Comments to Senate Committee on Education
Electronic Assessment Delivery
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OBSERVATIONS:

Pre-assessment considerations

- Testing system needs to be browser-based as opposed to client-based system presently in place such as Java or flash based system.
- System needs to be Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) compliant.
- There should be standards set for handling online testing regardless of the provider. For example, presently some systems require blocking any pop-up windows while others require allowing pop-up windows. Because of this inconsistency, every computer needs to be touched in order to enable or disable these features every time a test is conducted. This puts an unnecessary burden on district and campus staff.
- The format for requesting student and teacher data is cumbersome and outdated. A more user friendly format such as a spreadsheet, Comma Separated Values (CSV), or Extensible Markup Language (XML) would be more appropriate.
- The amount of data requested on students and teachers for the system can be overwhelming since student data changes frequently and districts would have to reload the data each time the test is given. Some districts may not have the personnel who can handle this data extraction.

During assessment

- Online testing requires more technical support. There is a need for campus technology support personnel to help during testing.
- Considerations should be given to wireless access. More and more campuses are going wireless with student laptops so the test providers must provide capacity for wireless.

- Consideration must be given to adequate Internet bandwidth for testing. Districts need to acquire tools to prioritize bandwidth.
- Test questions would not be limited to multiple-choice. They could be more dynamic and interactive. Online tests can provide measurement tools and calculators. Beyond that, an electronic version of a test can allow for scenarios and simulations in test questions that would create questions of a higher order and evaluate critical thinking skills.
- Randomized test questions will promote test security.
- Viewing isolated questions promotes focused concentration on comprehension.
- Most students prefer an online environment and seemed more engaged in taking tests this way.
- Students do not see the technology as a barrier. We have seen better performance with the online testing.

Post-assessment considerations

- Instant responses and reporting capabilities make the test meaningful and just in time.
- SIF compliance would ensure that data can be exported into other systems.