Preparing Your Students for SBAC Testing 2014-2015
FOR TEACHERS (AND ADMINISTRATORS)
Paper/Pencil Version

How can I prepare my students for SBAC?

- You’ve already started! The best way to prepare your students is by making sure you have shifted to the mathematics and ELA practices outlined in the CCSS so that what they are tested on is aligned with their instruction.
- Use the practice and training tests and released items with students to help them be familiar with the types of test items and the computer platform so they are prepared for the test.
- Model how to approach problems and how to use the tools.
- Access the Digital Library for resources (available now) and try out some interim assessments with students (when they become available).
- Be a cheerleader for the test. We know the system has flaws and that state tests are nobody’s favorite subject, but don’t display a negative attitude in front of students. We need them to have buy-in, and they take their cues from you!

Test Item and Task Types
We don’t fully know what the Paper/Pencil test will look like. The online SBAC test includes the following types of items. Obviously, the paper/pencil will need to look different, but no test specification have been published yet. They have said the paper/pencil test will be as similar in test item types as it can be, with the Technology-enhanced items rewritten to fit within paper limitations AND of course fixed, not computer adaptive.

- **Selected-response items** prompt students to select one or more responses for a set of options.
- **Technology-enhanced items** take advantage of computer-based administration to assess a deeper understanding of content and skills. Technology-enhanced collect evidence through a non-traditional response type, such as editing text or drawing an object. Selected-response and technology-enhanced items can be scored automatically.
- **Constructed-response items** prompt students to produce a text or numerical response in order to collect evidence about their knowledge or understanding of a given assessment target.
- **Performance tasks** measure a student’s ability to integrate knowledge and skills across multiple standards—a key component of college and career readiness. Performance tasks will be used to better measure capacities such as depth of understanding, research skills, and complex analysis, which cannot be adequately assessed with selected- or constructed-response items. Some constructed-response items and performance tasks can be scored automatically; many will be hand-scored by professionally trained readers.
More about the performance task: The performance task begins with a classroom activity that allows the students to engage the topic and build background knowledge. This activity is estimated to take approximately 30 minutes. Then, students complete the performance task themselves, drawing on what they learned during the activity to support them in their analyses. The performance tasks are not timed, but are estimated to take approximately 2 hours for ELA and 1.5 hours for math.

View Sample Items and Performance tasks: Go to www.smarterbalanced.org. Click on the Smarter Balanced Assessments Tab, and then click on Sample Items and Performance Tasks. About half way down the page, there are links to choose whether to view these for English Language Arts or Mathematics. This will take you right into sample items.

Note: To see the grade level of the sample item, click on “About this Item” in the bar at the top of the page. Also in this bar, you will see “View More ELA/Math Sample Items.” Click on this to get a matrix of sample items at certain grade bands or to navigate straight to Performance task examples.

Practice and Training tests: There are no practice tests or training tests specific to the paper/pencil version. You will have to use the existing tools for online test practice as best you can.

PRACTICE TESTS: The Practice Tests mirror the online year-end assessment. Each grade level assessment includes a variety of question types and difficulty (approximately 30 items each in ELA and math) as well as an ELA and math performance task at each grade level (3–8 and 11). They also include universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations. All language supports, including translated glossaries and stacked Spanish translation, are available on mathematics Practice and Training Tests.

TRAINING TESTS: The Training Tests are designed to provide students and teachers with opportunities to quickly familiarize themselves with the software and navigational tools that they will use on the spring 2015 Smarter Balanced Assessments. The Training Test is organized by grade bands (grades 3 to 5, 6 to 8, and high school) and each test contains 14-15 questions. The questions on the Training Test were selected to provide students with an opportunity to practice a range of question types. The Training Tests do not contain performance tasks. Similar to the Practice Test, the Training Test includes all embedded universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations.

ACCESSING THESE TESTS:
http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/

*Click on the Green Student test Interface button, log in as a Guest by pushing Sign-in, select a grade, and select the desired test. You can do these yourself and with students.
You can use these materials with students as many times as you want to help them become familiar with the test format. More familiarity means less anxiety!

**Digital Library:**

You can find the Digital Library at: [https://www.smarterbalancedlibrary.org/](https://www.smarterbalancedlibrary.org/)

This is a resource that is available to you to help find materials for your instruction as well as professional resources to inform your practice. The resources on this site are vetted, so they are of better quality. Types of resources:

*Instructional resources—Materials designed to use with students for a variety of grades and topics.

*Professional resources—Materials designed for teachers’ growth, training, or personal reflection related to their practice.

*Modules—Interactive, multimedia modules built by contracted experts. These modules model the formative assessment process within exemplary instructional modules. Only a few of these have been published, but more are coming soon.

