

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 131

Week ending Friday, September 6, 2013

Top News This Week

- Collaboration Conference to be held September 8–11
- The Smarter Balanced Spanish website was launched on September 4
- Nomination period for two Executive Committee members-at-large

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. I am extremely proud to announce another major step in the Smarter Balanced goal to reach as broad an audience as possible. This week Smarter Balanced posted Spanish- language supports on our website. Education statistics indicate that about three-fourths of the nation's English language learner (ELL) students have Spanish as their native language.

Making Spanish-language materials available is part of the Smarter Balanced commitment to keeping stakeholders well informed about our progress. With the growing number of ELLs across the United States, we hope these additions to our website will help Smarter Balanced states in their efforts to communicate with Spanish-speaking parents, teachers, and other stakeholders.

The Spanish webpage includes:

- Smarter Balanced brochure
- Assessment System factsheet
- Parent factsheet
- Teacher factsheet
- Indicators of Success factsheet
- Links to Common Core State Standards resources
- General Q&A

I hope these resources will be helpful in communicating with parents and teachers about the development and implementation of next-generation assessments. The webpage for Spanish speakers can be accessed from the Smarter Balanced website [here](#), or at: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/parents-students/como-ayudar-a-todos-los-estudiantes-a-que-tengan-exito/>.

Please feel free to contact our communications director, Eddie Arnold, with any questions: at eddie.arnold@smarterbalanced.org.

JW

Announcements

Collaboration Conference to be held September 8--11—The twice-yearly Smarter Balanced Collaboration Conference will be held next week at the University of California, Los Angeles. The conference includes

discussions of policy among Chiefs, K-12 State Leads, and Higher Education State Leads; assessment updates presented by Smarter Balanced executive staff; and face-to-face meetings between work group co-chairs, contractors, and Smarter Balanced staff.

The Smarter Balanced Spanish website was launched on September 4— The Spanish webpage, linked from the homepage (<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/>), launched this week. The new Spanish webpage and Spanish factsheets can assist states in communicating with Spanish-speaking teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. According to the U.S. Department of Education, approximately three-fourths of ELL students in the U.S. use Spanish as a native language. Translating select materials into Spanish allows the Consortium to reach a broader audience as the assessments move from design to testing and implementation.

Nomination period for two Executive Committee members-at-large (Repeat)—The nomination period for two Executive Committee members-at-large began last Tuesday, September 3. These terms will commence on October 1, 2013, and conclude on September 30, 2014. Governing State Leads were sent nomination materials on Tuesday, September 3.

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

Practice Test Phase 2 released (Repeat)—Phase 2 of the Practice Test was successfully implemented 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 (Repeat)—State Leadership Teams (SLTs) for formative assessment kicked off their face-to-face meetings last 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.

In The News

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 9/5/13

Press Release: “Smarter Balanced Launches Spanish Webpage to reach Broader Audience”

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/news/smarter-balanced-launches-spanish-webpage-to-reach-broader-audience/>

Education Week, 9/5/13

Article: “Common Assessment Group Launches Spanish Webpage”

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning-the-language/2013/09/common_assessment_group_launch.html

Education Week, 9/5/13

Article: “California Proposes Major Assessment Changes”

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2013/09/california_proposes_major_assessment_changes.html?cmp=SOC-SHR-TW

Education Week, 9/5/13

Article: “States May Move Closer to Uniform Way of Identifying ELLs”

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/09/05/03ell.h33.html>

Idaho Press-Tribune, 9/5/13

Article: “Idaho preps for Common Core tests”

http://www.idahopress.com/members/idaho-preps-for-common-core-tests/article_b0cc9b80-15ee-11e3-8b3d-0019bb2963f4.html

Los Angeles Times, 9/4/13

Article: "California accelerates shift in student testing"

<http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-state-tests-20130905,0,6459120.story>

Delaware Online, 9/3/13

Article: "Delaware officials promote, experience the real Common Core"

http://www.delawareonline.com/article/20130904/NEWS03/309040030/Delaware-officials-promote-experience-real-Common-Core?nclick_check=1

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 9/3/13

Press Release: "Smarter Balanced to Convene Member States and Education Experts in Los Angeles"

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/news/smarter-balanced-to-convene-member-states-and-education-experts-in-los-angeles/>

The News & Observer, 8/30/13

Article: "Common core is 'mission critical'"

<http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/08/30/3150897/mission-critical-common-core.html>

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

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=jgm

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

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

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

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.

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) 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 questions and information on upcoming meetings and events.

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Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

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