Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 74 Week ending Friday, July 20, 2012

Top News This Week

- CTB/McGraw-Hill selected for achievement level descriptors contract
- Recording of webinar by Complete College America available

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. Last weekend, I had the privilege of participating in CCSSO's Summer Institute in Coeur d'Alene, ID. It was a great opportunity to share the work of the Consortium with state Chiefs and some of the nation's top education leaders.

I was pleased to report on the progress we are making in developing a next generation assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards. One of the themes of my remarks was to reinforce the commitment that Smarter Balanced has made to provide resources to teachers and administrators throughout the development, and implementation, of the assessment system.

As I have mentioned previously, much of the Consortium's work this summer and fall will center on research and development of items and tasks for the Pilot Test of the assessment system early next year. We are making good progress. Governing States have recruited teachers to participate in the item writing process. Cognitive labs are underway, and small-scale trials will begin this fall.

In addition, several Governing States have expressed interest in participating directly in the item development process. Under this arrangement, states would work closely with educators and experts to write and review—guided by the Smarter Balanced Item Specifications—assessment items and performance tasks that would be included in the Pilot Test and/or Field Test.

States have considerable experience in developing assessment items. We believe that a blended item development process, with a portion of item and task writing overseen by states, will result in deeper engagement in our work, more involvement from educators, and a stronger item bank for the assessment system.

I continue to be amazed by the commitment and dedication of our state partners to the goal of creating a balanced, high-quality assessment system that improves teaching and learning. Thank you for your ongoing support. JW

Announcements

Achievement level descriptors contract—The Consortium selected CTB/McGraw-Hill as the winner of RFP-12. CTB/McGraw-Hill will work with the Consortium to develop general and grade-specific achievement level descriptors (ALDs) in English language arts and literacy and mathematics (grades 3–8 and 11) for the Smarter Balanced summative assessments.

Recording of webinar by Complete College America available—Stan Jones, president of Complete College America (CCA), discussed CCA's new report on remediation and the role of the Common Core

and Smarter Balanced in advancing the completion agenda. A recording of the July 18 webinar presentation can now be viewed at: https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/higher-education/higher-education-webinars. CCA's recent report on remediation can be accessed at http://www.completecollege.org/state data/.

Governing States elect Deb Sigman to Executive Committee—The Governing States have elected Deb Sigman, state lead from California, to the Smarter Balanced Executive Committee. Deb has over 35 years of experience in the assessment and accountability arena in K-12 California public schools. She has served as a district administrator overseeing various aspects of assessment, research, and evaluation, including the development of district-level assessments and the training of teachers in the interpretation and use of assessment data. She served as California's State Testing Director from January 2004 until May 2008, when she then became the Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction for the California Department of Education. She currently serves as the vice-chair of the National Assessment Governing Board-CCSSO Policy Task Force and as a member of the Education Information Management Advisory Consortium (EIMAC) Assessment Task Force. Deb will fill the position Joseph Martineau recently vacated when he was elected as Executive Committee Co-Chair. The term runs through September 30, 2012.

Collaboration Conference meeting—Smarter Balanced is pleased to announce that registration is now available for the upcoming Collaboration Conference and Chiefs meeting, September 11–14, 2012, in St. Louis, MO. Invited participants have received an email invitation from sbac@wested.org with instructions on registration for the conference. Events during this collaboration meeting are role-specific, so please be certain of the session days you are signing up to attend. Please refer to the email invitation sent from sbac@wested.org on July 13. Once you have reviewed the invitation, if you have any questions regarding your attendance on a particular day, please check with the Project Management Partner (WestEd) at sbac@wested.org.

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 Apps 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 support will Smarter Balanced provide to help states and schools interpret assessment results?

Smarter Balanced will develop web-based professional learning tools for teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders to understand how to access and interpret Smarter Balanced interim and summative score reports.

As part of this work, Smarter Balanced will convene state leadership teams charged with recruiting an average of 100 educators per state to form state networks of educators. These educator networks will provide feedback on the development of formative assessment resources and professional learning tools. They will also serve as ambassadors to help states engage stakeholders with resources and trainings to understand and interpret assessment results.

Additional information is available in the Formative Assessment Master Work Plan: http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Formative-Assessment-Master-Work-Plan-Narrative.pdf.

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