

SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium

SBAC Weekly Update

Issue 5

Week ending Friday, March 4, 2011

This is a weekly email update for the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. It is distributed to the Consortium's State Leads, Work Group chairs, and to Consortium and WestEd staff.

State Leads: Please feel free to share contents of this update with your colleagues, such as members of your SBAC team; with state leadership, such as your chief, public information official, director of assessment, and directors of curriculum and instruction; and with staff in the offices of your governor, your state board of education, and your legislature.

Work Group Co-Chairs: Please be sure to share this update with the members of your Work Group.

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From the Executive Director

Greetings. Time to sing "Happy Birthday" . . . well, happy half-birthday anyway. Six months ago, on September 2, 2010, the US Department of Education awarded SMARTER Balanced one of the Race-to-the-Top Assessment Program grants. Much has happened since then, and now's a good time to reflect on all we've done since early September. As I reflect upon our accomplishments, I am impressed not only by our progress, but also by the fact that nearly everyone working in the Consortium also has a full-time job to attend to. The list below is far from complete, but it and all our other efforts would not have been possible without the commitment and efforts of the folks in our member states. So, happy birthday to us!

One of our major and early accomplishments was the acquisition of WestEd as our project management partner. Daily (maybe even hourly) they continue to demonstrate the value they bring to our work. We are truly privileged to have the services of Stanley, Christyan, Cindi, and all the rest of the WestEd crew who staff our work groups, who assist with communications, who track our resources, and generally help keep us moving forward.

Only a few weeks after the September 2 announcement of our award, the Department of Education informed us we would be receiving additional supplemental funding of \$16M. That was great news—and with it we have been able to enhance our services to states—but in a very short amount of time we needed to design how these new resources would be used, and submit the justifications and narratives to the Department for approval. We completed that task, and significantly strengthened our support of states in their implementation of the Common Core.

As a Consortium we have also:

elected members to our Executive Committee; welcomed Wyoming as a new member, said goodbye (sadly) to Georgia as a member, and celebrated New Hampshire's becoming a Governing State; selected Charlie Lenth as a representative from higher education for the Executive Committee; created the charters for our work groups, solicited membership for those groups, and set them to work; formed our Technical Advisory Committee and held our first TAC meeting; built a month-by-month master work plan; drafted and issued an RFP for communications services; created a public website and enhanced the internal member site; developed a staffing plan for the Consortium that's been approved by Governing States and is ready to implement as soon as foundation funding is finalized; and established an arrangement with CCSSO to partner with the Consortium on a number of activities, including membership for all states in the ICCS SCASS. And these are only the accomplishments that are at the Consortium level. Each of you in your own state can probably generate a list of comparable length of Consortium and CCSS activities since the beginning of September.

So, take a few minutes, catch your breath, reflect on our accomplishments, and sing a round of Happy Birthday to us.

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Announcements

The state of Washington, as the Consortium's fiscal agent, has released SBAC's Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Communications Service Provider. The link to the RFP is <http://www.k12.wa.us/RFP/pubdocs/SBACCommunicationsRFP.pdf>. As stated in the RFP, the state of Washington will manage this solicitation; other states are encouraged to share this RFP with any communications service providers they feel would be excellent candidates for this opportunity.

WestEd is beginning a phased change of Internet conferencing tools from Wimba to Cisco WebEx. WebEx offers increased usability and features. Look for future emails regarding new links for meetings and orientations to using WebEx.

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Upcoming Events

The next Governing States meeting will be March 8 at 10 AM Pacific. Agenda and meeting details will be sent in a separate email.

The next Advisory States meeting will be March 7 at 11 AM Pacific. Agenda and meeting details will be sent in a separate email.

All States Meeting—Thursday, April 7, 2011: Plans are underway to convene an All States meeting of the Consortium's 31 State Leads on April 7, 2011, directly following the ICCS SCASS meeting to be held on April 5–6, 2011. CCSSO will cover the travel and accommodation costs for all State Leads attending the ICCS SCASS meeting. For State Leads not attending the ICCS SCASS, SBAC will provide for travel and accommodation to the All

States meeting. See the email from March 2 regarding meeting registration and travel arrangements.

Reminder: SBAC State Leads and EC members, please save the following dates:

- ICCS SCASS: Tuesday and Wednesday, April 5–6, 2011 (all day)
- SBAC All States Meeting: Thursday, April 7, 2011 (half-day, beginning AM)

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Resources

The Consortium recently distributed a media release related to the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee. The release is available at <http://k12.wa.us/SMARTER/PressReleases/TechAdvisoryCommittee.aspx>.

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Archive

Previous SBAC Weekly Updates are available at <http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/sbac-weekly-update-archive>.

Minutes from previously held meetings are available at <http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/agendas-and-minutes>.

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