

SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium

SBAC Weekly Update

Issue 38

Week ending Friday, October 21, 2011

Top News This Week

- Mathematics content specifications revision scheduled for release in early November
- Collaboration website launch successful
- Systems Architecture Workshop showcase to be held on October 31

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, we hosted our first site visit with program officers from the U.S. Department of Education. It was a collaborative conversation that spanned two days in Olympia, Washington. The annual meeting complements our monthly conference calls, and allows us to dive deeply into our accomplishments over the past year and also plan for the work ahead.

Unlike most federal grant programs—such as Title I or other funding provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—the Consortium entered into a cooperative agreement with the Department. This means that we work in partnership toward the goals described in the Race to the Top Assessment Program grant application. Given the scope of our work, ongoing communication and involvement from the Department is critical to the success of the Consortium.

Of course, we must also demonstrate that the project remains on track and progress is being made toward clear milestones. To that end, we spent a good deal of time discussing the summative assessment work plan and procurement schedule, as well as the progress of contracts already underway. These resources are available online here: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/Resources.aspx>.

We also reviewed the overall financial status of the Consortium, which I am pleased to report remains strong. Responsible administration of federal funds is our highest priority, and the Consortium has clear protocols in place to monitor and track expenditures through the State of Washington and our Project Management Partner, WestEd. The Executive Committee receives regular budget updates, and, in accordance with our Consortium governance structure, any reallocations of funding from the approved budget in excess of \$100,000 must be approved by Governing States—and ultimately the Department.

The Department intends to make summaries of the meetings with both SMARTER Balanced and PARCC available early next year. In addition, a joint consortia meeting is in the works. We appreciate the guidance and direction from our partners in Washington, D.C., and across the country—and look forward to the work ahead. JW

Announcements

Mathematics content specifications—The revised math content specifications will be made available for a

second round of review in early November. Consortium staff and advisors are working to thoughtfully incorporate the valuable feedback gathered during the first round of review. Additional details will follow regarding the specific release date and review processes.

Collaboration website launch—Consortium members: A new internal collaboration website has been rolled out to the Consortium's work group members and will be rolled out to the remaining Consortium members by early November. The new website is intended to replace the current internal website, and features extended capabilities such as calendar sharing and document collaboration. As we transition to the new Collaboration Site, the Project Management Partner (PMP) is providing customized training materials that include quick start guides, user manuals, and webinars. Please watch for emails from the Project Management Partner regarding new user IDs and passwords. The existing internal website will continue to be supported for the next few months to allow adequate time for all members to transition to the new Collaboration Site. Please contact sbac@wested.org with any questions or comments.

Systems Architecture Workshop Showcase—The IT Systems Architecture contractor has completed the three-week Architecture Workshop series. Consortium members will have the opportunity to review the initial workshop deliverables via a webinar-based showcase on October 31, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. (Pacific). Please watch for emails from sbac@wested.org for additional details.

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>.

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 12 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

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.

Will students have multiple opportunities to take the summative assessment during the last 12 weeks of school?

The formative and interim assessment components of the assessment system will help to ensure that the summative assessment is truly a capstone measure that serves to confirm information that was obtained earlier in the year. Therefore, we envision an option for a single re-take, at the student-by-student level. That is, if there is a problem with test administration or a concern that a student's score is not accurate, a student would be able to take the CAT portion of the summative assessment a second time. The number of re-takes that the system can support is directly related to the item bank size and other aspects of operational costs. The estimated operational per-student cost of \$19.81 that we provided in our proposal included an assumption that no more than a quarter of all students would re-take the summative assessment. This cost estimate will be reviewed, and if necessary revised, by the Sustainability Task Force.

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SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium

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