



A Summary of Core Components

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is one of two multistate consortia awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education to develop an assessment system based on the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). To achieve the goal that all students leave high school ready for college and career, Smarter Balanced is committed to ensuring that assessment and instruction embody the CCSS and that all students, regardless of disability, language or subgroup status, have the opportunity to learn this valued content and to show what they know and can do.

With strong support from participating states, institutions of higher education and industry, Smarter Balanced will develop a balanced set of measures and tools, each designed to serve specific purposes. Together, these components will provide student data throughout the academic year that will inform instruction, guide interventions, help target professional development and ensure an accurate measure of each student's progress toward career- and college-readiness.

The core components of Smarter Balanced are:

Summative assessments:

- ▶ Mandatory comprehensive accountability measures that include computer adaptive assessments and performance tasks, administered in the last 12 weeks of the school year in grades 3–8 and 11 for English language arts(ELA)/literacy and mathematics;
- ▶ Designed to provide valid, reliable and fair measures of students' progress toward and attainment of the knowledge and skills required to be college- and career-ready;
- ▶ Capitalize on the strengths of computer adaptive testing (e.g. efficient and precise measurement across the full range of achievement and quick turnaround of results); and,
- ▶ Produce composite content area scores, based on the computer adaptive items and performance tasks.

Interim assessments:

- ▶ Optional comprehensive and content-cluster measures that include computer adaptive assessments and performance tasks, administered at locally determined intervals throughout the school year;
- ▶ Results reported on the same scale as the summative assessment to provide information about how students are progressing;
- ▶ Serve as the source for interpretive guides that use publicly released items and tasks;
- ▶ Grounded in cognitive development theory about how learning progresses across grades and how college- and career-readiness emerge over time;
- ▶ Involve a large teacher role in developing and scoring constructed response items and performance tasks;
- ▶ Afford teachers and administrators the flexibility to:
 - select item sets that provide deep, focused measurement of specific content clusters embedded in the CCSS;
 - administer these assessments at strategic points in the instructional year;

- use results to better understand students' strengths and limitations in relation to the standards;
- support state-level accountability systems using end-of-course assessments.

Formative tools and processes:

- ▶ Provides resources for teachers on how to collect and use information about student success in acquisition of the CCSS;
- ▶ Will be used by teachers throughout the year to better understand a student's learning needs, check for misconceptions and/or to provide evidence of progress toward learning goals.

System Features

- ▶ Ensures coverage of the full range of ELA/literacy and mathematics standards and breadth of achievement levels by combining a variety of item types (e.g., selected-response, constructed response, and technology-enhanced) and performance tasks, which require application of knowledge and skills.
- ▶ Provides comprehensive, research-based support, technical assistance and professional development so that teachers can use assessment data to improve teaching and learning in line with the standards.
- ▶ Provides online, tailored reports that link to instructional and professional development resources.

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Smarter Balanced and Parents: Preparing Students for Success after High School

More than 40 states are implementing the Common Core State Standards, which provide consistent learning goals for students regardless of their background or where they live. These standards are designed to make sure that all students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college and career.

To help students meet these goals, Smarter Balanced is working with educators and parents to develop assessments that will replace current state assessments in English language arts/literacy and mathematics in the 2014-15 school year. The Smarter Balanced assessment system will provide teachers with new tools to monitor student progress and resources to meet each student's unique needs.

Key Features of Smarter Balanced

- ▶ **Measures student achievement and growth** in English language arts/literacy and mathematics in grades 3-8 and high school.
- ▶ **Includes accommodations** for students with disabilities and English language learners so that all students can demonstrate what they know.
- ▶ **Administered online** with questions and performance tasks that measure critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- ▶ **Expectations of student performance** linked to international benchmarks.

Preparation for College and Career

A high school diploma should mean students are ready to take their next step in life—by going to college, pursuing career training or entering the workforce. Smarter Balanced assessments measure college and career readiness so that parents and teachers can help them stay on track to graduation.

Supporting Teaching and Learning

In addition to a year-end assessment, teachers will be able to administer interim assessments throughout the school year to monitor student progress. Results from the interim assessment will be available quickly, giving teachers the information they need to address student needs before the end of the year. In addition, teachers will have access to a digital library of resources and professional learning opportunities to help students succeed.

Feedback for Teachers and Parents

An online system will provide clear, easy-to-understand reports on student performance for teachers, parents and schools. Teachers can use these reports to inform their instruction, and parents will have better information about their child's progress. Parents will also be able to see how student achievement at their school compares to performance at the district and state level.

Assessment Implementation Timeline

- ▶ **Winter/Spring 2013**—Pilot testing of assessment items and performance tasks
- ▶ **Spring 2014**—Field testing of summative and interim assessments
- ▶ **2014-15 School Year**—Implementation of assessment system

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