

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 89

Week ending Friday, November 2, 2012

Top News This Week

- **Webinar for K-12 and Higher Education State Leads on ALDs**
- **ELA webinar recording available**
- **Sample item release webinar recordings available**
- **Regional leadership meetings registration reminder**
- **Collaboration Conference reminder to submit travel reimbursement request**

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. Access to this website is currently limited to Consortium state department of education officials and their delegates. For news and other important information related to Consortium activities, we encourage individuals to visit our public website at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org> and sign up for the monthly newsletter by clicking on the Stay Connected link located at the top of the homepage.

From the Executive Director

Greetings. This has been a devastating week for states along the East Coast. As we think about family, friends, and colleagues affected by the storm, let's keep in mind what a very important role schools play in children's day-to-day lives. For many students, the stability of their school is a welcome comfort in an often unpredictable and chaotic world. The physical damage from Sandy is easy to see, but the true toll on children and families is much greater. Thanks to everyone who is working to speed the recovery.

This week, I want to highlight two recent reports about what states are doing to implement the Common Core. These reports provide timely information to guide policy decisions and professional development for teachers. The first comes from ASCD, which is working with four states—including North Carolina—to provide technical assistance with Common Core implementation. Fulfilling the Promise of the Common Core State Standards discusses takeaways from statewide educator summits, including the importance of sustained professional development to help educators understand the instructional shifts in the standards; high-quality, aligned instructional resources; the leadership role of principals to support implementation; and the importance of engaging higher education partners.

With respect to the new assessments, educators most often request sample items, information about technology requirements, guidance about how to use assessment data to inform instruction, and support for the transition. The report spotlights the Smarter Balanced sample items and performance tasks. It is online at <http://bitly.com/U0E5s2>.

In October, NGA published the first of four issue briefs on state trends in Common Core

implementation. This brief focuses on increasing educator effectiveness through teacher preparation, certification, and professional development. Other issue briefs in the series will identify priorities for state executives, including the need to communicate a vision for reform, lead transitions in state accountability policies, and create a structure to coordinate implementation and reallocate resources. The briefing is available online at <http://bit.ly/U1PQhL>.

Smarter Balanced has supported member states with technical assistance for Common Core implementation, including membership in CCSSO's Implementing the Common Core State Standards collaborative. As we move into the third year of the grant, the Consortium will begin to make formative assessment and professional learning resources—developed in collaboration with state networks of educators—available to states.

Finally, I want to remind everyone about next week's election. Exercise your right to vote by casting a ballot on November 6. JW

Announcements

Webinar for K-12 and Higher Education State Leads on ALDs—On Tuesday, November 15, at 11:00 am Pacific, Smarter Balanced will host a webinar on the status of the Initial Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) that were developed during the October 2012 workshop. The webinar will provide an overview of the ALD draft materials, as well as information on how to submit feedback. The initial ALD draft materials will be posted prior to the webinar. Details will be available next week from sbac@wested.org.

ELA webinar recording—On October 25, Barb Kapinus of Smarter Balanced and Sue Pimentel and Jennifer Dean of Student Achievement Partners presented an informational webinar about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for ELA/literacy to the Consortium. The webinar provided a deeper understanding of the CCSS for ELA/literacy, with a focus on Smarter Balanced and its development of assessments aligned to the CCSS, and included an overview of the CCSS's implications for assessment, including the criteria for evaluating CCSS-aligned items and passages. A recording of the webinar is available here: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/resources-events/webinars/>.

Recordings of webinars for higher education on sample item release—On October 16 and October 31, Smarter Balanced hosted webinars for higher education faculty on the sample math and ELA items. Recordings of both of the webinars are available here: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/resources-events/webinars/>.

Regional leadership meetings registration reminder—Invitations have been sent out for the Regional Leadership Meetings. These meetings will be an opportunity for Chief State School Officers, State Higher Education Executive Officers or other state higher education leaders, and governors' education policy advisors to discuss in a small-group setting the critical issues confronting states as they move toward full-scale implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced Assessment System. Please refer to the emails sent on October 22 and 23 from sbac@wested.org for more details on how to register. The registration deadline is Friday, November 9.

Collaboration Conference reminder to submit travel reimbursement request—Thank you to those of you who have already submitted reimbursement requests for your participation in the Smarter Balanced Collaboration Conference in St. Louis. To those of you who have not already done so,

please complete and submit your request as soon as possible. Instructions on how to submit reimbursement requests were attached to the email sent from sbac@wested on October 25. If you have questions, please contact Karrie Guss at karrie.guss@k12.wa.us.

Smarter Balanced Pilot Test information—Early next week, state leads will receive information about the Smarter Balanced Pilot Test scheduled to begin in February 2013. The Consortium requests the help of state leads in disseminating this information, as well as coordinating with state leadership, and encouraging the participation of schools in the Pilot Test. A high-level overview of the Pilot Test opportunity was presented during the All States meeting on October 23, 2012, and is available on the Smarter Balanced Collaboration Site under the Meetings tab.

Upcoming Events

Webinar on CCSS for mathematics—Part II—Student Achievement Partners' Jason Zimba and Smarter Balanced Director of Mathematics Shelbi Cole will present an informational webinar about the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSSM) to the Consortium on November 15 from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Pacific (please note the new date). The objective of the webinar is to practice identifying three shifts called for by the Standards in assessment items through analysis of examples and non-examples. State-level mathematics curriculum and assessment specialists are encouraged to attend. Please see the October 16 email sent from sbac@wested.org for details.

TAC meeting—The next meeting of the Smarter Balanced Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will occur on December 12–13, 2012, in Las Vegas. 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.

2012 National Teacher of the Year webinar about sample assessment items—On November 9, CCSSO will host a webinar with 2012 National Teacher of the Year Rebecca Mieliwocki on the recently released Partnership for Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced sample assessment items in English language arts. Ms. Mieliwocki, a seventh grade English teacher, will offer her reactions and guidance to fellow teachers on what the new assessment items can illustrate about the Common Core State Standards and accompanying assessments that their students will be experiencing soon. The webinar will be held on Friday, November 9, from 11:00–12:00 p.m. Pacific. To register, please visit <https://ccsso.webex.com/ccsso/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=719177081>. An analogous webinar focused on mathematics will also occur at a later date.

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.

When will Smarter Balanced release minimum technology requirements for the assessment system?

Smarter Balanced is developing a Technology Strategy Framework & System Requirements Specifications document that will be released later this fall. The requirements are informed by the results of the first data collection through the Technology Readiness Tool, as well as ongoing work with our test delivery system contractor. States will soon be able to use the Technology Readiness Tool to conduct a gap analysis comparing existing resources to requirements for administering the assessment system in the 2014-15 school year.

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