



## Key Points to Highlight about the Common Core and Smarter Balanced

- **The new academic goals—or standards—in mathematics and English language arts/literacy are part of states' efforts to ensure that all students graduate high school prepared for college and the workplace.** The standards are grounded in extensive research on what skills and knowledge students need to succeed in first-year college courses and career-training programs.
- **Teachers, experts, and state leaders worked to develop a consistent set of standards** called the Common Core State Standards. These standards have been adopted by more than 45 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Schools that serve our military families overseas.
- Moving far beyond simply memorizing facts and figures, **the new standards challenge students to develop a deeper understanding of subject matter, learn how to think critically, and apply what they are learning to the real world.** Rather than racing to cover a curriculum that is “a mile wide and an inch deep,” teachers will be able to significantly narrow and deepen their lessons so that students master critical skills.
- In the 2014-15 school year, states will roll out online assessments to accurately measure how well students are meeting these new learning goals. **These new assessments are a critical step in implementing the Common Core and preparing all students for college and careers.** They will help teachers and parents monitor student progress and provide information about each student’s unique needs.
- More than two dozen states are working in partnership as part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to develop next-generation assessments. **By working together, these states are able to share their expertise and accomplish much more than they could on their own—at a lower cost.** After 2014, Smarter Balanced will continue to be a state-led organization committed to providing high-quality assessment tools and information to educators and policymakers in member states.
- Smarter Balanced assessments include formative, interim, and summative assessments—a **high-quality system that can help improve teaching and learning for all students, regardless of race, gender, or background.** With Smarter Balanced, teachers will have access to **tools and strategies to differentiate instruction**, as well as optional spot checks that provide **meaningful feedback on student achievement throughout the year.**
- States are working hard to ensure **that teachers and principals are fully supported with dynamic tools and resources that will prepare them to help all students** reach the new standards.
- As we challenge students to reach these new rigorous expectations, there will be struggles. **We must all work together** to bring the new standards to life in the classroom, support teachers, and engage students in ways that help them achieve these new educational goals.