

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 103

Week ending Friday, February 22, 2013

Top News This Week

- Recording of Pilot Test administration training webinar posted on Pilot portal
- Fiscal agent completes successful audit
- Sustainability meeting for state leads on 3/13

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 week the Consortium achieved something unprecedented in large-scale assessment—Smarter Balanced Pilot testing opened Wednesday, February 20, 2013, across our 21 Governing States. This marks a major accomplishment for the Consortium, due to extraordinary effort and talent by member states, Consortium staff, and contractors.

On behalf of the Executive Committee and the senior management leadership team, I want to express my profound thanks to everyone who made reaching this achievement possible and to those who continue to work steadfast to support the ongoing Pilot testing effort. Through Pilot testing we are reaching our goal of learning how to improve the many facets of our assessment system, including the Field Test experience. Lessons learned throughout the Pilot Test are being documented for future improvements and I am grateful for the continued patience and support of schools, districts, and states as we learn (sometimes the hard way) from Pilot testing.

Here is an update on Pilot Test activity as of deadline for this column:

Schools and students have been actively testing on the Pilot Test system since 2/20/13.

As of 8:00 a.m. Pacific today (2/22/13)

- 7,759 Tests have been started.*
- 3,167 Tests have been completed.*
- There have been up to 1,200 concurrent users on the system.
- Schools in at least 15 states have tested.
- The Consortium continues to provide multiple avenues of support for Pilot testing through administration materials and trainings, Help Desk, and the State Lead hotline.

*This information will be updated regularly and posted on the Collaboration Site home page under "Pilot Test Update." JW

Announcements

[Recording of Pilot Test administration training webinar for test administrators posted on Pilot portal](#)—A recording of the Pilot Test administration training webinar for state test coordinators and test

administrators is posted on the Smarter Balanced Pilot Test portal. The PowerPoint presentation from the webinar is also posted, as are other Pilot Test resources. Please see the “Training and Tutorials” section of the Resources page at http://sbac.portal.airast.org/Pilot_Test/resources.html?pivot.

Fiscal agent completes successful audit—The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium’s fiscal agent, the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, just completed a formal audit of the Request for Proposal (RFP) process and internal controls for Fiscal Year 2012 (July 1, 2011–June 30, 2012). The audit was performed by the Washington State Auditor’s office. The primary objective of the audit was to determine whether the agency has established and maintained internal controls designed to reasonably ensure compliance with federal laws, regulations, and requirements applicable to the federal program. Smarter Balanced is happy to report that the Washington State Auditor’s office determined no audit findings were identified for the nine RFPs or resulting contracts that were analyzed.

Sustainability meeting on 3/13—State leads: the Sustainability Task Force has been working in conjunction with the Executive Staff and McKinsey & Company to compile and recommend an overall Sustainability Plan. Governing States will vote on the plan at the Smarter Balanced Collaboration Conference on March 20. In advance of that meeting, the set of recommendations will be reviewed with the K-12 and Higher Education Leads on March 13, 12:00–2:00 p.m. Pacific (3:00–5:00 p.m. eastern). The objectives of the discussion will be to review the overall plan that the Task Force has compiled, and seek input on how to best set up and prepare for a successful endorsement of the plan on March 20. Please see the February 15 email from 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 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.

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 for details.

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 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 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 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. Registration will remain open until March 1, however, the availability of hotel rooms can no longer be guaranteed.

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.

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 students' Pilot Test scores be available to the public?

The Pilot Test is designed to be a test of the items, performance tasks, and testing system—not an opportunity to report on student learning. Therefore, schools participating in the Pilot Test will not receive student scores.

Is the list of schools participating in the Pilot Test public information?

To avoid distractions for students and schools, this information should not be shared publicly.

Is there a plan to provide communication materials in Spanish?

Yes, a Spanish translation project is underway that will include translating factsheets and an overview page on the website that will link to additional Common Core resources in Spanish. The project will be complete by the end of March.

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Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

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