

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 81

Week ending Friday, September 7, 2012

Top News This Week

- **American Institute for Research selected for test delivery system contract**
- **Consortium update webinar now available**
- **Reminder: Executive Committee nominations close on 9/12**

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. Next week, more than 100 participants will gather in St. Louis for the second Smarter Balanced Collaboration Conference. These twice yearly meetings provide a great opportunity to discuss design and implementation issues of the assessment system with our Chiefs, K-12 leads, and higher education leads; to improve coordination between work groups and contractors; and to reflect on our progress and map out a plan for the next six months.

The conference also brings together work groups and contractors, allowing for cross-state and cross-work group collaboration. The first collaboration conference, held in San Antonio last February, jumpstarted contracts related to accessibility and accommodations policy, psychometrics, item development, and test specifications. In St. Louis, we will dive into the test delivery system, the process for developing achievement level descriptors (ALDs), and the Pilot Test—among other issues.

On Wednesday, September 12, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., state Chiefs will meet in a public session. As a state-led Consortium, it is critical to engage our Governing States in detailed policy discussions and, ultimately, put major decisions to a vote. Additional information is posted on the Smarter Balanced website at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/news/smarter-balanced-to-convene-member-states-and-education-experts-in-st-louis/>.

Finally, many Smarter Balanced members and partners may be interested to know that the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB)—which sets policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—is seeking nominations for five positions to serve on the board beginning in 2013. I encourage anyone interested in determining the future of the country's largest student assessment to submit an application. Additional information is available at <http://www.nagb.org/nominations2013>. JW

Announcements

American Institute for Research (AIR) selected for test delivery system contract—The test delivery

system encompasses test registration, presentation of the assessment items to students, and delivery of the data from the test to reporting systems. Under this contract, AIR, in collaboration with Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), will modify its existing test delivery system to meet Smarter Balanced specifications for the Pilot Test of the assessment system in early 2013 and for the Field Test in early 2014. The system will be optimized for release in its open-source version in fall 2014. Additional information is available at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/news/smarter-balanced-awards-test-delivery-system-contract-to-american-institutes-for-research/>.

Consortium update webinar now available—A recently recorded webinar with Joe Willhoft provides an overview of the Consortium’s work and upcoming milestones. The 30-minute presentation covers progress on test design and development; special populations; technology infrastructure; procurement; and collaboration and partnerships. The webinar can be shared through YouTube and viewed on the Smarter Balanced website at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/resources-events/webinars/>.

Executive Committee nominations close on 9/12—State leads: Per the Consortium’s governance model, Executive Committee (EC) member positions are filled on a rotating basis. Nominees are currently being sought for two EC positions and for one of the two EC Co-Chair positions. The new members will fill positions currently held by Joseph Martineau (co-chair), Dan Hupp (at-large member), and Deb Sigman (at-large member), all with terms starting October 1, 2012, and ending September 30, 2014.

All nominees must come from a Governing State and have approval from their Chief State School Officer indicating support for participation. Anyone can nominate a candidate, and individuals can nominate themselves. Nominations close on Wednesday, September 12. Once the slate of nominees is finalized, the Governing State leads will vote to select the new EC Co-Chair and two EC Members. Please see the August 27 email sent from sbac@wested.org for details.

The RFP for the Digital Library with Formative Assessment Practices and Professional Learning Resources for Educators (RFP-23) has been released to vendors—Proposals are due October 15, 2012, to develop and implement 1) a Digital Library technology application; 2) Smarter Balanced–developed classroom instruction and professional learning resources and an inventory of currently available resources; and 3) the recruitment of 2,700+ educators across member states for State Networks of Educators to participate in the development of the technology, the resources, and the training process. The RFP is available at <http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/Jobs-Contracts.aspx>.

Upcoming Events

Collaboration Conference meeting 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.

Resources

Contacting Smarter Balanced—The Smarter Balanced external website (www.smarterbalanced.org) showcases the innovative work of the Consortium and provides frequent updates on activities, milestones, and events. Visitors can submit questions or reach Smarter Balanced staff at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/contact-us/>. Consortium members may contact sbac@wested.org for information on upcoming meetings and events.

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.

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.

Will there be training available on the English language arts/literacy rubrics? Will “anchor papers” be made available to use when training teachers?

As part of the development of formative assessment practices and strategies, Smarter Balanced will create a digital library of professional development materials, resources, and tools aligned to the Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balanced claims and assessment targets. The digital library will include professional development materials related to all components of the assessment system, such as scoring rubrics and work samples. More information about the development of formative assessment tools and resources 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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