

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

### Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 125

Week ending Friday, July 26, 2013

#### Top News This Week

- Juan D'Brot elected to Smarter Balanced Executive Committee
- Governing States invited to attend Accessibility and Accommodations webinar on Reading and Listening

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. First of all, I want to welcome Juan D'Brot as a new member of the Smarter Balanced Executive Committee. Juan, the West Virginia Executive Director for Assessment and Accountability, was elected this past week by his colleagues in the Consortium's 22 Governing States. Juan has been involved in Consortium activities for quite a while, and currently is a co-chair of our Test Administration/Student Access Work Group.

Juan's election was necessitated by the departure of our long-standing friend and colleague Dan Hupp, who recently retired from his position as Director of Assessment for the Maine Department of Education. Dan's contributions to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium are difficult to catalog. Dan was with the Consortium from its earliest days, played a substantial role in the development of our grant application to the U.S. Department of Education for our funding, was a charter member of the Executive Committee, and served as liaison from the Executive Committee to the Item Development/Performance Tasks Work Group. I've known Dan for years prior to our work on the Consortium, and have always appreciated his common-sense approach to solving problems that, at first, appear to be intractable, but with a fresh perspective can be resolved. So, we'll miss you, Dan; keep in touch and stay well.

I also want to welcome North Dakota to the Consortium as a Governing State. North Dakota recently decided to change its status from Advisory State to Governing State. We look forward to having North Dakota join us in the decision-making process as we move into our final year of development. JW

#### Announcements

Juan D'Brot elected to Smarter Balanced Executive Committee—Juan D'Brot, State Lead from West Virginia, co-chair of the Smarter Balanced Test Administration/Student Access Work Group, and recent member of the Executive Committee's communication subcommittee, has been elected to the Executive Committee.

Governing States invited to attend Accessibility and Accommodations webinar on Reading and Listening—As part of the Consortium's ongoing efforts to develop a common set of accessibility and accommodations guidelines, a series of Governing States webinars have been planned to discuss key policy issues. The first of these webinars is scheduled for August 1, 2013, and will be devoted to addressing issues regarding Reading and Listening. Call-in information was sent to state leads on July 15.

North Dakota approved as a Governing State—The Consortium was pleased to announce that the Executive Committee approved North Dakota as a Smarter Balanced Governing State. “I am pleased to welcome North Dakota as a Governing State in the Consortium,” said Joe Willhoft, Ph.D., Executive Director of Smarter Balanced. “This decision represents an important step toward preparing all North Dakota students for college and the workplace.” Smarter Balanced extends a warm welcome to North Dakota and looks forward to its collaboration as we continue to develop the assessment system.

NGA Center request for proposals for policy academy grant—The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), partnering with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), requests proposals for a policy academy grant titled “Improving Student Learning at Scale.” Teams from up to six states will receive support with the implementation of the CCSS. Strong preference will go to states that have adopted the CCSS and have not received a Race to the Top Round 1 or 2 grant. Proposals are due on August 21. For further information, please contact Kate Nielson at (202) 614-5319 or [knielson@nga.org](mailto:knielson@nga.org).

### **In The News**

*Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 7/24/13*

Article: “Chicken Little Goes to School”

<http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/flypaper/2013/chicken-little-goes-to-school.html>

*Idaho Statesman, 7/23/13*

Article: “Reader’s View: New Exam Will Help Students Build Critical-Thinking Skills”

<http://www.idahostatesman.com/2013/07/23/2666601/new-exam-will-help-students-build.html#storylink=cpy>

*The Washington Times, 7/22/13*

Article: “Engler: Common Core Can Make America Competitive”

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jul/22/common-core-can-make-america-competitive/>

*The Hechinger Report, 7/18/13*

Article: “Why Our Nation Needs Common Standards”

[http://hechingerreport.org/content/why-our-nation-needs-common-standards\\_12662/](http://hechingerreport.org/content/why-our-nation-needs-common-standards_12662/)

*EdWeek, 7/17/13*

Article: “North Dakota Drops Out of PARCC, Commits to Smarter Balanced”

[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2013/07/north\\_dakota\\_drops\\_out\\_of\\_parcc.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2013/07/north_dakota_drops_out_of_parcc.html)

*T.H.E. Journal, 7/10/13*

Article: “Getting Your School Tech Ready for Common Core Assessments”

[http://thejournal.com/Articles/2013/07/10/Getting-Your-School-Tech-Ready-for-Common-Core-Assessments\\_0.aspx?Page=4&p=1](http://thejournal.com/Articles/2013/07/10/Getting-Your-School-Tech-Ready-for-Common-Core-Assessments_0.aspx?Page=4&p=1)

### **Resources**

Key Facts About the Common Core State Standards—Alliance for Excellent Education publications on the CCSS can be found at the following links: <http://www.all4ed.org/files/CCSSFacts.pdf> and <http://www.all4ed.org/files/CommonCore101.pdf>.

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 are the assessments being tested before implementation in the 2014-15 school year?*

Smarter Balanced is incrementally testing the content of the assessment and the technology that will support the assessment. Smarter Balanced has already completed:

- Cognitive labs: Individual students provided feedback to test developers about their experience with the innovative test questions, accommodations for students with special needs, and the testing software.
- Small-scale trials: Promising types of questions and software features were further tried out with hundreds of students.
- Pilot Test: Students at about 5,000 schools across the Consortium responded to a preliminary pool of test questions and performance tasks.
- In spring 2014, the Consortium will conduct its Field Test to present the entire pool of Smarter Balanced items to students across member states. The Field Test is expected to involve students in about 15 to 20 percent of Consortium schools, and will gather the information necessary for final evaluation of item quality.

### **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

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