

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 71

Week ending Friday, June 29, 2012

Top News This Week

- South Carolina becomes a Smarter Balanced Governing State
- Draft Summative Assessment ELA and Mathematics Blueprints and Constraints sent out for review

The Smarter Balanced 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 this website, please contact sbac@wested.org.

From the Executive Director

Greetings. I am pleased to welcome South Carolina as a Governing State. Since 2010, South Carolina has been an Advisory State and an active participant in the Consortium. We are excited about continuing to learn from the Palmetto State's expertise with high-quality assessments as we develop and implement the Smarter Balanced system.

This week, I joined many of our Consortium members in Minneapolis for CCSSO's National Conference on Student Assessment (NCSA). This annual forum brings together test developers, publishers, education agencies, and other experts to discuss the latest in educational assessment. For over 40 years, the annual NCSA has been the premier forum for assessment professionals of all levels and backgrounds.

As you may have guessed, our work was the topic of much discussion this week. Several Smarter Balanced representatives led panels and discussions on a wide range of issues related to the development of the assessment system and the future of assessments in general.

In a session moderated by Executive Committee Co-Chair Carissa Miller, I provided an update on the progress of the Consortium to date, including the item/task research and development now underway in preparation for the Pilot Test of the assessment system early next year. The presentation is available at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Smarter-NCSA-Presentation.pdf>.

Executive Committee Co-Chair Joseph Martineau presented on the potential of comparing Smarter Balanced scores to existing state assessments. Other Smarter Balanced representatives, including work group members and state leads, participated in discussions on interoperability and IT systems architecture, support for English language learners and students with disabilities, automated scoring, and the design and implementation of the assessments.

I continue to be impressed by the depth of knowledge and commitment to these issues from our members. Thank you all for your ongoing leadership. JW

Announcements

State membership changes—South Carolina has officially become a Governing State in the Consortium.

Draft Summative Assessment ELA and Mathematics Blueprints and Constraints—K-12 state leads and work group members have been asked to review and provide feedback on the draft Summative Assessment ELA and Mathematics Blueprints and Constraints. Comments are due by end of day July 2. Please refer to the email sent from sbac@wested.org on June 25.

Formative Assessment Master Work Plan approved—Governing States voted to approve the Formative Assessment Master Work Plan (Formative MWP) as amended to address feedback that some materials should be ready and available for teacher use at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year. The vote approved the six main activities of the Formative MWP and associated dates. The Formative MWP can be viewed here: <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/master-work-plans>.

Technology readiness data collection and best practices—The first data collection window for the Technology Readiness Tool closes on June 30. At that time, a snapshot will be taken of all the information submitted by schools, and the first readiness analysis will be completed. To assist states during this critical period, Smarter Balanced has compiled best practices based on experiences to date with the Technology Readiness Tool. Please see email and attached document sent from sbac@wested.org on June 19.

Upcoming Events

TAC meeting—The next meeting of the Smarter Balanced Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will occur on July 25–26, 2012, in Denver. 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 its own funds for transportation, lodging, per diem, and other expenses. If your state is planning to participate in person, please email sbac@wested.org as soon as possible so we can confirm that the meeting space will accommodate all participants.

Resources

External website—The Smarter Balanced external website can be found at www.smarterbalanced.org. The site showcases the innovative work of the Consortium and provides frequent updates on activities, milestones, and events. Visitors are able to explore an interactive timeline of activities by school year, download new fact sheets and resources, and sign up for a monthly e-newsletter.

Collaboration Site—Consortium members: The Consortium uses an internal collaboration site hosted by Google Docs to enable information sharing and collaboration among the member states. If you are a state employee in a Consortium state and need access to material on this website, please contact sbac@wested.org.

Relevant news items—State members: Weekly selections of news items relevant to the Consortium are available on the internal Smarter Balanced website at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/communications/news-archive>.

Prior versions of the Weekly Update—State members: Previous Smarter Balanced Weekly Updates are available on the internal Smarter Balanced website at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/communications/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 <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/meetings>.

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.

What are test blueprints?

A test blueprint provides detailed specifications for a student assessment. The blueprint describes the purpose of the assessment, what content will be covered—in this case, the Smarter Balanced Content Specifications—and the proportions of the test devoted to each topic. It also includes the approximate test length and technical details related to scoring. In collaboration with work groups and experts, Smarter Balanced is developing test blueprints for the summative assessment in English language arts/literacy

and mathematics, which are now being reviewed by member states.

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Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

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