

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

### Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 111

Week ending Friday, April 19, 2013

#### Top News This Week

- Alaska approved as Advisory State
- Reminder to submit Finance Committee member recommendations by 4/26

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 busy week, with three significant events occurring on three different fronts. Early in the week, a team of Smarter Balanced staff and state leads traveled to Southern California to meet with folks at UCLA/CRESST. The purpose of the meeting was to move forward on implementing a plan, submitted by CRESST and adopted by the Chiefs of our Governing States, to have Smarter Balanced states affiliate with CRESST to establish a sustainable organizational structure as our federal grant comes to a close. Both organizations continue to be very excited about this partnership. One of the side conversations at our meeting was to confirm the decision to hold our September Collaboration Conference on the UCLA campus on September 9–12. Smarter Balanced members will be getting more information shortly.

The second event this week, I will discuss below. The third event occurred today, with senior Smarter Balanced staff joining me at a meeting hosted by the Hewlett Foundation. This is a fairly regular meeting we have with our foundation supporters, including the Hewlett Foundation, the Lumina Foundation, the Gates Foundation, and the Sandler Foundation. All of these foundations have, from time to time, stepped up to provide targeted assistance to Smarter Balanced to help us address unanticipated and/or special projects. Keeping them informed of our plans and progress is an important part of our work.

Now, back to the middle of the week. On Wednesday, Stanley Rabinowitz from WestEd and I met with our program officers at the Department of Education and a panel of technical experts that they had gathered to review a set of documents we pulled together in response to a request for an early "Technical Review" of both consortia. The technical criteria we were asked to provide responses to are at the end of this section. I can share three takeaways from this endeavor:

- Are the technical requirements daunting? Yes. With this effort, the Department makes it clear that they will continue to expect that state assessments meet high quality standards, and that they will expand upon those expectations (e.g., see first bullet in the "Validity Framework" section #1).
- Is Smarter Balanced up to this challenge? Yes. Even though there are still almost two years before the summative assessment goes live in the spring of 2015, we were able to document progress on almost all of the quality criteria, submitting more than 150 documents as evidence of our meeting these criteria.
- Finally, did the expert panel suggest anything we need to do better? Yes. As is the case with all knowledgeable advisors, there were several comments from the Wednesday meeting that Stanley and I found to be quite useful.

Bottom line: Though organizing and coordinating the evidence took substantial time and effort, we fully recognize the value of responding to this early request from the Department to provide evidence of the quality of our work.

We were asked by the Department to respond to the following data elements:

### **Validity Framework**

1. *Evidence that the summative assessment measures student knowledge and skills against a common set of college- and career-ready standards in mathematics and English language arts in a way that:*

- *Covers the full range of those standards, including standards against which student achievement has been traditionally difficult to measure;*
- *Provides an accurate measure of student achievement across the full performance continuum, including for high- and low-achieving students; and*
- *Provides an accurate measure of student growth over a full academic year or course.*

2. *Evidence that the assessment system consists of assessment components in mathematics and in English language arts that include, for each subject, one or more summative assessment components that produce student achievement data and student growth data (both as defined in the NIA) that can be used to determine whether individual students are prepared for success, without remediation, in credit-bearing entry-level courses in an institution of higher education (IHE), incorporating feedback from higher education and work force leads.*

- *Students who score proficient or above are college- and career-ready or on track to be college- and career-ready; and*
- *Test scores are related to outside variables as intended; intended and unintended consequences of the assessment are evaluated.*

3. *The assessment system is fair and produces valid measures for all students, including English learners and students with disabilities.*

- *The assessment system is fair and accessible and produces valid measures for English learners; and*
- *The assessment system is fair and accessible and produces valid measures for students with disabilities.*

4. *The assessment system produces data, including student achievement data and student growth data, that will validly inform:*

- *Determinations of school effectiveness for purposes of accountability under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA); and*
- *Determinations of individual principal and teacher effectiveness for purposes of evaluation and identifying professional development and support needs.*

5. *Other claims, as determined by the Consortium. The Consortium should identify each additional claim about student achievement that will be made by the Consortium.*

