

TESTIMONY OF DOUGLAS KUBACH, PEARSON ASSESSMENT & INFORMATION

US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2009

10:00AM

Thank you, Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Kline, and all the members of the committee for the invitation to be here today. I am Douglas Kubach, President & CEO for Pearson's Assessment & Information group.

Pearson is the global leader in educational assessment and education technology. Drawing on our expertise implementing large-scale assessments, longitudinal data systems and instructional support systems, we are actively working to inform the public dialogue about higher quality standards and assessments. We share the Administration's and the Committee's goals of improving student learning, increasing college readiness and global competitiveness.

(1) Collaboration for the greater good

In my testimony today I will focus on three key points. The first point is that to successfully develop and implement higher quality standards, diverse education stakeholders, such as state consortia, the US Department of Education, non-profit and for-profit entities, K-12 and higher education leaders, and assessment developers, to name a few, will be required to collaborate and cooperate in new ways. For example, Pearson is collaborating with ETS and the

College Board, two organizations with a shared, longstanding commitment to investing in education research and development. Together, we're exploring, not for individual gain, but for the benefit of our students and our nation, how innovative approaches and best practices in high-quality assessments can contribute to a new Common Core Standards assessment system. Our joint paper is being submitted for the record along with Pearson's full written response to the U.S. Education Department's recent request for input on the Race to the Top Assessment program.

(2) Preserving Accountability, Increasing Transparency

The second point I'd like make is about the role of annual assessments as a foundation for a quality management system for public education. We are proud of the role that we play in helping 30 states implement valid, reliable and efficient assessment systems. We believe that transparency into student performance is essential to achieving lasting education reform. Nothing is more fundamental to ensuring transparency than accountability systems based upon annual assessments of individual student growth and achievement and providing parents and the public with the results.

It is only through annual assessments that we know what progress we are making in providing equal access to a quality public education for all children. It's the only way for parents and educators to know whether curriculum and instructional practices are working, what's effective and what needs to improve. It's the only way for parents, policymakers and administrators to know whether schools are effectively serving students, holding teachers and school leaders accountable for making progress in improving student outcomes.

Here I'd like to make a special point about assessment systems developed in connection with No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Both the federal government and the states have invested

significant amounts of time and money in these systems, which rely primarily on paper-based, multiple-choice summative assessments. With all of the resources provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Race to the Top we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to go to paperless testing.

(3) Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity to “Go Online”

And that is my final point this morning: The unprecedented opportunity we have before us to “go online” to improve learning. Now is the time for states to build out the infrastructure and capacity for online assessments, online management systems, and online content and instructional delivery and reporting systems.

Online assessments will allow us to do some truly revolutionary things. For example—

- Wider use of performance-based tasks such as multi-step problems, simulations, and inquiry-based investigations;
- New language evaluation technologies that automate the scoring of open-ended oral and written responses;
- Less cumbersome assessment processes and speedier delivery of results – allowing more real time adjustments in instruction;
- Greater use of longitudinal data systems through improved data timeliness and quality;
- Wider range of accommodations for students with disabilities and English-language learners.

Online assessments better reflect the world of college and work that students will live in.

Moreover, the emerging Common Core standards in both Mathematics and English Language Arts define constructs that can best be measured through the use of technology. New assessment



innovations allow us to go beyond traditional tests to measure complex tasks like problem-solving, critical thinking and analysis, or making inferences within and across core subjects. Advances in technology, coupled with advances in assessment design, psychometrics and cognitive models, make it possible for us to obtain a richer and more nuanced picture of what students know and can do than ever before.

In closing, we are committed to developing assessment systems that provide accountability data and instructionally actionable information to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and policymakers. Improvements and innovations in assessment methods and technology, coupled with the development of common standards focused on both content and critical thinking skills, will allow us to better measure student performance and ultimately improve student learning.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this conversation with you and your colleagues. I look forward to answering your questions.