

Overview of Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is a state-led consortium working to develop a next-generation assessment system **aligned to the rigorous, 21st Century standards** embodied in the Common Core State Standards. The goal of Smarter Balanced is to ensure that all students – regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, economic status or background – leave high school **prepared for postsecondary success in college or a career**.

The work of Smarter Balanced is guided by the belief that a **high-quality assessment system** can provide information and tools for teachers and schools that **help improve teaching and learning**, and that help students succeed. Smarter Balanced, building upon the collective experience and expertise of its member states, is creating a high-quality, balanced, multi-state system of assessments that ensures comparability across all its member states.

A Balanced System

Smarter Balanced is composed of three major components that represent a comprehensive, coherent, and integrated system of assessments:

- An **end-of-year summative assessment** of mathematics and English/language arts in grades 3-8 and high school that meets state and federal requirements for accountability purposes;
- Optional **interim assessments** that can be administered throughout the year to check student progress; and
- **Formative assessment resources and tools** available on-demand to teachers through an online digital library.

Innovation and Technology

The end-of-year summative and on-demand interim assessments make use of proven technology advances both in terms of **innovative item types** – including constructed response and computer-enhanced items – and test delivery – using “**Computer Adaptive Technology**” (CAT) which assesses students with greater accuracy and efficiency than conventional tests.

Member states have collaborated to establish **minimum technology standards** for the delivery of the Smarter Balanced assessments that are compatible with existing equipment and bandwidth available in most schools. Smarter Balanced provides an online “**technology readiness tool**” giving schools and districts up-to-date information on technology gaps.

Accessibility for All

Smarter Balanced is committed to ensuring that all students (except those with the most significant cognitive disabilities) have **fair and unbiased access to its assessments**. The



Smarter Balanced assessments are being designed from the very start to provide students with access to the assessment, regardless of visual, auditory, physical, or language barriers, with the goal of **allowing all students as possible to demonstrate what they know and can do.**

Engagement with K-12 and Higher Education

Smarter Balanced collaborates with K-12 teachers and school leaders to:

- Provide support for implementation of the Common Core State Standards
- Provide training for teams of teachers from each governing state
- Develop the Smarter Balanced digital library of formative assessment practices and professional development tools
- Develop test items and tasks for the Pilot and Field Tests
- Score portions of the interim and summative assessments

Smarter Balanced is also committed to **engaging higher education in the development and implementation of the assessment system**, with the goal that colleges and universities across member states will accept performance on the assessment as evidence that **high school students are ready for entry level, credit-bearing coursework.**

Smarter Balanced Member States

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|--------------|-----------------|
| Alabama | New Hampshire* |
| California* | North Carolina* |
| Connecticut* | North Dakota |
| Delaware* | Oregon* |
| Hawaii* | Pennsylvania |
| Idaho* | South Carolina* |
| Iowa* | South Dakota* |
| Kansas* | Vermont* |
| Maine* | Washington* |
| Michigan* | West Virginia* |
| Missouri* | Wisconsin* |
| Montana* | Wyoming |
| Nevada* | |

*Governing States

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is funded by a four-year grant from a U.S. Department of Education Race to the Top Assessment Program. Smarter Balanced assessments will be fully operational and available for state use beginning in the 2014-15 school year. For more information, please visit our website:

www.smarterbalanced.org