- *For each claim, the Consortium should provide the approach to determining the validity of use of scores for that purpose.*

### **Assessment Design and Development**

1. *Assessment Design—evidence of progress toward ensuring that the assessments are:*

- *Aligned to the academic content standards in terms of content and process;*
- *Capable of eliciting complex student demonstrations or applications of knowledge or skills; and*
- *As much as feasible, are free of bias; all items and assessments are accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners; and valid inferences about students' knowledge and skills can be made.*

## 2. Scoring and Reporting—evidence of progress toward ensuring that:

- *Test users have clear explanations of and rationales for the meaning, intended interpretation, and use of data, as well as the limitations of specific assessment scores;*
- *Assessment results are expressed in terms of academic achievement standards, not just scale scores or percentiles;*
- *The standard error of measurement has been determined;*
- *Clear scoring rubrics are developed to evaluate whether the student's response is sufficient to demonstrate the knowledge and abilities tested by the item;*
- *Procedures are in place for testing, evaluating, and validating the scoring of assessment results, including automated scoring; and*
- *Scoring and reporting structures are consistent with the sub-domain structures of the test design.*

## 3. Test Security

- *Provisions are in place for preventing and mitigating the disclosure of test items or test forms, consistent with legal and professional ethics requirements, before and during test administration, particularly for performance tasks or other more memorable types of items, as well as after the test administration.*
- *Item authoring and test delivery systems have proper safeguards and controls to minimize test security risks.*
- *Clear test administration procedures and policies are established to reduce the risk of test security violation or item and test exposure.*

JW

### **Announcements**

Alaska approved as Advisory State—The Consortium is pleased to announce that the Executive Committee has approved Alaska as a Smarter Balanced Advisory State. We extend a warm welcome and look forward to Alaska's collaboration as we continue the development of the assessment system.

Special invitation to Chiefs to attend 4/23 Governing States meeting for Field Test planning—At the next Governing States meeting on April 23, Smarter Balanced will be seeking input from states on their interest in different levels of engagement and use of the Smarter Balanced Field Test. In particular, we want to explore and discuss:

- Options that we should either pursue or that may emerge to minimize (or eliminate) the need for “double-testing” in 2014, and
- Feasibilities related to meeting requests from several states that want to use 2014 as an “early adoption” accountability year.

Due to the importance of these topics to states, a special invitation is extended to Chiefs from Governing States to attend the April 23 Governing States meeting at 10:00 a.m. Pacific. The discussion will be informed by the information gathered during previous conversations with Chiefs and state leads and from recent conversations with USED. The Chiefs' input will help the Consortium move forward with planning and represent the wishes of our states as we talk to USED on these topics. Please see the April 9 email sent from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) for WebEx and conference call details.

Reminder to submit Finance Committee member recommendations by 4/26—Governing State K-12 and Higher Education Leads: The Consortium seeks your assistance in identifying qualified individuals from your state to serve on Smarter Balanced’s Finance Committee. This four-person committee will assist the Chief Operating Officer, Tony Alpert, in managing the Consortium’s budget and financial policies. Membership terms will be segmented as either two-year or four-year terms. We hope that you will consider both employees within your state departments of education and institutions of higher education as possible candidates. Please see the April 11 email sent from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) for more information on the recommendations, which are requested by April 26.

## **Resources**

Video about Common Core Assessments—This New York–produced video helps parents understand that scores may be lower with the new Common Core assessments: <http://www.engageny.org/resource/video-for-parents-and-families-about-the-common-core-assessments>.

Quarterly Program Report available—The quarterly program report for the period ending December 31, 2012, can be found at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/resources-events/publications-resources/>. The report details the Consortium’s progress in key areas and priorities for the next three months.

Collaboration Conference materials available—Materials handed out during the Collaboration Conference have been posted on the Consortium’s internal Collaboration Site and can be found at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/meetings/collaboration-conference-march2013>.

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>.

--

## **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

WestEd—Project Management Partner  
[sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org)

aa\_G