Smarter Balanced Assessment Team

For more information or to be added to the newsletter distribution list, please contact:

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Questions?
Please contact:
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844-218-1184

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From the Test Director: New Year & Assessment Updates/Changes

The Agency of Education's Assessment Team wishes you a happy New Year and high test scores from this spring's administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessments. Starting with this issue, we plan to publish the assessment newsletter every other week until early March and then weekly once the assessment window opens on March 14th. Please let us know if there are specific topics you think we should address.

Here are a few changes to this year's assessment we want to bring to your attention:

- **Classroom Activities** will no longer be a required part of administering the performance tasks. All new performance tasks developed by the Smarter Consortium will have key contextual information embedded in the task. Review of data on the original performance tasks indicates that classroom activities make little or no difference in students' ability to complete tasks successfully. So, in the interest of keeping testing time as short as possible we have eliminated this requirement.
- **Estimates for Testing Time** have been revised to reflect the absence of the classroom activities, as well as data taken during the first two administrations of the assessment. You should allow at least 6 hours for students in grades 3-5 to take the test, 6.5 hours for grades 6-8 and 7 hours for grade 11. Keep in mind that those estimates are for actual testing and do not include time needed for setting up the test session, entering ticket numbers, and other activities you might use to engage students. You can find the new test time estimates on pages 15 and 16 of the newly revised Test Administration Manual.
- **Embedded Field Test Items and Performance Tasks** will be included in some of your student's assessments. However, neither you nor your students will be able to tell if they have been assigned one of these questions. The field test items also will not impact scores. I just thought you might want to know.
- **Airways** is a new analysis and reporting tool that is available for the interim assessments. Those of you who miss the item analysis reports that were part of the NECAP reporting system should take a look at Airways. Among the new reporting options, this is the one that allows educators to view the actual test items that students got right and wrong.
- **AIR's Mobile Testing Application** has been upgraded so that it is now fully functional with iOS 10.2. As you may know, there were some security flaws in iOS 10.0 and 10.1 that Apple fixed with 10.2. AIR will discontinue support for versions 10.0 and 10.1 as of January 31, 2017.

Michael Hock, State Assessment Director

Training:
TIDE Webinar

For anyone feeling the need for a refresher training, the September 28th TIDE presentation was taped and has been posted in the VT-SBAC Portal. For a complete list of training webinars, please visit the Training Materials on the portal. The regional workshops held in October are posted in the District Administrator (DA) section.

TTS – Checklist & Accommodation 3-5 Protocol

The new VT (state specific) guidance for assigning Text-to-Speech on the ELA CAT [TTS Accommodation in grades 3-5] is available in the VT-SBAC Portal. Although the form allows you to enter information directly in the document, at present, you will still need to fax the request to Linda Moreno at 802-479-1829. As mentioned at the fall workshops, I have scheduled several webinars starting in January and running up to the start of the testing window. It is important that you try to attend at least one of the webinars and take advantage of the built-in Question & Answer session.

Date	Time
Thursday, 1/19/17	10 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Thursday, 1/19/17	3:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.
Monday, 1/23/17	12:00 p.m.- 1:00 p.m.
Thursday, 2/2/17	9:30 a.m.- 10:30 a.m.
Thursday, 2/2/17	2:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.
Monday, 2/13/17	3:30 p.m.- 4:30 p.m.
Friday, 2/24/17	11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.
Tuesday, 2/28/17	9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday, 3/8/17	3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Thursday, 3/9/17	3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Friday, 3/10/17	10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Monday, 3/13/17	3:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Digital Library: New Playlists

Check out the new playlists just added to the VT-SBAC portal. This month, Mathematics Grade 5 Fractions and ELA Grade 8 Research were added to the portal. These resources are also available on the Smarter Balanced public website and in the Digital Library. Additional Connections Playlists were added in the fall of 1026. As we continue collaborating with our State Network of Educators (SNEs), we expect to add more playlists this spring.

