

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

### Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 102

Week ending Friday, February 15, 2013

#### Top News This Week

- Pilot Test support meetings for K-12 Governing State Leads on 2/20 and 2/22
- Pilot Test communications toolkit now available
- Wireless Generation selected for Formative Assessment contract
- NAEP report webcast announced
- Executive Committee member election process launched
- Remember to register for the Collaboration Conference

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. Smarter Balanced is at two watershed moments in the development of our next generation assessments: Pilot Testing and the award of our Formative Assessment contract. Today, each state's K-12 state lead has received their Pilot Test communications toolkit. The toolkit is designed to help member states in our state-led Consortium build greater understanding, awareness, and involvement among their key stakeholders: local districts, schools, principals, teachers, students, and parents of our Pilot Testing initiative. I strongly urge our state-level folks to use these valuable assets and to encourage their state's communications departments/public information officers to attend the Communications Webinar we will be hosting on how to use the Toolkit in support of state communications efforts. Invitations were mailed on February 15, 2013.

Just recently, we have closed negotiations and have entered into a contract for the development of our "formative tools and processes" component. Our contractor Wireless Generation, part of Amplify, will be working with our member states to develop a digital library of formative assessment practices and professional learning resources for educators aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Through this online resource teachers will have access to formative assessment strategies and practices that enhance day-to-day classroom-based assessment instruction as well as resources to interpret Smarter Balanced interim and summative score reports. The development of the formative assessment and professional learning resources will be guided by quality criteria established by a national panel of experts on formative assessment practices, adult online professional learning, and quality instruction incorporating universal design for a range of diverse learning. This Formative Assessment component includes the establishment of educator teams in each of our member states. These teams—an average of about 100 per state—will be composed mostly of teachers, and will also include building administrators and local LEA Curriculum & Instruction staff. The Smarter Balanced Formative Work Group will have its "kick-off" meeting with Wireless Generation in early March. JW

#### Announcements

Pilot Test support meetings for K-12 Governing State Leads on 2/20 and 2/22—K-12 Governing State Leads: Two webinar meetings will be offered next week to support K-12 Governing State Leads during the launch of the Pilot Test. Both webinars will start at 11:00 a.m. Pacific. The February 20 webinar will provide an opportunity for a status check and issue escalation, and the February 22 webinar will provide

an opportunity to debrief the first week. Please see the February 12 email sent from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) for details.

Pilot Test communications toolkit now available—A Pilot Test communications toolkit has been distributed to state leads to help them reach district administrators, educators, and the media. The toolkit includes: template newsletter and website copy; template press release; key messages and talking points; and presentation slides. Please see the February 15 email sent from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) for details and toolkit attachments. The toolkit is also posted at the “Pilot Communications for State Leads” tab of the Collaboration Site.

Wireless Generation selected for Formative Assessment contract—Smarter Balanced selected Wireless Generation, part of Amplify, to design and implement the formative assessment practices and professional learning component of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System. The formative assessment component will consist of 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 State Leadership Teams and about 100 educators per member states to create a State Networks of Educators that will provide input on the digital library and assessment system usability.

NAEP report webcast announced—On Thursday, February 21, 2013, at 9:00 a.m. Pacific time / 12:00 p.m. eastern, the National Assessment Governing Board will host “Lessons for All: Decades of NAEP Data from the Mega-States,” a live event in Sacramento, California (with simultaneous webcast), to release the results of a new report from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Drawing on nearly two decades’ worth of data, Mega-States: An Analysis of Student Performance in the Five Most Heavily Populated States in the Nation shows trends in student achievement in California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas in the subjects of mathematics, reading, and science at grades 4 and 8. Webcast participants will learn about these states’ changing demographics, how those shifts are related to student achievement, and how the findings offer insights for educators and policymakers nationwide. A panel of education experts representing the mega-states will be on hand to discuss the report. Register and learn more at [www.nagb.org/mega-states](http://www.nagb.org/mega-states).

Executive Committee member election process launched—State leads: Nominees are currently being sought for the position of Executive Committee member, to fill the remainder of the term held by Deb Sigman who was recently elected to EC Co-Chair. The term of this position runs through September 30, 2014. Anyone can nominate a candidate, and individuals can nominate themselves. All nominees must come from a Governing State and have approval from their Chief State School Officer indicating support for participation. Nominations close on Thursday, February 28. Please see the February 13 email sent from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) for details.

State Lead Pilot Test administration training webinar presentation posted on Collaboration Site—The presentation slides accompanying the State Lead Pilot Test administration webinar held Thursday, January 30, are posted on the Collaboration Site at the “Pilot Communications for State Leads” tab on the Collaboration Site home page.

Revised ALDs released—Following a series of review from member states, partners, and individual stakeholders, Smarter Balanced released revised achievement level descriptors (ALDs) for a second round of review. Smarter Balanced welcomes feedback on the content, coherence, clarity, and rigor of the ALDs through February 20, 2013. The revised ALDs, new feedback survey link, and feedback survey results for the first draft can be found here: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/achievement-level-descriptors-and-college-readiness/>. A recording of the February 6 webinar highlighting the revisions is also posted.

### **Upcoming Events**

Webinar for state policymakers—Chiefs and state leads: The National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) is hosting a webinar that we want you to be aware of on Tuesday, February 26, 2013, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Pacific, with a primary audience of state legislators and legislative staff. Please encourage

the appropriate individuals in your legislature to attend this important briefing. See the January 28 email sent from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) for more details.

Remember to register for the Collaboration Conference—Smarter Balanced is pleased to announce that registration is now available for the upcoming Collaboration Conference and Chiefs meeting, March 19–22, 2013, in Arlington, VA (near Reagan National Airport). Invited participants have received an email invitation from [sbac@wested.org](mailto: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](mailto:sbac@wested.org) on January 25. 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](mailto:sbac@wested.org).

## **Resources**

Contacting Smarter Balanced—The Smarter Balanced external website ([www.smarterbalanced.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:sbac@wested.org).

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

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).

*Is there a difference between the minimum technology requirement on the Smarter Balanced website and the technology requirements for the Pilot Test?*

The Pilot Test was developed to support all of the requirements indicated in the Smarter Balanced Technology Strategy Framework and System Requirements Specifications which is posted on the Smarter Balanced website (<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/technology/>).

**For general questions about the Pilot or specific questions related to uploading students and navigating the online delivery system, call the AIR help desk at 866-815-7246 or email at [smarterbalancedhelpdesk@air.org](mailto:smarterbalancedhelpdesk@air.org).**

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