VT—SBAC Newsletter

Portal Updates: The VT-SBAC portal has added a few new resource folders designed to help School Coordinators and Teachers administer the test.

Field Tips & Tools can be found (coming soon) in a resource folder contained in the School Coordinator, Technology Coordinators, and Test Administrator's section of the portal. These are links to documents that individual SU/SDs have created. We invite all to share tools that have improved your ability to coordinate and administer the Smarter Balanced Assessments (formative, interim and summative)

Special Populations resource folder was also added. You can find helpful state documents, such as the VT Exemption Form and the Test Security/Confidentiality Agreement.

Brochures and Quick Guides have also been added to various sections throughout the portal. These quick reference documents offer shortcuts to helpful information related to the Test. Delivery System (TDS), TIDE, and System Requirements.

Message from the Director: Test and Information Security *Although it is not possible in this day and age to guarantee that any computer system is 100% "unhackable," Vermont selected the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to administer our Smarter Balanced Assessments, in part, because of their extensive, state of the art data security system. Here is a list of some, although not all, system components that AIR uses to help protect our students' confidential data.*

- *Students take the test on a secure browser that locks out any other functions on the school's internet server including cookies, spyware, malware and other security holes that can make student data vulnerable to unauthorized and inappropriate uses.*

- *When a student completes and submits a test for scoring, the student's data is automatically encrypted so that all the scoring contractor can see is a tracking number and the test responses.*

- *During the time the students' tests are with the scoring contractor, they are kept at a secure facility called "Rack Space" that stores the student files offline so that they cannot be accessed by an online intruder.*

- *Student files are unencrypted only when they return to Vermont and the school's password protected reporting system.*

- *Data is stored at AIR for the duration of the testing window and then it's returned to Vermont to be archived on Vermont AOE servers indefinitely.*

It's worth noting that before the Agency of Education was permitted to sign a contract with AIR, their web-hosting and data security systems were reviewed and judged to be sound by Vermont's Division of Information and Innovation (DII). The Vermont Legislature has assigned DII with the responsibility of reviewing and approving any and all state contracts that use online systems and servers. Although it would be an over-reach to guarantee that AIR's system is unbreachable, their systems meet and exceed industry standards. Because of the built-in safeguards and redundancies, it is extremely unlikely that our students' right to privacy will be compromised by participating in the Smarter Balanced online tests. **Michael Hock, Director of Educational Assessment, michael.hock@state.vt.us / 802-479-1288**

On the performance tasks, can my student use the notes they take during the lesson? Yes. The Test Administration Manual (TAM) is not very clear on this stance. Students may use the notes they take (paper or digital) during the lesson. However, they may not bring in notes from outside the class, and all paper-based notes must be collected and given back to the students for the task. After the task is completed, all paper notes must be securely destroyed.

NEW! I have 3 students who need print on demand. Is this done in TIDE, or do I request this through the Agency or the Help Desk? The code for print on demand will need to be entered in TIDE, but you'll need to put the request in to your District Administrator, who is the only person in your SU/SD authorized to enter the code. This is because we need to balance the needs of our students with our obligation to keep the test items secure. We are assuming that prior to entering the permission in TIDE, your District Administrator will determine that the schools have procedures in place to ensure that the printouts are only used during testing and will be shredded as soon as the student is finished.

For more information or questions please contact Linda Moreno at 802-479-1309 or linda.moreno@state.vt.us