

## **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium**

### **SBAC Weekly Update**

*Issue 37*

*Week ending Friday, October 14, 2011*

#### **Top News This Week**

- RFPs posted for Psychometric Services and Item/Task Materials Development
- Systems Architecture Workshops have been completed
- Mathematics content specifications under revision

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 SMARTER Balanced 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. This week, I had the opportunity to participate in the third and final Systems Architecture workshop. The three-day session brought together Measured Progress and their partners, Consortium representatives, and technical experts to explore the functional and user requirements for the test design and test delivery systems. Previous workshops focused on machine and distributed scoring, reporting, item authoring, item banking, the digital library, and interoperability standards.

As I've often described it, the role of a system architect is similar to the role of a structural architect. Just as a house requires a logical organization that meets the needs of a family, the different technology platforms and databases of the assessment system must be designed to work together and meet the needs of a wide variety of users. Our job at the workshop was to walk through how tests would be created and delivered so that the system architects had sufficient information to outline the most effective IT infrastructure for the assessment system.

The mood in the room was collaborative, with both technical and content specialists sharing their expertise and puzzling through tough issues. Everyone recognized the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. On the one hand, no one has developed an assessment system with this specific design and at this scale. On the other, we are not constrained by legacy systems or traditional models. We truly have a chance to build an assessment system from the ground up that works for teachers, students, and states.

The Technology Approach Work Group was deeply involved in workshops, and I want to recognize the co-chairs, John Jesse from Utah and Steve Garton from Maine, for their commitment to this project. In addition, Tony Alpert oversees the Systems Architecture development and made sure that these workshops included a diverse range of participants and perspectives to push our thinking and test our assumptions.

So what comes next? Measured Progress will provide opportunities for review of the architecture documents later this month. Feedback from states and work groups will be critical to ensure that the architecture meets the needs of the Consortium. JW

#### **Announcements**

RFP 05 for Psychometric Services has been released to vendors—Proposals are due Friday, November 7. The Consortium is seeking a contractor to provide quality psychometric services. The RFP is now

available at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/Jobs-Contracts.aspx>.

A revised RFP 08 for Item/Task Materials Development has been released to vendors—Proposals are due Tuesday, November 15. The Consortium is seeking a contractor to provide item/task training materials and review committee policies and materials. The RFP is now available at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/Jobs-Contracts.aspx>.

Collaboration website launch—Consortium members: A new internal collaboration website is being rolled out to Consortium members. The new website is intended to replace the current internal website, and features extended capabilities such as calendar sharing and document collaboration. The website is currently being piloted by four work groups and will be extended to the remaining work groups over the next few weeks. All remaining Consortium members will receive access by the end of October. To support the transition, the PMP will host training webinars highlighting how to navigate within the site and use its new collaboration features. Additional details will follow regarding access and training.

Lead mathematics and English language arts specialist positions posted—Two new Consortium staff positions have been posted by Washington State. The Consortium is seeking a lead mathematics specialist and a lead English language arts specialist. Within their content areas, the lead specialists will oversee item writing, item quality, item alignment, item sensitivity, and bias and data reviews, as well as the production of formative assessment and professional development materials. Both postings can be found at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/Jobs-Contracts.aspx>.

Systems Architecture Workshops completed—The IT Systems Architecture contractor has completed our three-week Architecture Workshop series, covering test creation, test delivery platform adaptive testing, and integration framework during this past week. Consortium members will have the opportunity to review the initial workshop deliverables via webinar-based showcases in the latter half of October. Additional details and information will follow.

Mathematics content specifications—Revision of the math content specifications is in progress and will incorporate the feedback received during the first round of review. Additional details will follow regarding release dates and review processes.

### **Upcoming Events**

Governing States meeting—Governing State leads: The next meeting of the Consortium's Governing States will occur on Tuesday, October 25, at 10 a.m. (Pacific). Please see separate email for agenda and webinar information.

Work Group Co-Chairs meeting—Work Group Co-Chairs: The next meeting of the Work Group Co-Chairs will occur on Friday, October 28, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Pacific). Please see separate email for agenda and webinar information.

Chiefs meeting—Chiefs and State Leads: The next meeting of the member state Chiefs will occur on Monday, October 31, at 1 p.m. (Pacific). Please see separate email for agenda and webinar information.

### **Resources**

Updated Consortium PowerPoint presentations available—Consortium members: Two updated SMARTER Balanced PowerPoint presentations are now available for external use. The “summary” presentation provides a detailed look at the assessment system design and the Consortium’s work to date. The “detailed” presentation focuses on the process for developing the assessments and is recommended for technical audiences, such as district assessment directors. Both presentations are available on the internal SMARTER Balanced website at <http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/presentations>.

Relevant news items—State members: Weekly selections of news items relevant to the Consortium are available on the internal SMARTER Balanced 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 SMARTER Balanced website at <http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/sbac-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 <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](mailto:sbac@wested.org).

*How will the Consortium's approach to computer adaptive testing ensure that students who have diverse performance profiles—in other words, different strengths and weaknesses within a content domain—are assessed fairly?*

Computer adaptive testing allows the selection of items to be tailored to a student's performance, providing a more accurate and efficient measure of achievement. At the same time, SMARTER Balanced is committed to developing a summative assessment that will measure student achievement across the full range of skills in the Common Core State Standards. The selection of items in the CAT will be required to adhere to the test blueprint so that students are assessed on the full breadth of a content area in the most efficient manner.

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**SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium**

WestEd—Project Management Partner

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