

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

### Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 123

Week ending Friday, July 12, 2013

#### Top News This Week

- Director of State Services joins Smarter Balanced staff

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 the 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. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is committed to supporting member states and territories as they implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Communicating early and often with parents and the public about the Common Core and the work of the Consortium is critical to raising awareness and garnering support. JW

#### Key Points to Highlight about the Common Core and Smarter Balanced

- **The new academic goals—or standards—in mathematics and English language arts/literacy are part of states' efforts to ensure that all students graduate high school prepared for college and the workplace.** The standards are grounded in extensive research on what skills and knowledge students need to succeed in first-year college courses and career-training programs.
- **Teachers, experts, and state leaders worked to develop a consistent set of standards** called the Common Core State Standards. These standards have been adopted by more than 45 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Schools that serve our military families overseas.
- Moving far beyond simply memorizing facts and figures, **the new standards challenge students to develop a deeper understanding of subject matter, learn how to think critically, and apply what they are learning to the real world.** Rather than racing to cover a curriculum that is "a mile wide and an inch deep," teachers will be able to significantly narrow and deepen their lessons so that students master critical skills.
- In the 2014-15 school year, states will roll out online assessments to accurately measure how well students are meeting these new learning goals. **These new assessments are a critical step in implementing the Common Core and preparing all students for college and careers.** They will help teachers and parents monitor student progress and provide information about each student's unique needs.
- More than two dozen states are working in partnership as part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to develop next-generation assessments. **By working together, these states are able to share their expertise and accomplish much more than they could on their own—at a lower cost.** After 2014, Smarter Balanced will continue to be a state-led organization committed to providing high-quality assessment tools and information to educators and policymakers in member states.
- Smarter Balanced assessments include formative, interim, and summative assessments—a **high-quality system that can help improve teaching and learning for all students,**

**regardless of race, gender, or background.** With Smarter Balanced, teachers will have access to **tools and strategies to differentiate instruction**, as well as optional spot checks that provide **meaningful feedback on student achievement throughout the year.**

- States are working hard to ensure **that teachers and principals are fully supported with dynamic tools and resources that will prepare them to help all students** reach the new standards.
- As we challenge students to reach these new rigorous expectations, there will be struggles. **We must all work together** to bring the new standards to life in the classroom, support teachers, and engage students in ways that help them achieve these new educational goals.

#### Resources for Engaging Parents and the Public

- **Common Core State Standards Initiative**  
(<http://www.corestandards.org>)  
CoreStandards.org is the official website for the Common Core State Standards. The site includes general information, resources, and news on the CCSS.
- **The Common Core State Standards: An Introduction for Families and Other Stakeholders**  
(<http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/common-core-state-standards-introduction-families-other-stakeholders>)  
This two-page flyer—available in both English and Spanish—was developed by the Aspen Institute to explain what the CCSS are and why they are important for improving public education.
- **Council of the Great City Schools Three-Minute Videos**  
(<http://www.commoncoreworks.org/domain/157>)  
The Council of the Great City Schools developed a three-minute video—available in English and Spanish—that gives a brief introduction to the CCSS and explains how the standards will help students prepare for college and careers. The style and accessible language make these videos well suited for presentations to community and parent groups.
- **Common Core State Standards Videos by the James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy and the Council of Chief State School Officers**  
([http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Digital\\_Resources/Common\\_Core\\_Implementation\\_Video\\_Series.html](http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Digital_Resources/Common_Core_Implementation_Video_Series.html))  
The Hunt Institute and the Council of Chief State School Officers developed this series of videos featuring the authors of the standards discussing the development process and how the standards impact students.
- **Council of the Great City Schools Parent Roadmaps for English Language Arts and Literacy and for Mathematics**  
(<http://www.commoncoreworks.org/domain/114>; <http://www.commoncoreworks.org/domain/149>)  
The Council of the Great City Schools developed parent roadmaps that provide grade-by-grade information for parents about the expectations of the CCSS, including examples of topics and content at each grade level and tips on supporting learning at home.
- **PTA Parents' Guide to Student Success**  
(<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583>)  
The National PTA created guides in English and Spanish for grades K-12 to inform parents about the CCSS and support their children's success. The guides outline the key concepts that students should be learning in each grade in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, methods for building relationships with teachers, and tips for planning for college and careers.

#### **Announcements**

Director of State Services joins Smarter Balanced staff—Smarter Balanced is pleased to welcome Dacia Hopfensperger as Director of State Services. The Director of State Services has primary responsibility for coordinating outreach efforts to member state K-12 education agencies with regard to critical elements of the design and implementation of the Smarter Balanced assessment system. The Director will serve as the Consortium's primary point of contact for each member state's lead K-12 representative (K-12 Lead), designing communication efforts to keep K-12 Leads well informed about Consortium activities and fielding questions and concerns as they arise. Hopfensperger brings with her a diverse skill set in the field

of K-12 education, including experience as an assistant district superintendent, a school psychologist, and an assessment specialist at the state and district levels. “We are delighted to have Dacia join the Smarter Balanced team,” said Jacqueline King, Ph.D., Smarter Balanced Director of Higher Education Collaboration. “She brings strong experience in assessment, a passion for the capacity of standards and assessments to help transform teaching and learning, and a commitment to providing states with the help they need to successfully implement the Smarter Balanced assessment system. I am confident that she will quickly become an invaluable resource to our member states.”

Practice Test scoring guides released—Practice Test scoring guides for grades 3–8 and 11 (ELA/literacy and mathematics) and scoring guides for grades 3, 7, and 11 Braille (mathematics) were posted on Monday, July 1, to the Practice Test portal:

[http://sbac.portal.airast.org/Practice\\_Test/resources.html#scoringGuides](http://sbac.portal.airast.org/Practice_Test/resources.html#scoringGuides). Scoring guides for the remaining materials will be posted on August 15, 2013.

### **In The News**

*Hartford Courant*, 7/10/13

Article: “State Seeks To Avoid ‘Double-Testing’, Promote Early Use Of New Computerized Test”

<http://www.courant.com/news/education/hc-malloy-flexibility-0711-20130710,0,6440898.story>

*EdWeek*, 7/10/13

Article: “Adaptive Testing Gains Momentum, Prompts Concerns”

[http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/07/10/36adaptive\\_ep.h32.html?r=677920852](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/07/10/36adaptive_ep.h32.html?r=677920852)

*EdWeek*, 7/8/13

Article: “Educations Department Panel Says Test Consortia Need Sharper Focus on Accessibility”

[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2013/07/ed\\_dept\\_technical\\_review\\_of.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2013/07/ed_dept_technical_review_of.html)

*SI&A Cabinet Report*, 7/8/13

Article: “Costs to Implement New Student Testing System Starting to Pile Up”

<http://www.siacabinetreport.com/articles/viewarticle.aspx?article=4875>

*NPR*, 7/1/13

Interview: “Education Program’s Data Collection on Kids Angers Critics”

<http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=197713655&m=197713666>

### **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)

Answering Open Questions will resume on Friday, July 19, 2013.

### **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

WestEd—Project Management Partner

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