Smarter Balanced Assessment Team

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From the Test Director: Assessment News Briefs

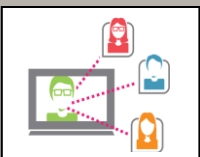Following are a few quick but important bits of information on the state assessment program:

- Password Reset. Next time you try to access TIDE, the Test Delivery System or the Online Reporting System, you will discover that your password no longer works. To get a new one, click "Forgot Your Password?" and then follow the directions that come up on the next screen. You will receive a temporary password in an e-mail that you can use to set a new permanent password.
- TIDE Data Entry. We will be following the same procedures we used last year for uploading student information into TIDE. SU/SD test administrators will be responsible for the initial upload and the Agency will update the information after the assessment window closes using spring census data.
- District Test Administrator Update. We sent your superintendents and heads of independent schools a poll requesting confirmation of your district test administrator. They were asked to either confirm that the same person as last year would be serving in that role or to name someone new. Thus far we have only heard from about half of the leaders on our distribution list. Please check with your leader to see if the survey has been submitted.
- Dynamic Learning Maps. A recent letter from Secretary Holcombe to the leaders of the DLM consortium got a bit of attention in the press and prompted a second letter to DLM form Vermont's Congressional Delegation. The letter concerned a steep increase in DLM's Service Agreement which would have been unstainable for us. In response to the letter, the DLM states have agreed to revisit the issue and take a new vote. However, contrary to some rumors that have come to our attention, Vermont has not decided to leave DLM. Schools should proceed with the DLM assessment as previously planned.

Please give us a call or send us an e-mail if you have questions about these topics or other concerns that may arise.

Michael Hock, State Assessment Director

Training: 2nd TIDE Webinar

We have been getting quite a few TIDE-related questions over the past couple of weeks. As a result, AIR is going to offer an encore of the TIDE webinar with an opportunity to ask questions. The date for the TIDE Encore is Tuesday, November 15th from 3:00p.m. – 4:00 p.m. The September 28th presentation was taped and has been posted, but often folks have questions and it is nice to be able to ask our AIR Team questions in real time. If you missed the first session and would like to attend the encore presentation, please use the link below. Registration link: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4886383983684188673

From Our Inbox:
From: A Curriculum Coordinator
To: Hock, Michael; Moreno, Linda; Drescher, Peter
Subject: Chromebooks for SBAC?
Hi all,
Are Chromebooks compatible for SBACs? I believe they are, but just wanted to be 100%. Thanks.

From MICHAEL: Chromebooks are fine for SBAC and are used by many of our Vermont schools.
From PETER: Should have replied all when I had answered this earlier with "Yes."
And also indicated that I have a dozen or so names of individuals around the state that could be resources in using Chromebooks for SBAC. Many of those folks have set up pretty seamless deliveries via their Chromebook environments.
From LINDA: Chromebook has speech recognition software that works quite well as a classroom tool. However, it is my understanding that it runs off the internet. Therefore, when the secure browser is downloaded for the assessment, it blocks access to the voice recognition software.

Conclusion:
From MICHAEL: So, the final answer is…SBAC and Chromebooks are compatible, unless you have a student who needs a speech-to-text accommodation. On the subject of speech-to-text, AIR is working with Google to resolve this issue but it is not likely to be resolved in time for this year's test administration.

Vermont Smarter Balanced/AIR Regional Trainings

The [Vermont Smarter Balanced Regional Training slides](#) can now be found in the VT-SBAC Portal. Early next week, attendees should be on the lookout for a survey seeking input on this year's workshop as well as recommendations for future trainings.

Digital Library: Self Sign-Up

Starting in mid-December, teachers will be able to self-register in the Digital Library. We hope that this may ease the workload of many of our district contacts, and provide easier access for teachers. Because those teaching in independent schools, and pre-service teachers may not have emails recognized by the Digital Library system, District Contacts will still be able to manually create accounts.
February Workshop's Guest Speaker: Dr. Maria Araceli Ruiz-Primo, Stanford University
Starting in February, the Digital Library will invite experts in the field of formative assessment to speak at the workshops. Dr. Ruiz-Primo's background is in formative assessment, and her most recent work has focused on English Learners. Look for more details on the February workshop in the next newsletter.

Special Populations Resources

Simplified Test Directions

A new Designated Support will be available for the 2017 administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Simplified Test Directions will be an option. Again, they will apply only to the language in the directions, not on test items or stimuli. Although it is a Designated Support (available for all students), and not an Accommodation, it was designed for students with special needs in mind. Special Educators may wish to note this designated support in IEPs, and should assign judiciously. More guidance will be coming as we move closer to the testing window.

Educator Opportunities

Educator Opportunity: NAEP Assessment Administrators

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is seeking individuals to proctor assessment sessions for 4th and 8th grade students in Vermont. Candidates must be available to work January 30th- March 10, 2017.This opportunity is a part-time, temporary position with limited benefits. Ideal candidates would be part-time or substitute teachers, college students, retired teachers, and para-professionals. Please pass this information along to your faculty and support staff. To apply for this position, visit our website and select "Search Field Data Collection Jobs." Search for Vermont, find the NAEP Assessment Administrator position, and select the "apply to job" button.

Contact: Email NAEPrecruit@westat.com or call (888) 237-8036, or Andrew Hudacs, NAEP Coordinator [Andrew.hudacs@vermont.gov / 802-479-1366] if you have general questions.

Question of the Week: *When will the Classroom Activities, which accompany the ELA and MA performance tasks, be posted?*

Following the lead of partner states in the Smarter Balanced Consortium, Vermont will no longer require schools to administer a Classroom Activity (CA) in conjunction with a Performance Tasks (PT). Therefore, you will no longer find CAs posted in TIDE or the TDS. The decision to eliminate CAs was based on the following:

- Smarter Balanced is no longer developing PTs that will require a CA. Clarification of any terms or contextual information that might be a source of bias for some student groups will now be contained within the task.
- This year's assessment will include embedded field-testing of newly developed PTs, which, as noted above, will not include CAs. Field test PTs will be randomly assigned to a subset of students. The rest will be administered existing PTs that were developed with a corresponding CA. Therefore, requiring CAs for some but not all students would create significant logistical issues for schools.
- Analysis of results from Smarter states that made CAs optional last spring does not support their continued use. In those states there was no significant difference between student who did and did not participate in a CA.
- Eliminating the CA will reduce testing time by an hour or more, consistent with the Agency's goal to minimize the impact of statewide testing on instruction. Overall, the benefits of including CAs, if any, are substantially outweighed by the benefits of eliminating them.