

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

### Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 112

Week ending Friday, April 26, 2013

#### Top News This Week

- Braille technology survey sent to states
- Initial definition of College Content-readiness Policy approved

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 our state-led Smarter Balanced Consortium launched its expanded communications and outreach campaign *On Track and Moving Forward: The Smarter Balanced Assessment System* (<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Smarter-Balanced-Milestones.pdf>) in Washington, DC, to create greater awareness and understanding of the work of Smarter Balanced among education insiders and stakeholders in the public and private sectors.

During this two-day event on April 23 and 24, Dr. Jaci King, our director of higher education collaboration, joined me in a series of briefings to update policymakers and partners to discuss how our work is going and to report on the major milestones we have met, including: the status of the Pilot Test, our progress on implementing a sustainability plan, and developments on collaboration among our K-12 and higher education partners.

Wednesday meetings included two Capitol Hill briefings for Senate and House staff of the education committees and Congressional staff from Smarter Balanced member states and territories. The Senate briefing was attended by 18 staff, including staff from the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee. The House briefing was attended by 13 staff, including staff from the House Education & Workforce Committee. On Thursday we hosted a briefing attended by about thirty membership organizations, funders, and advocates at the National Press Club.

All discussions were substantive and thoughtful. Participants were eager to learn more about the Smarter Balanced research and validation agenda, technology readiness in our schools, and the college content-readiness policy and its implications for students and institutions of higher education. The meetings also allowed us to engage with new stakeholders and to articulate the work ahead.

The feedback from all three meetings was gratifying. Responses were very positive; participants really appreciated the information and the opportunity for free-flowing questions and answers. Those in attendance urged us to continue our engagement with these influential policymakers and advocates.

These meetings are part of a focused communications effort to:

- Increase awareness among education thought leaders, advocacy organizations, and professional organizations that Smarter Balanced is on track to develop a comprehensive, next-generation assessment system by the 2014-15 school year, and

- Engage new partners—including organizations representing teachers, parents, policymakers, the business community, and communities of color—in two-way communication that promotes transparency and increased understanding, and that seeks feedback and meaningful involvement in the work of Smarter Balanced. JW

### **Announcements**

Braille technology survey sent to states—K-12 State Leads: Smarter Balanced is requesting state lead support in conducting a survey regarding their state's usage of technology to support visually impaired students. The survey was developed by the CCSSO ASES (Assessing Special Education Students) SCASS and is designed to be distributed to teachers of visually impaired students. The information collected from the survey will be used to inform the Consortium's decisions about serving the assessment needs of these students. Please see the April 22 email sent from [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org) for details on how to share the survey within your state. Participants are asked to respond by May 13.

Initial definition of College Content-readiness Policy approved—The revised definition of the College Content-readiness Policy was approved by Governing States. The approved version will be posted on the public website next week.

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.

### **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.

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)

*How can I get access to the Practice Test online?*

Online access to the Practice Test will be through the Smarter Balanced external website and will not require a username and password, meaning that schools and districts can use the Practice Test for professional development activities and for discussions with parents, policymakers, and other interested stakeholders.

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**Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

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