Educator Opportunity #1: College Board AP Reader

College Board is accepting applications from educators and college faculty members to participate in scoring the free-response sections of the AP Exams. This is an excellent opportunity for educators who are currently, or have recently, taught an AP course. Readers for *all* subjects are needed. For more information, please click or paste the following link into your browser. Professional Development / Continuing Education Credit is available.

http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/professional_development/232447.html?excmpid=MTG2-ED-2-che

TTS Webinar Registration

Digital Library

Educator Opportunities

Educator Opportunity #2: AOE Seeks Qualified Individuals for Short Duration Activities

Audience: All

The Agency of Education is seeking qualified individuals for short duration activities to be held throughout the year. The activities will consist of Peer Review Panels, ROPA Teams, **Student Assessment Scoring**, Site Monitoring Teams, Committee of Practitioners, Conference Presentations, and ad hoc Committees, Groups and Panels. NOTE: If you previously completed the survey, please do not resubmit at this time. Learn more about the AOE's employment opportunities.

Contact: Shelley Matz at (802)479-1754 or shelley.matz@vermont.gov

From Our Inbox:

From: A District Test Administrator
Sent: Thursday, January 05, 2017 2:26 PM
To: Moreno, Linda; Hock, Michael
Subject: Mixed Race

Greetings, And happy New Year!

What ethnicity checkbox (in TIDE) do you want us to use for students of mixed race? Have a good day.

Response:

If you click any combination of two or more of the ethnicity options, the student will enter the system as mixed race. I have no idea, however, why there is a mixed race tag on the reporting side of the system but not on the data entry side. I'm sure it's sound programmer's logic that is beyond the capacity of my non-programmer's brain—*Michael*

Special Programs and High School Testing

In the past, the Assessment Team has encountered many scenarios in which students might not test during their 11th grade year. Because there are many scenarios that may cause a delay in testing the Assessment Team handles assessment postponement requests on a case-by-case basis. That being said, there are two general groups in which these students tend to be categorized.

- First, the student is not on a graded program.
- Second, the student began the year as a 10th grader, but received enough credits to promote mid-year to the 11th grade.

Essentially the two basic criteria needed to qualify for the 11th grade testing are:

- the student has completed the 10th grade program, or
- it's the first year a student is classified as a junior in high school.

If you feel you have an exception to either of the two criteria above or would like to discuss your student's situation, please do not hesitate to contact Michael Hock or Linda Moreno. Contact information is provided on the first page of the newsletter.

Special Populations Resources

TTS Accommodations on Interim Assessments

If you have a student in grades 3-5 and would like to use the Text-to-Speech (accommodation - passages) on the interim assessment, please contact Linda Moreno to have the accommodation temporarily turned on. There is no approval process for interims; however,

Question of the Week: Do I need to be certified in order to administer the interim assessments?

Yes. Because Interim Assessments are accessed through TIDE, all users will need to be certified prior to administering the interim assessments. Certification is the method in which the state can prove to the federal government that everyone who is administering the assessment is trained, and that the training is consistent across the state. Much like the past, the total time to recertify will take approximately 15-20 minutes. Please contact the VT Help Desk [vthelpdesk@air.org / 1-844-218-1184] if you still cannot access the interim assessments, even after becoming certified.

Agency of Education Courtesy Post

After nearly a year of work, a draft of the Vermont state plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act is out for public comment. This is your chance to review the plan and offer your suggestions on how to strengthen it.

The plan is divided into six discrete sections allowing you to comment only on the portions you find relevant. Please navigate to the website where you will find links to:

- the full text of each section,
- brief narrated videos providing an overview of each section, and
- the survey to record your thoughts.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Patrick Halladay (802.479.1712; patrick.halladay@vermont.gov) or Chris Case (802.479.1179; chris.case@vermont.gov).

Please feel free to share this link with anyone interested in public education in Vermont.