

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 132

Week ending Friday, September 13, 2013

Top News This Week

- Governing States approve *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* and Data Privacy Principle
- Smarter Balanced to answer teachers' questions on Teaching Channel
- Collaboration Conference held September 8–11

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. Whew! Yesterday we just concluded the fifth semi-annual Smarter Balanced Collaboration Conference. The four-day Collaboration Conference, held this year on the campus of UCLA, brings together our K-12 and Higher Education State Leads; our Chiefs; our work group co-chairs; representatives from service providers that have active contracts with Smarter Balanced; WestEd PMP staff; our own Smarter Balanced staff; and invited guests. Hence, the "whew." It's a big event that we host each September and March, giving us a chance to have important face-to-face interaction and to engage in Consortium-wide problem-solving and decision-making. At each Collaboration Conference, the second day is reserved for meeting with our Chiefs, or their designees, including an afternoon public business meeting at which we pose important policy issues for their consideration and adoption.

At this Collaboration Conference our Governing State Chiefs adopted a data privacy principle stating that each member state retains control of its student-level data and directed the Consortium to develop a more detailed data privacy and confidentiality document for states that is consistent with that policy. The confidentiality document is targeted to be completed in early November.

The Chiefs also approved the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*. The *Guidelines* lay out a set of accessibility and accommodations rules that will be common across all Smarter Balanced states for the 2014 Field Test and the operational assessments that are used in 2014-15. Development, review, and final adoption of the *Guidelines* encompassed an immense amount of work, with literally hundreds of individuals and scores of organizations contributing time and ideas to the process. In the end, we have succeeded in developing a comprehensive array of accessibility features and test accommodations that make the Smarter Balanced assessments accessible to students with a wide variety of disabilities and other special needs. The *Guidelines* are available on the Smarter Balanced public website here: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/news/smarter-balanced-adopts-usability-accessibility-and-accommodations-guidelines>.

All in all, it was a very successful Collaboration Conference, and we are already making plans for our next meeting in March or April. JW

Announcements

Governing States approve Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines and Data Privacy Principle— After several weeks of discussion and four Governing State webinar discussions on relevant

related topics, the Consortium approved the *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* at the Collaboration Conference this week. Additionally, Governing States voted to move forward with a Data Privacy Principle. Consistent with the Consortium's state-led governance and its commitment to responsible flexibility, this vote affirmed that each member state will retain control of all student data transmitted to and generated by the assessment system.

Smarter Balanced to answer teachers' questions on Teaching Channel— Teaching Channel is a nonprofit that connects teachers to inspiring and effective teaching practices in America's schools. Throughout September, Teaching Channel is inviting its members to pose questions to experts from Student Achievement Partners, PARCC, and Smarter Balanced about the Common Core. Teachers can post questions online at www.teachingchannel.org/common-core. Smarter Balanced will answer questions submitted from September 15-21.

Collaboration Conference held September 8–11—The twice-yearly Smarter Balanced Collaboration Conference was held this week at the University of California, Los Angeles. The conference included discussions of policy matters 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 (Repeat)—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.

In the News

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 9/11/13

Press Release: "Smarter Balanced Adopts *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*"
<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/news/smarter-balanced-adopts-usability-accessibility-and-accommodations-guidelines>

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 9/11/13

Press Release: "Governing States Approve Data Privacy Policy Principle"
<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/news/governing-states-approve-data-privacy-policy-principle>

Education Week, 9/11/13

Article: "Assessment Consortium Votes on Privacy of Student Data"
http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2013/09/consortium_approves_data-privacy.html

Education Week, 9/11/13

Article: "Smarter Balanced Approves Testing Supports for English-Learners"
http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning-the-language/2013/09/smarter_balanced_approves_test.html

Education Week, 9/11/13

Article: "Smarter Balanced Adopts Accessibility Rules for Common-Core Tests"
http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/speced/2013/09/smarter_balanced_consortium_ad.html

Portland Press Herald (ME), 9/11/13

Article: "Our View: Common Core will set bar higher for Maine schools"

http://www.pressherald.com/opinion/common-core-will-set-bar-higher-for-maine-schools_2013-09-06.html

The Grand Rapids Press (MI), 9/5/13

Article: "Common Core: Giving students a competitive advantage (Guest column)"

http://www.mlive.com/opinion/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2013/09/common_core_giving_students_a.html

The Wall Street Journal, 9/5/13

Article: "How to Stop the Drop in American Education"

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324747104579024892381188288.html>

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>

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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