



Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Update from the California Department of Education

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The California Department of Education (CDE) Smarter Balanced Update is a bimonthly e-mail that reports on current and upcoming Smarter Balanced development activities. To join the CDE Smarter Balanced e-mail list, send a blank e-mail to subscribe-caaspp@mlist.cde.ca.gov. If you would like to unsubscribe from the CDE Smarter Balanced listserv, send a blank message to unsubscribe-caaspp@mlist.cde.ca.gov.

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The Conclusion of the Smarter Balanced Field Test

The Smarter Balanced Field Test concluded in June 2014, capping 12 weeks of test-driving new computer-based assessments that will be fully operational beginning with the 2014–15 school year. More than 3.1 million California students—among four million across the consortium—took part in the Smarter Balanced Field Test.

Field test questions will undergo a rigorous evaluation process to gauge the accuracy and fairness of the nearly 20,000 field test questions before the Smarter Balanced assessment becomes operational in the spring of 2015. This is to ensure that the Common Core-aligned assessments are valid, reliable, and fair measurements of college- and career-readiness for all students.

In order to gauge field test experiences and perceptions and to prepare for the 2015 operational assessment, the CDE and its contractors have conducted mid and post-test surveys and focus groups. Various stakeholders were included in the surveys and focus groups, including district and county testing and technology coordinators, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. A summary of the surveys and focus groups will be presented to the State Board of Education (SBE) along with recommendations for proceeding with the operational Smarter Balanced assessments in 2015.

Smarter Balanced Online Achievement Level Setting

This fall, K–12 educators, postsecondary educators, parents, and business/community leaders from Smarter Balanced governing states will collaborate to develop common achievement levels that are rigorous, fair, and accurate for each of the Smarter Balanced assessments. Smarter Balanced is recruiting participants who will contribute to this process of determining achievement levels for each grade via an online panel scheduled to take place in October 2014.

The online panel will be available to the public and allow for broad participation by the stakeholders mentioned above. Frequently asked questions and other information are available online for those who register to participate. Registration is available on the Smarter Balanced [Online Panel for Achievement Level Setting Web page](#). The registration deadline is September 19, 2014 and California stakeholders indicated above are needed to ensure that the state is proportionately represented during the online panel.

Test Operations Management System (TOMS)

TOMS will replace the Standardized Testing and Reporting Test Management System and the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE), which was used for the Smarter Balanced Field Test. All of the functions local educational agency (LEA) California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) coordinators were accustomed to handling in both systems, such as setting up testing windows and managing student test settings, will be functionalities available in TOMS.

A Webcast was presented on August 20, 2014, describing the use of TOMS for 2015 test administration setup. The *TOMS Test Administration Setup* Webcast will be archived and available on the Educational Testing Service (ETS) caaspp.org Web site under the "Training" link. Look for upcoming Webcasts on the ETS caaspp.org Web site that will provide instructions on additional TOMS features.

2014–15 Testing Windows

Regulations have been established and go into effect August 28, 2014, for the CAASPP testing windows. The testing windows are listed as follows:

- Smarter Balanced English–language arts/ literacy and mathematics for grades three through eight, testing shall not begin until at least 66 percent of a school's annual instructional days have been completed, and testing may continue up to and include the last day of instruction for the regular school calendar.
- Smarter Balanced English–language arts/ literacy and mathematics for grade eleven, the testing shall not begin until at least 80 percent of a school's annual instructional days have been completed, and testing may continue up to and include the last day of instruction for the regular school calendar.
- For science CST, CMA, and CAPA in grades five, eight, and ten the testing shall be administered during a window of 25 days that includes 12 days before and after 85 percent of the school's instructional days.

Please view the [2014–15 Testing Windows](#) on the CDE CAASPP Web pages for more details.

Interim Assessments

The Smarter Balanced assessment system will have two types of interim assessments available to all California K–12 teachers in late 2014 or early 2015: interim assessment blocks (IABs) and interim comprehensive assessments (ICAs). Interim assessment blocks are designed to be given at regular intervals throughout the school year to evaluate a student's knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of Common Core State Standards (CCSS). ICAs are designed to provide students with assessments that are similar in nature and academic content to the summative (end-of-course) assessments.

- IABs are groups (or blocks) of test items aligned with specific sets of CCSS. Teachers may select one or more IABs to assess students. The initial IABs will be fixed-length assessments, but eventually will also include computer-adaptive tests.
- ICAs will be similar to the Smarter Balanced summative assessment and will begin with a fixed-length test form. Computer-adaptive testing will be used for the ICAs after analyses of the field test items are complete.

As more information becomes available on the interim assessments it will be reported in future issues of this update.

Digital Library Update

According to *Education Code (EC)*, Section 60642.6, the CDE shall acquire, and offer at no cost to LEA's, interim and formative assessment tools for kindergarten and grades one to twelve, inclusive, as provided through the consortium membership pursuant to *EC* Section 60605.7. The [Digital Library](#) provides formative assessment tools to LEAs for their local use and is currently able to be previewed by LEA staff.

The [Digital Library](#) preview will continue until September 30, 2014. During the preview, educators can become acquainted with the functions of the Digital Library and view a set of initial resources that will help explain the future utility of the Digital Library.

Complete instructions for LEAs and a template for user registration for the preview were sent to all LEAs in May 2014. Any questions about the Digital Library preview should be directed to caaspp@cde.ca.gov.

Technology Update

State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson, announced the Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Grant (BIIG) Program August 25, 2014. Eligible districts and charter schools are encouraged to apply for new funding to help students, educators, and staff connect to the internet so they can implement the new computer-based CAASPP test in the 2015 spring testing window.

The BIIG funding opportunity is being administered by the [K-12 High Speed Network](#), in consultation with the CDE and SBE. For more details, visit the Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Grant (BIIG) Program Web page at <http://www.k12hsn.org/biig>.

Additional Information

Additional information about Smarter Balanced is available on the [CDE Smarter Balanced Web page](#). General questions about the Smarter Balanced assessments should be directed to the CDE CAASPP Office by phone at 916-445-8765 or by e-mail at caaspp@cde.ca.gov.