

## **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

### **Introduction**

The work of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium involves developing the next generation of assessments for grades 3 through 8 and 11 that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Mathematics and English Language Arts. Full implementation of the new assessments will commence in 2014-2015.

### **Process**

As a state-led consortium, Smarter Balanced is committed to a transparent process in the development of its products. The basic model being used by Smarter Balanced to achieve its goals is to engage small working groups to address particular policy questions and products. In some instances the work group produces advice or assistance on a particular issue or challenge facing the Consortium. In the case of products or policies, an initial draft is developed and distributed to each state for review and comment. After several iterations based on extensive vetting by various constituency groups votes are taken (one vote per state) on key decision items. Without 100 percent agreement, the policy or product goes back out for more review and another vote before it is finalized.

### **Existing Work Groups**

Currently there are 13 working groups (see attached sheet for list of work groups and their responsibilities).

### **Key Decision Items Requiring State Votes**

Over the next two years, Consortium members will be voting on at least seven decision items. In each case, K-12 and Higher Education are expected to work collaboratively in determining the state's position on each item. In some cases, consensus between K-12 and higher education is expected prior to any vote being cast while for other decision items, higher education's role is more advisory. A list of decision items along with the role of higher education for each follows:

- Accommodations and Accessibility Policy (Advisory)
- Achievement Level Descriptor for College and Career Ready (Consensus)
- All Other Achievement Level Descriptors (Consensus)
- Field Test Blueprint (Balance of Claims) (Consensus)
- Smarter Balanced Sustainability Plan (Advisory)
- Performance Standard Setting (Consensus)
- State Use of Short or Long-form (Consensus)
- Technology Plan (Advisory)

### **Future Work Groups**

Each state was asked to nominate two faculty (one from mathematics and one from English Language Arts) for consideration to be appointed to a new work group that will draft achievement level descriptors for the summative assessments. For the 11<sup>th</sup> grade assessment, these achievement levels will include a threshold for college and career readiness.

Each state's higher education system is being challenged to identify faculty experts willing to serve on work groups in addition to getting a commitment from a larger group of faculty to review and comment on initial draft policies and products. Without such engagement, decisions about the new assessments will be made without the benefit of higher education's collective voice.

### **Public and Institutional Policies**

Additionally, higher education is expected to review its current public policies especially those associated with early warning systems, messages about college ready and placement decisions. While the full impact of the CCSS and new assessment systems will be years in the making, attention to potential changes to public and institutional policies now will provide adequate lead time for implementation in the future. Implications for curriculum revisions will also become important to identify as tomorrow's students become better prepared and truly college ready at point of entry into their first credit-bearing course.