**Standards, Assessment and Technology for Assessment**

**A 2017 Legislative Priority**

**Background:**

On Sept. 17, 2015, the State Board of Education initiated rules to begin the process of implementing the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) suite of assessments as Iowa’s new state test, following the near unanimous recommendation of the Assessment Task Force. The rules intended first administration of the test statewide in the spring of 2017. During the 2016 Session, the legislature did not appropriate funds and delayed the requirement for schools to use SBAC until the spring of 2018. Although the legislature also agreed to have the State BOE rules reviewed again in Dec. 2016, Gov. Branstad vetoed that requirement as the education associations, including RSAI, requested. The Iowa DE is planning to issue an RFP in fall 2016 for the test administrator and planning to prepare schools for the spring 2018 use of SBAC.

Although a summative test is required for federal accountability compliance, school leaders also recognize the importance of formative assessments along the way to inform instruction. The suite of assessment tools, including the formative assessments, the online digital library and the professional development included in the task force recommendations, will help teachers diagnose what students know and can do, and change instruction based on that information.

**Current Reality:**

* **SBAC will cost an estimated $10 million.** Although school district may have invested funds locally for formative and interim assessments, it is unclear if they will be able to redirect the funds immediately or if it’s better for staff and students to phase in the changes over a few years. ($10 million is an estimate based on information during the 2016 Session. With a new RFP in the works, that estimate may change.)
* **Computer adaptive test**: In the SBAC, which students take on the computer, prior answers determine subsequent questions. Standards mastery for students at both ends of the learning spectrum will be better identified. Students are less frustrated with the test and more engaged. Iowa students interviewed after participating in the piloting of the SBAC tests confirmed their preference for this test format. Yet delivery of this test in the spring testing window to all Iowa students required to be tested depends on adequate technology infrastructure and devices. Some districts are more ready than others to deliver tests online. Extension of the state penny sales tax will provide additional long-term resources for adequate school technology.

RSAI supports the Iowa Content Standards, including an aligned assessment and supports for the technology and bandwidth required to adequately administer the assessment. Assessments required by the state must be funded by the state.