

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

### Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 130

Week ending Friday, August 30, 2013

#### Top News This Week

- Deb Sigman reelected as Executive Committee Co-Chair
- Nomination period for two Executive Committee members-at-large
- Practice Test Phase 2 released
- State Leadership Teams have first face-to-face regional sessions

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. Ah, the Friday before Labor Day—a new school year is upon us. A number of years ago, with the help of a couple of teacher friends, I hit upon the following metaphor:

Summer vacation is like the weekend—the latter part of June is the Friday night, July and August are the Saturday and Sunday, and Labor Day weekend is the Monday morning.

Naturally, over time, this has spawned numerous spin-offs. For example, the last week in August is late Sunday night—coinciding with The Ed Sullivan Show, when it's time to get your homework done. Better start getting ready for school!

I think part of what makes this metaphor work so well is that for those of us in education, the cycling of school years really is part of an ongoing renewal process. Each day is marked by the rising sun; each week is marked by a new Monday morning; the end of summer is marked by the beginning of a new school year. I also think that being bound to the school-year renewal cycle explains, in part, the irrepressible optimism of educators. Who among us can avoid being energized by being in proximity to the excitement and wonder shown in the faces of our children as they head off to a new school year, new learning, new adventures? Welcome back; here we go again. JW

#### Announcements

Deb Sigman reelected as Executive Committee Co-Chair—Deb Sigman, state lead from California, has been reelected to the position of Executive Committee Co-Chair.

Nomination period for two Executive Committee members-at-large—The nomination period for two Executive Committee members-at-large will begin next Tuesday, September 3. These terms will commence on October 1, 2013, and conclude on September 30, 2014. Governing State Leads will be sent nomination materials on Tuesday, September 3.

Practice Test Phase 2 released—Phase 2 of the Practice Test was successfully implemented this weekend and can be found at <http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/>. Phase 2 updates include expanded accommodations to cover all grades and the addition of mathematics performance tasks and

associated scoring rubrics.

State Leadership Teams have first face-to-face regional sessions—State Leadership Teams (SLTs) for formative assessment kicked off their face-to-face meetings this week in Sacramento, Raleigh-Durham, and Seattle. Meeting topics included applying gatekeeping criteria, going live with the Digital Library, and oversight, support, and training of State Networks of Educators (SNEs). Each SLT is made up of 8–12 K-12 educators and higher education faculty in positions of state leadership, and their regional meetings will continue throughout September.

Field Test information for schools and districts distributed (Repeat)—In an effort to provide both schools and districts with an early understanding of the Field Test commitment and to promote and encourage participation, Smarter Balanced has released an informative and customizable document for Consortium states to distribute. States were sent this document on August 22, along with instructions on how to customize it to reflect different participation and recruitment options.

Governing States are invited to attend a series of accessibility and accommodations webinars (Repeat)—As part of the Consortium’s ongoing efforts to develop a common set of accessibility and accommodations guidelines, a series of webinars have been planned for Governing States to discuss the following topics:

- *Reading and Listening: held August 1*
- *Scribe and Calculator Use: held August 8*
- *Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines Walkthrough: held August 13*
- *Review of Changes to Guidelines Based on Feedback: September 4*

Call-in information was sent to state leads on July 15.

### **In The News**

*THE Journal*, 8/28/13

Article: “Smarter Balanced Field Test Expanded”

<http://thejournal.com/articles/2013/08/28/smarter-balanced-field-test-expanded.aspx>

*Education Week*, 8/28/13

Article: “States Eye Changes as They Move Toward Common Assessments”

[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2013/08/states\\_eye\\_changes\\_as\\_they\\_move\\_toward\\_common\\_assessments.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2013/08/states_eye_changes_as_they_move_toward_common_assessments.html)

*Idaho Press-Tribune*, 8/27/13

Article: “Idaho’s students are ready for higher academic expectations”

[http://www.idahopress.com/members/idaho-s-students-are-ready-for-higher-academic-expectations/article\\_bcf3b67c-0eba-11e3-8f00-001a4bcf887a.html?mode=iqm](http://www.idahopress.com/members/idaho-s-students-are-ready-for-higher-academic-expectations/article_bcf3b67c-0eba-11e3-8f00-001a4bcf887a.html?mode=iqm)

*LA School Report*, 8/27/13

Article: “CA Getting ‘Smarter’ with New Tests to Probe Critical Thinking”

<http://laschoolreport.com/ca-getting-smarter-with-new-tests-to-probe-critical-thinking/>

*Detroit Free Press*, 8/25/13

Article: “Nancy Kaffer: Longer Michigan waits on Common Core, farther behind we get”

<http://www.freep.com/article/20130825/OPINION05/308250082/michigan-education-test-scores-common-core>

*New Britain Herald (CT)*, 8/24/13

Article: “Statewide exam will adapt to each student, take less time”

<http://www.newbritainherald.com/articles/2013/08/24/news/doc5219685d441ff425136559.txt>

*Norwich Bulletin* (CT), 8/24/13

Article: "New education standards focus on practical lessons"

[http://www.norwichbulletin.com/x1155155594/New-education-standards-focus-on-practical-lessons?zc\\_p=0](http://www.norwichbulletin.com/x1155155594/New-education-standards-focus-on-practical-lessons?zc_p=0)

*Record Journal* (CT), 8/24/13

Article: "'Smarter Balanced' replaces state tests"

<http://www.myrecordjournal.com/wallingford/wallingfordnews/2160830-129/smarter-balanced-replaces-state-tests.html>

*Education Week*, 8/20/13

Article: "Calculator Use on Exams to Shift With Common Core"

[http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/08/21/01calculators\\_ep.h33.html?tkn=MRMFDm5kj4o6Cg0a1dE5iWP4qt90eqEKvRLp&cmp=clp-edweek](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/08/21/01calculators_ep.h33.html?tkn=MRMFDm5kj4o6Cg0a1dE5iWP4qt90eqEKvRLp&cmp=clp-edweek)

*Bakersfield Californian*, 8/18/13

Article: "CHRISTINE FRAZIER: Schools on better footing as another academic year begins"

<http://www.bakersfieldcalifornian.com/opinion/community-voices/x244795726/Schools-on-better-footing-as-another-academic-year-begins>

*Capital City Weekly* (AK), 8/14/13

Article: "Practice tests for new standards are online"

[http://www.capitalcityweekly.com/stories/081413/new\\_1167211089.shtml](http://www.capitalcityweekly.com/stories/081413/new_1167211089.shtml)

*Idaho Education News*, 8/14/13

Article: "A seat at the table gives Idaho SBAC influence"

<http://www.idahoednews.org/news/a-seat-at-the-table-gives-idaho-sbac-influence/>

## 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>.

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>.

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 questions and information on upcoming meetings and events.

## Answering Open Questions

We routinely use this space to address a question or two on the minds of Consortium members. Send your questions to [sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org).

*When is the Smarter Balanced Field Test scheduled to be administered?*

The Smarter Balanced Field Test is scheduled to be administered between March 18 and June 6, 2014.

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**Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

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