If you have not yet set up a Digital Library account, check back in your email…all SSD employees were enrolled in this back in June 2014. If you were a new employee this year, you were added at the beginning of October. Users who had not accessed their account were sent a new email at the end of October. The email gives you a temporary password so that you can log-in and set up a permanent password. It looks like this:

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Welcome, Lori Pierce, to Smarter Balanced! Your account, lori.pierce@ssd.tacoma.k12.wa.us has been created and your temporary password is:******

This account will let you immediately access the Smarter Balanced Digital Library. Other services of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium come online in the fall of 2014 and you will use this login to make use of those services.

You are required to change your temporary password.

Click the following link to access your account and update your password: [https://www.smarterbalancedlibrary.org](https://www.smarterbalancedlibrary.org)
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If you need assistance logging into the Digital Library site, please contact us in the assessment office.

**Interim Assessments:**

The Interim assessments are not yet available, but they are scheduled to be released in January. The Comprehensive Interim Assessment is scheduled for release January 6, 2015 and the Interim Assessment Blocks are scheduled for release January 27, 2015. In addition, the interim assessments are predicted to be fixed and not computer adaptive for at least the first year until the item bank is adequately large.

Teachers can use the interim assessments throughout the year to gauge student progress toward mastery of the skills measured by the summative assessment and to assess targeted concepts at strategic points during the school year. There will be two types of interim assessments:
Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs)--use the same blueprints as the summative assessments and assess the same standards. The ICAs include the same item types and formats, including performance tasks, as the summative assessments.

Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs)--focus on smaller sets of targets and therefore provide more detailed information for instructional purposes. Teachers can use these to measure progress and readiness for a variety of ELA or math topics. For example, at the elementary level in math, there’s a block for geometry, one for fractions, one for measurement and data and so on. At the high school level, there are blocks for rational functions, probability, geometric proofs and so on...

Both the ICAs and the IABs are administered online, using the same delivery software as the summative assessments. There are no restrictions on the number of times that a school, teacher, or student may access interim assessments.

**Some helpful resources outside of the Smarter Balanced world:**

Many website and groups are starting to put out helpful resources for preparing students. A few already available:

* Achieve the Core. [http://achievethecore.org](http://achievethecore.org/) Click on ELA or Math at the top, then choose Assessment. There are mini-assessments for various works and grades as well as professional resources for teachers.

* California Technology Assistance Program. [https://sites.google.com/site/ctapcommoncore/](https://sites.google.com/site/ctapcommoncore/) There are modules for various grades to prepare students for types of tasks and technology rich environments they will see in SBAC.

* TCRWP. [http://readingandwritingproject.org/resources](http://readingandwritingproject.org/resources) Click on Reading and Writing Performance Assessments to get grade specific practice assessments that are similar to the Performance Tasks.

In addition, there are many online assessment and learning sites (for example [www.thatquiz.org](http://www.thatquiz.org)) that can help built the technology assessment skills students need.

**What about Accommodations and Supports?**

There are three levels of support. **Universal tools** are available to all students—many of these are built in to the computer program but some, like breaks and scratch paper, are necessarily separate. **Designated supports** are available for any student for whom the need has been determined by an educator or team of educators (along with input from students and parent/guardians). Which students need these supports must be determined in advance and entered into the testing system (TIDE). **Accommodations** are changes in procedures or materials that increase equitable access for students with IEPs or 504 plans. These must be documented in students’ plans, and a parent/guardian must receive a report that makes them aware of the conditions under which their child participates in the assessment. Also accommodations must be entered into the testing system (TIDE). The chart below indicates the
three levels. For more details, refer to the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines document.

These documents and charts were created for online testing. Consider carefully what we will need to gather or prepare considering paper/pencil will not have the same “embedded” tools.

**Universal Tools**

**How long does the SBAC take?**

The tests are not timed. Students have as much time as they need to complete the test. The chart below indicates estimated testing times. CAT in the chart stands for Computer Adaptive Test, so look at that column for paper/pencil as well but realize that students doing the paper/pencil version of the SBAC may need more time.
When will we get more details?

We are working with administrators now to begin discussions around scheduling these assessments for the spring. Your building principals will communicate schedules to you later in the year as they are finalized.

There is still much we do not know. The state has begun working with a new vendor, the American Institute of Research (AIR), to prepare for the first administration. More details are coming out all the time, but the trickle will continue through the spring. We will communicate news to your buildings as soon as we know more. Please be as patient and as flexible as you can—we know how frustrating not having details can be.

I still have questions or I would like support to help prepare my students...

You can call or e-mail us in the assessment office and we'll answer any questions we can. We can also arrange to come out and help you work with students around the practice or training tests. We can also do model lessons with items, help with trainings, or assist with other creative solutions that you might think of.

Lori Pierce
Assessment TOSA
Ext. 7304

Sonya Lang
Admin. Assistant, Assessment
Ext. 7260

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**Summative Assessments – Estimated Testing Time**

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