

Student Achievement Committee
May 6, 2014
Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
Standardized Testing



Systems Accountability Office
Student Assessment Section



Smarter News



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IN THE NEWS

CCSSO Executive Director Chris Minnich wrote a piece in [The Huffington Post](#) focused on the launch of Common Core - aligned assessments as a “milestone” achievement in American education.

Joan Herman, co-director of UCLA’s CRESST wrote a guest post in [Education Week](#) about deeper learning and increased rigor of new standards-aligned assessments.

NPR’s Bay Area affiliate, [KQED-FM](#) reported on the Field Test language supports, including glossaries in 10 languages for English learners.

The [Idaho Press-Tribune](#)

From the Executive Director



Smarter Balanced member states successfully launched the Field Test of assessments on March 25. The Consortium is now one-third of the way through the testing window, and more than 2 million students have completed a full English language arts (ELA)/literacy or mathematics Field Test.

The Smarter Balanced Field Test is larger than any other online testing endeavor, and we could not have gotten to this point without the thousands of teachers and school and district

administrators across the Consortium who contributed to a successful launch of the test.

The Field Test is part of an unprecedented collaboration among states to develop college- and career-ready assessments. This “test of the test” or practice run helps ensure that questions are accurate and fair for all students. It also allows teachers and students to gain experience with computerized assessments aligned to the [Common Core State Standards](#).

To keep stakeholders informed of the progress of the Field Test, we are reporting the total number of tests started and completed each day. You can get the latest updates by following us on [Twitter](#) (@SmarterBalanced) or by visiting the [Smarter Balanced website](#), where these numbers are updated daily.

Inside the State-Led Consortium



Field Test Launch Successful

reported on the successful rollout of the Field Test and students' preference for the test interface and the enhanced technology.

[LA School Report](#) wrote about the encouraging early response to Smarter Balanced assessments.

The [Seattle Times](#) reported on student and teacher preparation for the Smarter Balanced Field Test.

An article from [Vox.com](#) highlighted the dress rehearsal of Common Core - aligned assessments in the classroom, and how they are working.

[EdSource](#) reported that several California high school students thought the Field Test was an improvement over previous assessments.

[Palo Alto Online](#) wrote about how Smarter Balanced assessments will enable teachers to measure students' progress.

The [Southeast Missourian](#) reported on the critical thinking component of the Field Test and the smooth transition to computer-based assessments.

NC READY FOR SUCCESS

[NC Ready for Success](#) is a cross-sector collaboration that educates policymakers, faculty, and other key stakeholders about the impact of the adoption of North Carolina's higher career and college



The Smarter Balanced Field Test window started on March 25 and runs through June 6 (an optional makeup week is available June 9-13). All Smarter Balanced

Governing States are participating in the assessments and we are encouraged to see that the launch has been successful across the Consortium.

One of the goals of this practice run of the assessments is to uncover challenges before the tests are implemented in spring 2015. So far, we have encountered minor technology and administrative issues that we worked quickly to resolve. Smarter Balanced is committed to providing resources and support to ensure students and teachers have a productive experience with the Field Test. The [Field Test Portal](#) features up-to-the-minute information on any test administration issues and a wealth of resources to assist schools in preparing for and administering the Field Test.

The Field Test showcases the Consortium's commitment to accessibility for all students. Smarter Balanced has developed a comprehensive suite of accessibility resources to ensure that all students can demonstrate what they know and can do. Three-tiered Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines include universal tools (available to all students), designated supports (for use by any student as indicated by a knowledgeable educator), and accommodations (available to students for whom there is a documented need). Students can access a combination of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations to meet their testing needs.

The language supports available on Smarter Balanced assessments exemplify the Consortium's approach to responsible flexibility. English glossaries are available as a universal tool to all students. In addition, our mathematics assessments provide native-language glossaries as a designated support. Students can have access to an English glossary only, a native-language glossary only, or both. Glossaries are available for terms that do not relate to the knowledge or skill that a question tests. There are glossaries in 10 languages, plus multiple dialects, and English language learners are already benefiting from these supports during the Field Test. To learn more about the Consortium's accessibility resources, visit our [Support for Under-represented Students page](#).

Additionally, the Consortium developed a [Resources and Practices Comparison Crosswalk](#) to help states identify similarities between the assessment resources and classroom practices. This document lists the resources currently included in the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines and assists educators and decision-makers by providing a description of each resource and its classroom equivalent.

States across the Consortium have also developed Field Test related

readiness standards. This statewide initiative works to create an effective and efficient education system to prepare students for college and career readiness by bridging the information gap between K-12 and postsecondary education. NC Ready for Success recently announced the selection of over 125 educators from across the state who serve as NC Ready for Success Alignment Fellows. The Fellows are effective school leaders in the subjects of ELA and math, and are tasked with creating suggestions and finding opportunities for further alignment between K-12 and postsecondary institutions.

ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENT EDUCATION WEBINAR

Smarter Balanced Director of Higher Education Collaboration Jacqueline King served as a panelist for "Getting Ready for the Assessment Consortia Field Tests," a webinar hosted by the Alliance for Excellent Education. The webinar provided representatives from both consortia an opportunity to discuss implementation of the field tests and other recent developments.

SMARTER BALANCED MEMBERSHIP

GOVERNING STATES
California
Connecticut
Delaware
Hawaii
Idaho
Iowa
Maine
Michigan

resources for teachers, parents, and students—including videos that explain the purpose of the Field Test and the benefits of the assessment system.

Examples include:

- [New London Public Schools](#), Connecticut
- [California Department of Education](#)
- [Idaho Department of Education](#)

Supporting Classroom Teachers



Helmsley Grant for Teacher Ambassadors

Engaging teachers in developing the balanced assessment system is a core principle of Smarter Balanced. An **18-month grant** from the Leona M. and

Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust is funding a partnership among Smarter Balanced, the National Education Association (NEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and WestEd to increase the number of educators that have the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively implement the CCSS and to use the components of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System to improve student learning.

Smarter Balanced and WestEd are working with NEA and AFT to train approximately 125 Teacher Ambassadors to deliver turnkey trainings about the new assessments to an additional 1,250 teachers. NEA/AFT Teacher Ambassadors met in February in Charlotte, North Carolina, San Francisco, California, and Washington, D.C. to participate in the first training. Consortium and WestEd staff shared information and resources related to summative and interim assessments and the formative assessment process, including a demonstration of the beta Digital Library. The Digital Library is a searchable, interactive online tool composed of instructional and formative assessment resources that have been selected by educators and screened against a set of quality criteria established by experts. The Teacher Ambassadors will share information about the Smarter Balanced Assessment System with other teachers and contribute exemplar lessons and professional learning materials to the Digital Library by the end of the project.

The next Teacher Ambassador face-to-face trainings are June 9-10 for AFT and June 12-13 for NEA at each of their respective offices in Washington, D.C.

Input Sought on Achievement Level Setting



Following the conclusion of

Missouri
Montana
Nevada
New Hampshire
North Carolina
North Dakota
Oregon
South Dakota
Vermont
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

ADVISORY STATE
Pennsylvania

AFFILIATE MEMBER
U.S. Virgin Islands

**SMARTER BALANCED
ASSESSMENT
CONSORTIUM**

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State Services
Jacqueline E. King, Ph.D. -
Director, Higher Education



the Field Test in June, Smarter Balanced will analyze the performance of more than 20,000 test items and performance tasks. This information will inform the setting of student achievement levels—the

threshold test scores that separate different levels of achievement.

Achievement Level Setting will take place in two phases in October: an online panel and an in-person workshop. The online panel is an opportunity for educators and other stakeholders to virtually participate in making recommendations for student readiness expectations, using an interactive web-based tool. The window for the online panel has been finalized as October 6-17. The in-person workshop convenes panels of educators and other stakeholders to deliberate and recommend scores on the assessments that are necessary to meet each performance levels.

The online panel and in-person workshop will allow the Consortium to collect input from a diverse group of participants and establish consistent measures of progress for the Smarter Balanced interim and summative assessments. Participants will help ensure that the score results of the new Common Core-aligned assessments are based on rigorous and fair expectations for students. States will nominate individuals for the in-person workshop this spring. Registration for the online panel is open this spring for all interested educators from K–12 and higher education in Smarter Balanced member states. If you are an educator interested in participating, please contact your [state lead](#) or state teacher involvement coordinator.

Smarter Balanced Works with Khan Academy to Develop Free Math Resources



[Khan Academy](#), a non-profit educational website that provides videos and other instructional tools for teachers, students, and parents, recently announced new [Common Core math resources](#).

These resources include thousands of newly created, free interactive online math exercises for grades K-12 that focus on conceptual understanding and real-world application. Khan Academy collaborated with Smarter Balanced, Illustrative Mathematics, and 40 educators to ensure the materials are rigorous and fully aligned to the standards.

Students can work at their own pace through grade-level “missions”

Collaboration
Marty McCall, Ph.D. - Lead
Psychometrician
Chrystyna V. Mursky, Ph.D. -
Director, Professional Learning
Brandt Redd - Chief Technology
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Associate

and track their progress through personalized dashboards. All of the problems are accompanied by step-by-step solutions specific to that problem.

Teachers can assign exercises tied to specific standards. The website includes a **Common Core Map** that allows teachers to explore problems related to each math standard at every grade level.

More information about the Khan Academy Common Core resources is available from [EdSurge](#).

Frequently Asked Question



What do the Smarter Balanced assessments cover?

The Smarter Balanced assessments measure real-world skills in English and math, such as analytic reading, persuasive writing, and problem solving.

Beginning in 2015, in addition to providing composite scores in those two subjects, score reports will provide information on student performance in the following areas:

English language arts: reading, writing, listening, and research;
Math: concepts and procedures, problem solving and modeling/data analysis, and communicating reasoning.

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