**Oregon Formative Assessment Resources: Project OFAR**

**Overview**

Project OFAR (Oregon Formative Assessment Resources) is a 3-year federally funded grant with four major outcomes:

(a) Data integration between the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and the University of Oregon,

(b) Relocation of ODE’s Data Center to Oregon State University,

(c) Creation of a database system for researchers to analyze Oregon assessment data, and

(d) Publication of assessment literacy materials to be used at Oregon University System institutions.

In 2007, the Institute for Education Sciences within the U.S. Department of Education created an annual Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grant competition. Project OFAR is Oregon’s second (FY09) SLDS grant. It builds upon the foundation of our earlier (FY07) grant, the Oregon DATA Project, which developed and implemented courses to improve data-based decision making in K-12 schools.

Project OFAR focuses on formative assessments, brief frequently administered tests, that help teachers understand how quickly students are learning. With this formative assessment data, teachers can predict how well their students will perform on summative assessments, high stakes tests such as the Oregon statewide tests or OAKS (Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills).

**Program Results**

ODE has not yet begun the data exchange and integration in Project OFAR; we are designing and implementing the technological components necessary. Next year, we will start the data exchange and expect to see impacts such as those described below.

The formative assessments in this project are a type of Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM). The empirical literature base supporting CBM is rich and broad and spans more than 30 years. CBMs can predict how a student will perform on state achievement tests. For example, Sibley, Biwer, and Hesch (2001) found that CBM Oral Reading Fluency measures have strong predictive validity relative to student performance on state and local standardized achievement tests. Therefore, CBMs are a robust tool in tailoring curriculum to fit student need, as well as predict how students will perform in the future.
Effective Practices and Models

Oregon is still developing its RTI (Response to Intervention, an approach to providing intensive teaching prior to identifying a student for additional services such as special education) and CBM modules. Other states, such as Pennsylvania and Colorado report successful implementations.

In Colorado, an RTI model has been implemented that uses CBM, a three-tiered model in which curriculum changes and interventions increase in intensity based on student need. Tier 1 provides instruction for all students, using flexible grouping to insure that students are taught at their instructional level, rather than their enrolled grade level. Tier 2 includes supplemental instruction designed to meet the targeted needs of those students not progressing in Tier 1. Tier 3 provides the most intensive explicit instruction focused on specific skills. The Curriculum Based Measures are administered with increasing frequency at Tiers 2 and 3, which allows instructors to verify growth in student achievement or revise interventions.

Related Links and References

NCES SLDS Website
EasyCBM Website
http://easycbm.com/info/about.php
Colorado Department of Education Website
http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_home.htm