

SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium

SBAC Weekly Update

Issue 18

Week ending Friday, June 3, 2011

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 interested in the Consortium's work.

Embedded links in the Update sometimes direct you to the website, <http://smarter.k12partners.org/>, designed for use by 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. If you are not a state employee in a Consortium state and need material from this site, please ask your state lead to forward it to you.

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From the Executive Director

Greetings. This week I am thrilled to announce that as of June 2 the Consortium’s contract with a communications service provider has been duly executed by the State of Washington. The firm of GMMB was selected from among five competing proposals. Our Request for Proposals asked bidders to specify how they would go about helping the Consortium in three particular areas: developing and implementing a communications strategic plan, including providing support to state-level communications offices; helping the Consortium solidify its brand identity; and providing guidance on the design and coherence of our web- and paper-based reports. GMMB hit a home run on all three, and we are all looking forward to starting this new partnership.

The GMMB contract is the first significant acquisition of services for the Consortium and the State of Washington, and I want to recognize and celebrate this milestone. Special thanks are in order to our Washington support, particularly to Mike Middleton—the state’s business director for assessment—and to the folks he works with in the grants office and in fiscal management.

I asked Nathan James, a vice president with GMMB and our main account manager, to craft a few words of introduction about the firm for this announcement. Here's what Nathan has to say:

"GMMB is honored to be selected as the communications partner for the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. We share your belief that next generation assessments aligned to college- and career-ready standards have the potential to transform public education by fundamentally changing the way schools measure, report, and improve student achievement.

"GMMB has always been more than a public relations shop, advertising agency, or digital consulting firm. Our worldview is different. For us, it's about making the world a healthier, smarter, better place. For more than 20 years, we have partnered with leading education advocates to improve our nation's classrooms by designing clear, high-impact communications. Led by our education practice group, our staff includes professionals who have taught in classrooms, worked with foundations, covered education at leading news organizations, and served with state and federal governments.

"Our clients include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy. We worked closely with targeted states as they moved toward adoption of the Common Core State Standards, and we worked within a small coalition of partners to assist the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers on the public rollout of the standards.

"Our team—with locations both in Seattle and Washington, D.C. —will work with the Consortium and its partners to support the development and deployment of the new assessments with research-based communications tools and resources. In the coming weeks, we expect to do a lot of listening and learning about your work to date and the challenges on the horizon. We look forward to the journey ahead." JW

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Announcements

Open positions—Just a reminder that the Consortium currently has openings for a Communications Director and a Lead Psychometrician. Qualified applicants are encouraged to apply online at <http://k12.wa.us/SMARTER/jobs-Contracts.aspx>. Please share these openings with colleagues whom you think would be a good addition to the Consortium.

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Upcoming Events

Advisory States meeting—The next Advisory States meeting takes place on Monday, June 6, at 11 a.m. Pacific. Agenda and log-in information has been sent in separate email.

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Resources

No new resources added this week.

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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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