

## **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium**

### **SBAC Weekly Update**

*Issue 42*

*Week ending Friday, November 18, 2011*

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

- ELA/Literacy Content Specifications claims to be voted on by Governing States
- Higher Education Leads to be designated
- IT Systems Architecture Showcase to be held on November 21
- Measured Progress selected for item and task specifications contract

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.

Please note that embedded links in the Update sometimes direct readers to the Consortium's internal website, available only to Consortium members. If you are a state employee in a Consortium state and need access to material on these websites, please contact [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org). For the next month, links are included to both the new Collaboration Site and the prior internal website. Starting in December 2011, the prior internal website will be retired.

#### **From the Executive Director**

Greetings. With development and procurement activities well underway on the summative assessment, we are now focusing attention on the design of our interim assessments. As part of a balanced assessment system, interim assessments can provide information about what students know and can do in relation to the Common Core State Standards throughout the year, allowing educators to adapt and make mid-course corrections.

The SMARTER Balanced design includes the development of optional, computer-adaptive interim assessments that can be administered at locally determined intervals. Just like the summative assessment, these interim assessments will include a variety of item types—selected-response, short constructed-response, extended constructed-response, and technology-enhanced items—as well as performance tasks. The interim item bank will be non-secure, making it accessible for both instruction and professional development.

While the Consortium's proposal to the U.S. Department of Education more than a year ago reflected our high-level thinking about the assessment system, important decisions about the scope of the interim assessments are now at hand. Consistent with our state-led approach, we are working to gather input from work groups, member states, and our Technical Advisory Committee. As part of this process, we worked with our Project Management Partner, WestEd, on a briefing paper that articulates several options plus a set of recommendations for the design of the Consortium's interim assessments.

On Tuesday, December 13, we will discuss these recommendations during our All States meeting. A wide-ranging discussion on this topic across the entire Consortium is critically important to ensure that all perspectives are articulated and considered before we move forward with development activities. Following the approval of an articulated interim assessment design by Governing States, we will develop a work plan and procurement schedule.

I look forward to this discussion. Careful consideration of the design of the interim assessments will ensure that we meet the needs of member states and educators.

One last note: Due to the holiday next week, we won't distribute a Weekly Update. Happy Thanksgiving!

JW

### **Announcements**

ELA/Literacy Content Specifications claims vote—Governing State leads: The SMARTER Balanced Content Specifications for ELA/literacy have been through two rounds of review to obtain feedback from states and organizations. Governing State Leads will be invited to vote to approve the five ELA/literacy claims for the Content Specifications beginning on November 28. Voting will close on December 5. A link to the voting site will be sent under separate cover.

SMARTER Balanced Higher Education Leads to be designated—Member state leads: Letters to each state's higher education leadership (i.e., the State Higher Education Executive Officer and public college and university system leaders) were sent this week requesting that they designate a state Higher Education Lead by no later than Monday, November 28. Jaci King will share the names of these individuals once they have been designated.

Item and task specifications contract—The Consortium selected Measured Progress as the winner of RFP-04. Measured Progress will work with the Item Development Work Group, the Performance Task Development Work Group, and the Accessibility and Accommodations Work Group to develop specifications for each item type and performance task, a style guide for all materials, bias and sensitivity guidelines, and accessibility and accommodations guidelines to support the SMARTER Balanced Assessment System.

TAC meeting—The third meeting of the SMARTER Balanced Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will occur on December 14–15, 2011, in San Francisco, CA. As in the past, our member states are welcome to participate in person or virtually via live webinar. Those states wishing to participate in person may send one representative and will be required to use their own funds for transportation, lodging, per diem, and other expenses. If your state is planning to participate in person, please email [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) by the close of business on Tuesday, December 6, so we can confirm that the meeting space will accommodate all participants.

SMARTER Balanced is now on Twitter—Follow @SmarterBalanced to get resources and links to the latest news about the Consortium.

### **Upcoming Events**

Second round IT Systems Architecture Workshop Showcase—Consortium members will have an opportunity to review the revisions and enhancements to the Systems Architecture Workshop deliverables via a webinar-based showcase on Monday, November 21, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. (Pacific). The purpose of this meeting is to review the feedback from the October 28 and October 31 webinars and walk through the updated architecture documentation in a number of key areas. Please see separate email for agenda and webinar details.

All States meeting—Governing State and Advisory State Leads: The next All States meeting will occur on Tuesday, November 22, at 10 a.m. (Pacific). Please see separate email for agenda and webinar information.

### **Resources**

Collaboration Site launch—Consortium members: The new internal Collaboration Site has been fully launched. The new website replaces the current internal website and features extended capabilities, such as calendar sharing and document collaboration. The existing internal website will continue to be supported for the next month to allow adequate time for all members to transition to the new Collaboration Site. You should have already received access information that includes your username and password. If you have not received your login details or are having trouble logging into the site, please contact [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org).

ESEA Flexibility Waiver support—State Chiefs and state leads: A document designed to support SMARTER Consortium states applying for ESEA Flexibility is now available. The document is specifically

designed to support a state’s answer to question 1.C “Develop and Administer Annual, Statewide, Aligned, High-Quality Assessments that Measure Student Growth” and could be included in its entirety as a complete document or a state could use portions of the document for their application. Please note that the third paragraph of the document must be updated with specific state information, including the state’s role in the Consortium. The document is available on the internal SMARTER Balanced websites at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/document-library> and <http://smarter.k12partners.org/content/document-library>. If you require a copy of your state’s signed Memorandum of Understanding, an electronic scan can be sent via email to the SMARTER Balanced state lead within 24 hours of receiving the request.

Relevant news items—State members: Weekly selections of news items relevant to the Consortium are available on the internal SMARTER Balanced websites at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/communications/news-archive> and <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 websites at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/communications/weekly-update-archive> and <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 websites at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/meetings> and <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).

### ***Following up on last week’s question about the components of the summative assessment: Why is SMARTER Balanced creating performance tasks for grades 9 and 10 when the summative assessment will only be administered in grade 11?***

Included in the Consortium’s proposal to the U.S. Department of Education is a commitment to develop “up to six performance tasks by grade 11 for both ELA and mathematics.” Governing States considered the possibility that at least some of these performance tasks may need to be administered before grade 11. At the time the proposal was being written, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) had not yet been finalized. Governing States had agreed to the provision regarding performance tasks as one means by which the CCSS might be covered, while minimizing the impact on students’ 11th-grade instructional time. However, our proposal also acknowledged that we would need to have confirming validity evidence in hand before scores from grades 9 or 10 could be used as part of the overall high school summative score. So, whether performance tasks will be administered in 9th and 10th grade—and the particular way in which the performance tasks roll out for grades 9 and 10—is still in development, and will require careful consideration by several of the Consortium’s work groups and the Governing States. We anticipate that these issues will be resolved through the test specifications development process, which will begin in early 2012.

--

**SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium**

WestEd—Project Management Partner

[sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org)