

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 116

Week ending Friday, May 24, 2013

Top News This Week

- Reminder: Accessibility and Accommodations Framework issued
- Reminder: Career Readiness Task Force Nominations commenced

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. Today marks the end of another major milestone in the development of the Smarter Balanced next-generation assessment system, the Pilot Test. It has been an unprecedented effort with 653,124 students participating in the Pilot Test. Data collected from the Pilot Test will be used to inform item writing, accessibility features, accommodations, and test administration decisions for the Field Test as we continuously improve the assessments many of you will place before students in the spring of 2015. On behalf of our staff and Governing state leads, I wish to express profound thanks to each of you who played a role in creating the success of the Pilot Test.

On May 29 we take another giant step in the development of the next-generation assessment system: the initial release of Smarter Balanced Practice Tests aligned to the Common Core in grades 3-8 and 11 in English Language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. Starting next Wednesday, students, teachers, and parents nationwide will have access to sets of assessment questions aligned to the Common Core. We hope these Practice Tests are used for professional development and for discussions with policymakers and other interested stakeholders. The Practice Tests will be freely available through a link on the Smarter Balanced website at: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/practice-test/>.

While the Practice Tests will provide a preview of the Smarter Balanced assessments, we want users to know that they will not encompass the full range of content that students may encounter on the operational assessments. As such, they should not be used to guide instructional decisions about students. Also, users should know that this early release of practice items will be presented in a "fixed form" (i.e., not computer adaptive) and that users will not receive reports or scores. Although the Practice Tests follow a fixed-form model, the operational assessment system will be computer adaptive.

Development of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System will continue after the release of the Practice Tests and through summer 2014 in collaboration with member states and educators. By fall 2013, this initial version of the Practice Tests will be augmented with additional features, including:

- Full array of performance tasks for mathematics (including classroom-based activities);
- Classroom-based activities for ELA performance tasks in all grades;
- Scoring rubrics for items requiring extended writing;
- American Sign Language translation and other accommodation and accessibility tools.

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Announcements

Accessibility and Accommodations Framework issued—Smarter Balanced is making available its Accessibility and Accommodations Framework for broad consideration and review. The framework was distributed to K-12 state leads, Higher Education Leads, and member state Chiefs on May 14. We invite feedback from national organizations. Consolidated feedback on behalf of organizations is especially encouraged. Instructions for submitting feedback may be found below.

Grounded in current research and a deep understanding of the current diversity of accessibility policies and practices across state and national assessment systems, the Smarter Balanced Accessibility and Accommodations Framework provides the conceptual underpinning for accessibility approaches, accessibility tools and accommodation options, and implementation guidance for Smarter Balanced assessments.

Based on feedback provided by states, advisory panels on English language learners and students with disabilities, and national organizations such as the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), this revised version of the framework represents a significant step toward accessibility and accommodations policies that contribute to more accurate and valid measures of achievement and growth for all students, regardless of visual, auditory, linguistic, or physical needs.

Instructions for Submitting Feedback (feedback is requested by June 14)

1. **Download** the draft Accessibility and Accommodations Framework here:
<https://wested.box.com/smarterbalanced-aa-framework>
2. **Annotate** the Framework document using the Comments feature in MS Word.
3. **Save** your annotated file with your first and last names appended to the end of the file name (e.g., A&A Framework_JohnSmith.docx)
4. **Upload** your feedback via the form located here:
<https://www.smartsheet.com/b/form?EQBCT=aa6233fe1d524544a7a56643de9f9bf8>

If you need assistance accessing or uploading the file, please contact sbac@wested.org.

Career Readiness Task Force Nominations commenced—To assist the Consortium in establishing a plan for describing student performance on the Smarter Balanced Assessment in relation to academic readiness for further career education and training, Smarter Balanced is seeking nominations for a small task force to be composed of experts in career and technical education at the secondary and postsecondary levels. The task force will include representatives of K-12 and higher education as well as members of the business community. The goal is for the task force to deliver a set of recommendations, which will be thoroughly vetted by the Consortium prior to a vote at the spring 2014 Collaboration Conference. Nominations are due to Jaci King (Jacqueline.King@smarterbalanced.org) by close of business (local time) on Friday, May 31.

In The News

Oregon Department of Education, 5/16/2013

News release: "Smarter Balanced selected to replace OAKS starting in 2015"

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/news/Announcements/announcement.aspx?ID=9099&TypeID=5>

Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 5/14/2013

Andy Smarick blog on Smarter Balanced

<http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/common-core-watch/2013/by-the-company-it-keeps-smarter-balanced.html>

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

How long will the assessments take to administer?

Smarter Balanced Governing States adopted the preliminary summative test blueprints (<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Smarter-Balanced-Preliminary-Test-Blueprints.pdf>) in November 2012. The test blueprints include critical information about the number of items, score points, and depth of knowledge for items associated with each assessment target. Estimated testing times are available in a supporting document, Scoring Reporting and Estimated Testing Times (<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Preliminary-Summative-Blueprints-Supporting-Document.pdf>). It is important to note that these are estimates of test length for most students. Smarter Balanced assessments are designed as untimed tests; some students may need and should be afforded more time. Smarter Balanced will use data collected through the Pilot and Field Tests to revise estimated testing times.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

WestEd—Project Management Partner
sbac@wested.org

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