

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

### Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 101

Week ending Friday, February 8, 2013

#### Top News This Week

- EC Co-Chair announced
- EC member election
- State Leads Pilot Test administration training webinar presentation posted on Collaboration Site
- Pilot Test will be the focus of Tuesday's All States meeting
- Revised achievement level descriptors released

The Smarter Balanced Weekly Update is an email sent each Friday to keep Consortium members and collaborators informed of new developments and upcoming events. The Update is widely distributed to Consortium state leads, work group members, Consortium and WestEd staff, and Consortium advisors, partners, and service providers. State members should feel free to share information in the Update with those who are interested in the Consortium's work.

Please note that embedded links in the Update sometimes direct readers to the Consortium's internal website. Access to this website is currently limited to Consortium state department of education officials and their delegates. For news and other important information related to Consortium activities, we encourage individuals to visit our public website at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org> and sign up for the monthly newsletter by clicking on the Stay Connected link located at the top of the homepage.

#### From the Executive Director

Greetings. This week's comments will be brief, possibly to make up for several occasions when this area has taken more space (and more of your time) than I would hope.

This week I want to recognize the outstanding leadership that has been provided to Smarter Balanced by our friend and colleague Carissa Miller. This month Carissa leaves her position as Idaho's deputy superintendent for the 21st Century Classroom for a new leadership position at CCSSO, which means she also leaves her role as co-chair of the Smarter Balanced Executive Committee. We will miss her. Carissa's contributions to Smarter Balanced are too numerous to list (particularly after saying I'd be brief.) Let me simply say that Smarter Balanced has benefited from her effort and vision as she has contributed her time, expertise, good counsel, and guidance to the design and implementation of our assessment system. Certainly, Carissa's tenure as co-chair is of significant note. It's not easy to be a leader among peers, but time and again Carissa exercised her good judgment and inclusive style to lead the Consortium through many complex decisions. So, thank you, Carissa, for all your help, support, and clarity of thought.

Consistent with the Smarter Balanced Governance document, the process for Governing States to nominate and elect a new co-chair has been underway. The election balloting closed last night, and I'd like to announce that Deb Sigman from California has won that election. Deb will officially take office on Tuesday, February 12. Congratulations, Deb. JW

#### Announcements

Executive Committee Co-Chair announcement—The Governing States elected Deb Sigman of California to be the new Smarter Balanced Executive Committee Co-Chair.

Executive Committee member election—The election of Deb Sigman of California as Executive Committee Co-Chair creates a vacancy on the Executive Committee for a Governing State member. The Consortium will begin the nomination process for a new Executive Committee member next week. Please look for an email from the Project Management Partner, WestEd, next week.

State Lead Pilot Test administration training webinar presentation posted on Collaboration Site—The presentation slides accompanying the State Lead Pilot Test administration webinar held Thursday, January 30, are posted on the Collaboration Site at the “Pilot Communications for State Leads” tab on the Collaboration Site home page.

Pilot Test will be the focus of Tuesday's All States call—Next Tuesday's (February 12) All States meeting will be primarily focused on Pilot readiness topics, and we encourage all state leads to attend. Please see the February 8 email from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) for agenda and webinar information.

Revised ALDs released—Following a series of review from member states, partners, and individual stakeholders, Smarter Balanced released revised achievement level descriptors (ALDs) for a second round of review. Smarter Balanced welcomes feedback on the content, coherence, clarity, and rigor of the ALDs through February 20, 2013. The revised ALDs, new feedback survey link, and feedback survey results for the first draft can be found here: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/achievement-level-descriptors-and-college-readiness/>. A recording of the February 6 webinar highlighting the revisions will be posted next week.

New Director of Professional Learning announced—Effective February 4, Chrystyna V. Mursky, PhD, has joined the Consortium as Director of Professional Learning. Chrys brings over 30 years of education experience, having taught or served as an administrator at every level from K-12 to higher education, and most recently served as the statewide program director for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, where she oversaw reforms designed to improve equity and student performance. Chrys oversees the development of formative assessment strategies and professional learning opportunities for teachers, a key component of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System. She can be reached at [chrys.mursky@smarterbalanced.org](mailto:chrys.mursky@smarterbalanced.org).

## **Upcoming Events**

Webinars for state policymakers—Chiefs and state leads: The National Governors Association (NGA) and the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) are separately hosting two webinars that we want you to be aware of: the NGA webinar is on Thursday, February 14, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Pacific, with a primary audience of governors' education policy advisors; and the NCSL webinar is on Tuesday, February 26, 2013, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Pacific, with a primary audience of state legislators and legislative staff. Please encourage the appropriate individuals in your governor's office and legislature to attend these important briefings. See the January 28 email sent from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) for more details.

Collaboration Conference registration open—Smarter Balanced is pleased to announce that registration is now available for the upcoming Collaboration Conference and Chiefs meeting, March 19–22, 2013, in Arlington, VA (near Reagan National Airport). Invited participants have received an email invitation from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) with instructions on registration for the conference. Events during this collaboration meeting are role-specific, so please be certain of the session days you are signing up to attend. Please refer to the email invitation sent from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) on January 25. Once you have reviewed the invitation, if you have any questions regarding your attendance on a particular day, please check with the Project Management Partner (WestEd) at [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org).

## Resources

Contacting Smarter Balanced—The Smarter Balanced external website ([www.smarterbalanced.org](http://www.smarterbalanced.org)) showcases the innovative work of the Consortium and provides frequent updates on activities, milestones, and events. Visitors can submit questions or reach Smarter Balanced staff at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/contact-us/>. Consortium members may contact [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) for information on upcoming meetings and events.

Collaboration Site—Consortium members: The Consortium uses an internal collaboration site hosted by Google Apps to enable information sharing and collaboration among the member states. If you are a state employee in a Consortium state and need access to material on this website, please contact [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org).

Follow Smarter Balanced on Twitter—Follow @SmarterBalanced for resources and links to the latest news about the Consortium.

Prior versions of the Weekly Update—State members: Previous Smarter Balanced Weekly Updates are available on the internal Smarter Balanced website at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/communications/weekly-update-archive>.

Smarter Balanced meeting minutes—State members: Agendas and minutes from previously held meetings are available on the internal Smarter Balanced website at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/meetings>.

## Answering Open Questions

Each week we will address a question or two on the minds of Consortium members. Send your questions to [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org).

*What are achievement level descriptors (ALDs)?*

Achievement level descriptors (ALDs) are text statements that articulate the knowledge, skills, and abilities represented at different categories of performance on Smarter Balanced assessments. Including the college and career ready category for the high school assessment, they describe how students are progressing toward mastery of the Common Core State Standards and provide clear explanations of student performance for policymakers, educators, and parents. Smarter Balanced has developed an inclusive, collaborative process for drafting initial ALDs in collaboration with K-12 teachers and higher education faculty nominated by member states, as well as content experts. Draft ALDs have been available for feedback from a wide range of stakeholders since November 2012. Preliminary ALDs are expected to be finalized by March 2013 by Governing States.

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**Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

WestEd—Project Management Partner

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