

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Team

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## From the Test Director: How to make a test director happy

We're into the third week of testing and so far all seems to be going quite well, thanks to your hard work and also the skills of our colleagues at the American Institutes for Research. But that is only a small part of why I'm happy. For the most part, Vermont joined the Smarter Balanced Consortium because of its very ambitious plan to improve the quality, and the accuracy, of standardized testing using an impressive array of new digital technologies. Last year we had a chance to try out some of the major innovations, including online test delivery, computer adaptive testing, embedded accessibility tools, and the interactive Online Reporting System. But, to my way of thinking, there were still a few benefits of the technology we weren't realizing. That has changed this year, and that is why I'm happy. Here are three examples:

- **It Appears, as a state, we have the infrastructure to do online testing** – As was the case last year, we offered schools the option to use a pencil/paper testing format if they didn't have enough devices or sufficient bandwidth for the digital applications. Some schools had to employ some creative strategies, but we ended up with only one small independent school requesting the paper test. This year, after having experience with the online testing and the chance for minds to change, we still only have one small independent school requesting the paper form, a different school than last year and with only four students to be tested.
- A few newsletter issues ago, I reported to you about "expedited reporting" noting that our assessment contractor estimated that individual student tests could be scored and posted to the school's ORS within about 10 days from the time the student submitted a completed test. Well, Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> was exactly 10 days from the opening of the test window, and student reports began showing up in the ORS as promised. As I mentioned in my first message on this topic, I was disappointed last year that we couldn't offer the quick turn-around of test scores, so I was especially happy to see those scores on Monday. A quick reminder: these test scores are for a school's internal uses. Please no public reporting until everyone in the state has completed testing in June.
- The student test scores that appeared on Monday also allowed us to confirm that our plans for "dual reporting" have been successful. You may recall that we

have been looking for a way to have test scores for Career Tech Ed students and students placed in special programs or schools available to both the attending school and the sending school. One of the schools that finished testing during the first week of the assessment window was an independent school, and just as we had hoped, they now have results reported for their students. Those results have also been posted to the ORS for the students' home schools.

Once again, I want to express my appreciation for your support and patience while we make these new technologies work for our students. And for giving me yet another reason to be happy about the work I do.

*Michael Hock, Director of Educational Assessment*

### **Home-Schooled Students**

**To: Michael Hock**

**From: An Elementary School Principal**

**Subject: SBAC and homeschool students**

*Hi Michael,*

*We are reviewing the SBAC information as an administrative team and a question has come up about the inclusion of students in home-school programs...is there guidance or rules on this? In the past, we would notify home school students of our assessment windows and they could opt to participate in administration at the school, how has this changed or has it? Thanks for the assistance.*

The Agency's position on home-schooled students is the same as it's always been – it's a courtesy but not a requirement. Parents may make a request to their local public school to have their home-schooled student included in assessment. The student will be assessed according to the schedule the school has established for the public school students. You do not need to inform the parents that this option is available to them, but if you want, you certainly could expand this courtesy by notifying them that testing is available upon request. You will need to notify the parents when the reports are available because they will be posted on the ORS files for the school where the testing occurred.

**There is one small difference** between Smarter Balanced and NECAP with respect to testing home-schoolers. NECAP had a "home-school" checkbox on the student test booklet that signaled the contractor to score the test and produce an Individual Student Report, but to exclude the student's scores from all school, district and state level aggregate reporting. Smarter does not have anything similar to that checkbox, so here's what you'll need to do:

1. Add the HS student's information into TIDE so that the test delivery system will recognize the student.

**From the Director's  
in-box**



2. Test the student at your convenience, presumably when you test similar public school students.
3. As soon as the student’s scores show up in the ORS, print off a copy of the Individual Student Report and send it to the parents.
4. Delete the student from TIDE so the scores will not be included in any of the group reporting you may do later.

**From the Archives – Preparing Students (from 1/21/15)**

**Weekly Field Question: How do I train students for SBAC and Computer Assisted Tests (CAT)?** The best way to prepare students for SBAC starts with incorporating technology into your daily instruction. In addition, the Vermont State SBAC web portal will offer practice and training tests which give students an opportunity to navigate the universal tools as well as the designated supports and accommodations, if applicable. Please note, however, that it is imperative that you administer the student training test no sooner than 3 weeks before you start testing.

**Question(s) of the Week:**

**How long can I expect to hear back from the state on my text-to-speech request?**

Please allow a two week turn-a-round (10 business days) to receive your response.

**Why is it taking so long for a response?**

The TTS requests are processed in the order they are received. There are a few steps you can take to speed up the process for everyone.

1. Make sure the special educator knows the criteria before they submit the request. I have had requests for middle school grades as well as a request to use the TTS designated support.
2. Make sure there are details in the submission pertinent to the decision. It is very helpful to have information on the student’s visual acuity, decoding capability, whether or not it’s happening on a consistent basis, and /or why the team does not feel the student will learn to read without supports.

**Testing Progress: Completion Tally**

2015 SBAC Assessment Tally – Vermont: Week 3					
Total # of Students Registered:	Completed the CAT Summative Assessments		Completed the Performance Tasks		Total # of Tests Completed to Date:
44,349					25,674 (14.5%)
Grade / #	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	All
11: 9146	2318	1818	1902	1600	7638
8: 5909	1181	1050	960	997	4188
7: 5805	879	1081	779	950	3689
6: 5905	1149	849	1011	700	3709
5: 5910	921	442	704	316	2383
4: 5717	884	517	444	330	2175
3: 5954	724	388	492	288	1892

