



TERRY E. BRANSTAD
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

KIM REYNOLDS
LT. GOVERNOR

July 29, 2014

Dr. Joe Willhoft
Executive Director
Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
600 Washington St. SE
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dear Dr. Willhoft,

How to best measure the academic performance of Iowa students is an important conversation under way in Iowa. The Iowa Assessment Taskforce established by the 2013 Iowa Legislature has been studying the state's academic assessment needs, including past, present and future options for accountability. Taskforce recommendations are expected by Jan. 1, 2015.

To honor the work of the taskforce, Iowa will not sign a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium as requested. We recognize that by declining to sign that Iowa will no longer be a governing state in the consortium. We request that Iowa's withdrawal be effective immediately, and that the consortium no longer list Iowa as a member state.

Iowa's goal is to have a state assessment that is the right fit for Iowa. It should reflect our high state academic standards. We want educators, students and parents to have confidence in the state assessment as a measure of complex thinking and problem solving capacity as well as basic skills.

We appreciate the work the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is doing to offer states a system with optional interim assessments and year-end summative assessments in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. We are confident that the Iowa Assessment Taskforce will give careful consideration to all options, and how they can best meet Iowa's needs.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Terry E. Branstad in black ink.

Terry E. Branstad
Governor of Iowa

Handwritten signature of Brad Buck in black ink.

Brad Buck
Iowa Department of Education Director