



STANFORD UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
520 GALVEZ MALL
CERAS BLDG. #326
Stanford, CA 94305
(650) 723-3555
fax: (650) 736-0968
ldh@stanford.edu

Linda Darling-Hammond
Charles E. Ducommun
Professor of Education

April 9, 2010

Barry Topol
Managing Partner
Assessment Solutions Group
215 Loch Lomond Way
Danville, CA 94526

Dear Barry,

I want to thank you, Ed, John and Pat for the outstanding work you did in designing and costing a new, high quality assessment system in support of the work the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education conducted under a grant from the Nellie Mae Foundation. Your design of a high quality assessment system reflects the work our team has been doing to summarizing research and lessons learned regarding the development, implementation, consequences, and costs of performance assessments and develop new assessments that will help teachers teach, students learn and measure student's critical thinking skills. Perhaps more important, the thorough and detailed cost analysis and modeling work you did will be instrumental in convincing policy makers that such new assessments can be made affordable.

The detailed report you wrote neatly lays out the quality of the analysis performed and model cases run to compare the cost of a high quality assessment with today's typical assessments and ultimately, how to make a high quality assessment affordable. The number of cases run and independent research conducted around several cost reduction strategies can serve as a blueprint to states and state consortia looking to implement new assessment systems. I was impressed with the detail behind the analyses and the quality of the cost model you have constructed.

I would be happy to serve as a reference for anyone interested in using the services of your firm. Do not hesitate to refer them to me for an excellent recommendation.

Thanks again for the great work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Darling-Hammond".

Linda Darling-Hammond, Ph.D.
Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education