

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

### Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 79

Week ending Friday, August 24, 2012

#### Top News This Week

- New Accessibility and Accommodations materials available
- Webinar recording available - National Procurement Opportunity for 1:1 Computing
- Reminder to submit candidates for Initial Achievement Level Descriptors development
- ASCD launches Common Core resources website

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](mailto:sbac@wested.org).

#### From the Executive Director

Greetings. Two reports out this week shed light on the transition to the Common Core State Standards. The annual Phi Delta Kappa International/Gallup survey of Americans' views on public education asked for the first time about the Common Core.

The survey found that while the public is divided on some education issues—such as the performance of public schools and support for school vouchers—most Americans (75 percent) believe that the Common Core will provide consistency in the quality of education between school districts and states. In addition, 53 percent believe that the standards will make education in the U.S. more competitive globally.

These findings are encouraging, although there is much work to be done to increase public understanding of the standards. Previous surveys have demonstrated that awareness of the Common Core is much higher among educators than among the public as a whole. Results of the PDK/Gallup poll are available at <http://www.pdkintl.org/poll/index.htm>.

Also this week, ACT released *The Condition of College and Career Readiness 2012*, which details the national and state-by-state performance of high school students who took the ACT exam (about half of all graduates in 2012). Consistent with results from 2011, just one-quarter of students met all four college readiness benchmarks (in English, reading, mathematics, and science). Full results are available at <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr12/index.html>.

The ACT results—along with other statistics, such as postsecondary remediation rates—shine a spotlight on the challenge ahead. Implementing college and career readiness standards and assessments will likely show that many students are not prepared to succeed after they graduate. However, as the report notes, “Promising practice research shows that systemic alignment of key policies and school activities empowers educators to make notable gains in student achievement.”

Our work as a consortium is critical to this effort. The Smarter Balanced Theory of Action calls for full integration of the learning and assessment systems, leading to more informed decision-making and higher-quality instruction, and ultimately to increased numbers of students who are well prepared for college and careers. JW

#### Announcements

New accessibility and accommodations materials available—Two documents produced as part of Contract-06 Accessibility and Accommodations Policies and Materials are now available on our

Collaboration Site. Member states are encouraged to download these comprehensive documents to help inform decisions on the effectiveness of various accommodation strategies. *Literature Review of Testing Accommodations and Accessibility Tools for Students with Disabilities* and *Summary of Literature on Empirical Studies of the Validity and Effectiveness of Test Accommodations for ELLs: 2005–2012* are being used as the Consortium develops a common set of guidelines and policies for accessibility and accommodations. These documents can now be found on the Collaboration Site at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/document-library>, and will soon be posted on the external website for use by a broader audience.

National Procurement Opportunity for 1:1 Computing webinar recording available—On August 22, Jeff Mao, Learning Technology Policy Director at the Maine Learning Technology Initiative, presented a webinar to the Consortium about the National Procurement Opportunity for 1:1 Computing. This webinar covered the process for procurement, an overview of the existing model used in Maine, and a discussion of how 1:1 computing can provide insights into a possible strategy that could improve states' ability to support instruction and assessment with technology. The webinar recording is available on the Collaboration Site under the Webinars tab.

Recruitment for initial achievement level descriptors development—The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is seeking highly qualified K-12 educators with deep understanding of the Common Core State Standards in English language arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics to support development of the Consortium's initial achievement level descriptors (ALDs) for its summative assessments for grades 3–8 and 11. These educators will be joined by higher education faculty from across the nation. This panel of experts will convene at a workshop in Las Vegas, Nevada, on October 1–5 to develop draft grade-specific descriptors that summarize the knowledge, skills, and abilities expected of students at each achievement level. The draft ALDs developed at this meeting will serve as the basis for subsequent reviews.

Governing State leads or their designees are asked to nominate four (4) individuals for the K–12 group, two for ELA/literacy and two for mathematics, with the intent of ensuring that each Governing State will have at least one representative participating at the workshop. Please see the August 15 email sent from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) for more details on providing nominees for consideration.

ASCD launches Common Core resources website—EduCore (<http://educore.ascd.org>), a new website developed by ASCD, provides easy access to evidence-based tools and resources to help middle and high school educators implement the Common Core State Standards. The site includes videos and instructional resources from the Literacy Design Collaborative and the Shell Centre for Mathematical Education. Registered users can save their searches, organize tools, and annotate resources. In the future, ASCD intends to expand the number of mathematics formative assessment lessons and sample literacy modules.

### **Upcoming Events**

Chiefs meeting—The next meeting of the member state Chiefs will occur via webinar on Monday, August 27, at 1:00 p.m. (Pacific).

Collaboration Conference meeting on September 11–14 in St. Louis, MO— Registration for the Collaboration Conference has closed. Registered participants who have yet to receive confirmation of their hotel and flight information should contact Karrie Guss at [karrie.guss@k12.wa.us](mailto:karrie.guss@k12.wa.us).

### **Resources**

Quarterly Program Report available—The quarterly project report for the period ending June 31, 2012, can be found at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Quarterly-Report-June-2012.pdf>. The report details the Consortium's progress in key areas and priorities for the next three months.

External website—The Smarter Balanced external website can be found at [www.smarterbalanced.org](http://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](mailto:sbac@wested.org).

Follow Smarter Balanced on Twitter—Follow @SmarterBalanced for resources and links to the latest news about the Consortium.

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](mailto:sbac@wested.org).

*What is the schedule for additional data collection through the Technology Readiness Tool?*

Earlier this year, Smarter Balanced and PARCC collaborated to launch the Technology Readiness Tool, a project designed to help states plan for the transition to online assessments. The first data collection window served as a baseline inventory of technology and supporting infrastructure that will inform policy and improvements of the tool. Subsequent data collection is scheduled for fall 2012, spring 2013, fall 2013, spring 2014, and summer 2014. Additional information will be available through State Readiness Coordinators.

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### **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

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