

SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium

SBAC Weekly Update

Issue 31

Week ending Friday, September 2, 2011

Top News this Week

- Draft mathematics content specifications released; feedback surveys for individuals and organizations are open through September 19
- Measured Progress selected for systems architecture contract
- Procurement schedule for summative assessment released to work groups August 25

The SBAC 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.

Embedded links in the Update sometimes direct you to the internal SBAC website, <http://smarter.k12partners.org/>, available only to Consortium members. If you are a state employee in a Consortium state and need access to material on this website, please click the "Create new account" link on the website to register.

From the Executive Director

Greetings. With summer drawing to a close, we convened chief state school officers and their representatives in Chicago for a one-day meeting this week. The discussion focused on important decisions regarding the assessment system, including test length and costs, as well as on outreach efforts for our stakeholders and the future of the Consortium after the development grant expires in 2014. We look forward to continuing these conversations during our monthly chiefs' conference calls and through face-to-face meetings scheduled at key points in the development of the assessment system, held in conjunction with existing partner events.

If you are catching up on reading this holiday weekend, let me recommend *Reaching the Goal*, a new report by David Conley—who serves on the Consortium's Technical Advisory Committee—and his colleagues at the Educational Policy Improvement Center. The EPIC study surveyed 1,900 postsecondary faculty across a broad range of disciplines, asking them to evaluate each of the Common Core State Standards as precursors to their courses and to evaluate how important the standards are to student success.

Overwhelmingly, respondents agreed that the standards as a whole are sufficiently challenging to prepare students for postsecondary courses. When asked if the standards omitted key knowledge and skills, nearly 84% of instructors said they did not. The full report is available here: <https://www.epiconline.org/standardsvaliditystudy>.

The study provides compelling evidence that students who are proficient in the Common Core are likely to succeed in a range of college courses, without the need for remedial education. This study is among the resources the Consortium will be using as assessment design work moves forward this fall and winter.

Finally, let me extend congratulations to Joseph Martineau, who was named to the board of the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME). Joseph serves on the SMARTER Balanced Executive Committee and is executive director of the Bureau of Assessment and Accountability at the Michigan Department of Education. His leadership with NCME is not only a significant professional honor, but also will be an asset to the Consortium moving forward. JW

Announcements

Mathematics content specifications—The first draft of the SMARTER Balanced mathematics content specifications is now available for review. Feedback is due by 11:59 p.m. Pacific time on Monday, September 19. A revised draft will be released in October. Instructions for both individual reviewers and groups on how to provide feedback through online surveys are included with the materials posted at <http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/Resources.aspx>.

Procurement schedule for summative assessment—Work Groups: A procurement schedule, based on the approved Master Work Plan for Summative Assessment, was released to work groups on Thursday, August 25. Work groups will use this in planning their RFP writing and procurement activities, to ensure that Master Work Plan activities are initiated on time. This procurement schedule, which outlines the roughly 20 major RFPs likely to be released across the life of the project, will soon be publicly available.

Systems architecture contract—The Consortium selected Measured Progress as the winner of the IT systems architecture RFP. Measured Progress will work with the Technology Approach Work Group to create blueprints for systematically developing the technology necessary to support the SMARTER Balanced assessment system.

Upcoming Events

Advisory States meeting—Advisory State Leads: Due to the Labor Day Holiday, the September Advisory States meeting will be held on Monday, September 12, at 11 a.m. (Pacific). Please see separate email for agenda and webinar information.

Governing States meeting—Governing State Leads: The next meeting of the Consortium's Governing States will occur on Tuesday, September 13, at 10 a.m. (Pacific). Please see separate email for agenda and webinar information.

Resources

Mathematics content specifications webinar recording—The recording and presentation from the August 29 webinar on the draft mathematics content specifications are now available at <http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/Resources.aspx>.

Innovative item development webinar recording—State Members: The recording and presentation from the August 15 webinar on innovative item development is now available on the internal SBAC website at <http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/webinars-0>.

Common Core State Standards videos—The Hunt Institute and the Council of Chief State School Officers have developed a series of video vignettes that describe and explain the Common Core State Standards. In the videos, key standards writers talk about how the standards were developed, who was involved, and the goals set for all students. The link to the YouTube site that houses the CCSS video vignettes is available at <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheHuntInstitute>.

Relevant news items—State Members: Weekly selections of news items relevant to the Consortium are available on the internal SBAC website at <http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/news-archive>.

Prior versions of the Weekly Update—State Members: Previous SBAC Weekly Updates are available on the internal SBAC website at <http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/sbac-weekly-update-archive%20>.

SBAC meeting minutes—State Members: Agendas and minutes from previously held meetings are available on the internal SBAC website at <http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/agendas-and-minutes>.

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.

The SMARTER Balanced assessment system will measure student performance in English language arts/literacy and math aligned to the Common Core State Standards. However, a number of states are working to develop consistent, next-generation science standards by the end of 2012. Will science be incorporated into the Consortium's assessments?

Our system will not include science assessments at the time of implementation in 2014–15. However, it is likely that the online test delivery options selected by states (or by the Consortium) will support the delivery of online science assessments in the future—particularly in cases where the science assessments include selected response items.

The U.S. Department of Education is particularly interested in maximizing the interoperability of test delivery systems for the many emerging assessments. There are currently two—and potentially four—separate, consortium-based assessment efforts underway: the CCSS consortia (SMARTER Balanced and PARCC); the alternate assessment consortia (CCSS assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities); the soon-to-be-announced English language development consortia; and whatever consortia emerge (or not) to develop assessments aligned to the new science frameworks. We will continue to monitor the development and adoption of the science standards and the progress of the other assessment consortia.

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SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium

WestEd—Project Management Partner

sbac@wested.org

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