

Chiefs:

Virtually all of you are wrestling with options and the direction you will pursue as a result of the upcoming RTTT Assessment RFP and many of you have taken initial steps to articulate assessment initiatives coming from within your states or as part of RTTT applications. At the CCSSO Policy Forum in Naples, you asked us to explore the possibility of developing comparable summative assessment and any future role CCSSO might play to assist this common work. In the interim, states who submitted proposals to the RTTT round one competition had to identify a consortium(s) with which to work. Six different consortia have emerged, each with its unique focus and strengths.

Many of you have asked what role CCSSO might play as you advance your consortium work while attending to the need for commonality across states. This weekend, CCSSO's Board of Directors met in Washington for their annual board retreat. As you can well imagine the issue of assessment consortia was a major agenda item. The Board, after thorough discussion regarding the six different consortium models, agreed that the organization should engage all states in collective work that should include input from all consortia. This will be a shared vision of what a comprehensive state system of assessment should be and from this comprehensive vision seek agreement about the role of a comparable summative assessment. The Board is in agreement that the comprehensive state assessment system is anchored in our desire to increase learning and improve instruction and that common and comparable summative assessment is one component of the system.

To that end, the Board asked CCSSO to begin the process by convening two groups, 1) a design team of state representatives and key assessment experts to draft a vision of a comprehensive state assessment system, building on the ideas and designs from the six consortia, and to describe the role of summative assessment within the system, and 2) a group comprised of several members of the board of directors and at least one chief from each of the six consortia to ensure that all interests are represented in the discussions. This group will approve a final draft that will be shared with all chiefs for subsequent discussion at the Legislative Conference in March. This group will make recommendations regarding a governance structure for the states' assessment system. CCSSO will be reaching out to assessment experts (who will not be representatives of, or affiliated with, the various assessment companies), state assessment directors, as well as chiefs and members of the board of directors. In addition, in the area of assessment, CCSSO will explore continuing the strong partnership that has formed during the common core work with NGA (National Governors Association).

There are many issues for these groups to tackle in a very short timeframe; however, we believe that it is imperative that states collectively need to build and lead the discussion about how to best assess the common core. It is the board's intent that the results from this effort would ensure summative comparability across all states but at the same time be nested in a system that allows for innovation including state flexibility in the areas of formative, on-line, and adaptive assessments including appropriate supports for teachers/educators to foster quality learning for all.

Sue Gendron, President, CCSSO
Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director, CCSSO