsored program that provides travel funds so organizations can share knowledge about education data issues.

Educators Tackle Common Core State Standards in Writing

Nearly 200 educators around Oregon rolled up their sleeves and got to work on Common Core State Standards recently as they attended a Direct Access to Achievement training that addressed the Essential Skill of Writing. The Strand 4 training from the Oregon DATA Project, "Essential Skills in Writing: Impact on Teaching and Learning," took place May 17-18. A third day, May 19, was reserved for school teams to polish up their implementation plan.



Participants are using the CCSS to look at standards that are already in place, as well as changes to standards that will affect their instruction. During the training, educators used this information to critically assess their approach to the Essential Skill of writing. Participants created one of two things: a curriculum map for at least one grade level or a K-12 district assessment calendar.

The training was broadcast via videoconferencing from Clackamas ESD, where there were 60 onsite participants, to seven ESDs and about 120 participants around the state. Malheur ESD in Ontario had more than 50 people attending, with about a dozen each at Douglas, Lane, Lake County, Harney County, High Desert, and Umatilla Morrow ESDs. The Oregon DATA Project training is one of the resources that ODE is providing to the field on the Common Core State Standards.

Pilot Test for New Braille Interface of OAKS Online

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has worked diligently to enhance the OAKS Online testing system for the 2011-12 school year, allowing students who use Braille, who previously took the paper-based Braille version of OAKS, to access the OAKS Online testing system. This enhancement will allow students who use Braille to have the same number of testing opportunities as other students and to have access to the *adaptive* OAKS Online testing system starting in the 2011-12 school year.

ODE has collaborated with Oregon educators and content experts, vision teachers and Braillists, and its test vendor, American Institutes for Research (AIR) to adapt the current OAKS Online test items for presentation in Braille. In partnership with the Vision Workgroup of Oregon's eight Regional Special Education Programs, ODE will use funding support from the Blind Visually Impaired Student Fund (BVI) to provide each Oregon student who uses Braille with access to the JAWS 12 Screen Reader, a 40-cell Refreshable Braille Display, and a Braille Embosser. In addition to using this equipment for state testing, ODE encourages districts to provide their students who use Braille with the opportunity to use this equipment in the course of instruction.

During the week of May 23 through May 26, 2011, ODE, in collaboration with AIR and all of ODE's partners in this project, including teachers for the visually impaired, and students who use Braille in districts around Oregon, conducted a small-scale pilot of the new Braille interface of OAKS Online. Twelve students from eight districts participated in this pilot to ensure that students are able to successfully access and navigate through OAKS Online using the Braille interface and supporting Braille technologies. Each student took two short sample tests online and provided feedback on the experience. ODE and its partners will use this feedback to make any necessary adjustments to the Braille interface before it becomes available for all students who use Braille in fall 2011.