

Smarter Balanced Assessment Team

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VT AOE Weekly Field Memo
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Questions?

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Message from the Director: This is Why We Field Test

Since the beginning of the field test for our new science assessment, several disgruntled adults and one disgruntled student emailed me to say that field-testing is a waste of their time because students won't be receiving any scores and the results don't really count for anything. Although it's true that the field test doesn't include enough test items to produce student level scores, we are in fact able to produce school and district level scores that will count for about 2% of this year's accountability calculations. However, that's not the point I want to make. Field-testing is actually a critical part of the test development process because it allows us to gather test item statistics that are used to ensure that the tests represent an appropriate range of difficulty and are free of bias. Field-testing also permits us to make sure that the complex digital systems we use to administer the assessments work as intended, something that is very difficult to do without approximating the conditions that will be present when the test WILL count and student scores WILL be reported.

We had a perfect example of this during the first few days of the VTSA field test window. We received reports from several alert test administrators that the Test Delivery System appeared to be skipping test items when students resumed testing after the session had been paused. It turned out that the pause rule that works well with the Smarter Balanced computer adaptive test, does not work so well with the "fixed form" item set that all students receive on VTSA. In case the pause rule is new to you, here's how it works. If students need a break during testing they can pause the test session and then pick up exactly where they left off after the break...with one condition. The test can't be left on pause for more than 20 minutes. If it is paused for more than 20 minutes, the session is closed and the only way to resume it is with a "reopen" appeal. So, why is this a problem with VTSA and not with Smarter? The computer adaptive algorithm used on the Smarter tests select a student's test items one at a time based on whether or not the previous item was answered correctly, so when the pause rule kicks in no items are lost. However, because all students at a grade level get the same set of items on VTSA, it is possible to make item delivery quicker and more efficient by holding a revolving set of items in a queue. The problem is that when the pause rule kicks in, all the items in the queue get skipped. If this happened next year when the test is live and official, it would be a big problem. Thank goodness we

discovered the issue during field-testing. In fact, we discovered the problem and applied a quick fix within 24 hours of learning there was a problem and at a point when only about 12% of students had started testing. I'm also pleased to report that the skipped items will not have an impact on the school and district scores we are generating for accountability, nor, will it mean we won't have the item statistics we need to construct next year's test, *and* we will have a permanent fix for the infamous pause rule. Our thanks to the teachers and district test administrators that alerted us to the issue.

Michael Hock, Director of Educational Assessment

Vermont Science Assessment (VTSA):

July Item Review Postponed

Vermont will resume recruitment for this very important work in late August. If interested, please make sure you have given [Margaret Carrera-Bly](#) for content, or [Linda Moreno](#) for the Fairness (bias & sensitivity) summer contact information.

VTSA Acronyms

Folks have probably figured out by now that Vermont, being a small state, needs to collaborate with larger states in test development to keep costs manageable. Vermont has renewed our relationship with Rhode Island (former NECAP partner) and together, we are the Multi-State Science Assessment (MSSA) consortium. The product of this partnership is the Vermont Science Assessment (VTSA). To meet the demands of item development, MSSA joined forces with states across the nation to develop and refresh items on the assessment. This collaborative is unofficially, but affectionately, referred to as "Friends of NGSS" or "Friends" for short. VTSA is not part of Smarter Balanced (formerly SBAC), a collaboration all its own. However, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) uses their proprietary testing system to deliver both the SBAC and the VTSA; thus, Vermont enjoys a uniform test delivery system.

Data Entry Interface (DEI)

This year, folks giving the VTSA Standard (paper/pencil), large print, or braille forms of the VTSA will need to input student data directly into the testing system. In order to do this, scribes will need to use the DEI. Recently posted is a [brochure](#) with directions on how to access the interface. Proctors are expected to input student responses in real-time, or at least immediately following the assessment. After the information has been entered, we ask that all scratch paper be securely shredded. All scribes should follow the Smarter Balanced [math protocol](#) in the Usability, Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines (UAAG) Appendix E, and sign a [Test Security and Confidentiality Agreement](#).

Alt ELA/MA/Science

The testing window for the Vermont Alternate Assessment for the 2017-18 school year is open and will close on June 15th. To access the assessment please open the link below. It should be reopened for each student who needs to submit an alternate assessment.

[2017-18 Alternate Assessment](#)

As a reminder, there is also a training available for this year's assessment. Please review the following webinar for more information.

[2018 Alternate Assessment Training Video](#)

Additional information and resources are available on the [alternate assessment website](#). Please contact Chris Kane at 802-479-1441 or christopher.kane@vermont.gov if you have any questions.

ALT FAQ Update

The Alternate Assessment [FAQ](#) has been updated to include questions asked during last week's office hours. Please take a minute to review the FAQ and update your information. The next session will occur in June at a date to be determined.

Smarter Balanced Remove students taking the Alt

Initially, it was recommended to keep the students taking the alternate assessment in TIDE until such a mechanism was in place for the alternate assessment. On Monday, May 14th, the link in which to submit the Alternate ELA / Math/ Science became available. Therefore, please feel free to remove students who will assess using the alternate assessments. You will need to remove these students in order to get accurate test completion numbers.

New Test Monitoring Brochure

With only a few more weeks left to test, we strongly encourage both District Test Administrators and School Test Coordinators to begin monitoring the pace of your testing. To make this easier, AIR has created a [Test Monitoring Brochure](#), which gives you information on how to monitor your district or school's progress.

Please keep in mind that we ask for all school-wide testing to be completed by June 1st, and use June 4th – June 15th for student make-up days.

VTPEA Non-FitnessGram Reporting

The document you will need to record information and results for students unable to access FitnessGram is ready to download. This form will need to be sent to your District Test Administrators (DAs) to be combined with other schools in your district, recorded on one form (Cognito) and sent via a secure link to the AOE. Please contact [Gabe McGann](#) with any questions regarding forms and form submissions. Questions regarding accommodations and accessibility can be directed to [Linda Moreno](#).



Question of the Week

When scribing on the VTSA, does the student have to spell out content related words?
 Spelling and punctuation can be assumed by the scribe on the VTSA. The scribing protocol will be the same as the math portion of the Smarter Balanced Assessment.



DA's: Please submit your [DA Certification of Proper Test Administration](#) to the AOE upon district test completion.

| VT 2018 SBAC Assessment Tally: 5/16/2018 (Completed) | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|---------|----------------|
| Grade | # of students 43148 | ELA CAT | MA CAT | ELA PT | MA PT | Total # | % Completed |
| 9 | 6275 | 4988 | 4799 | 4729 | 4678 | 19194 | 0.764701195 |
| 8 | 6097 | 5383 | 4629 | 5106 | 4343 | 19461 | 0.797974414 |
| 7 | 6214 | 5171 | 4994 | 4866 | 4650 | 19681 | 0.791800772 |
| 6 | 6086 | 4988 | 4325 | 4661 | 3985 | 17959 | 0.737717713 |
| 5 | 6314 | 5122 | 4488 | 4705 | 4011 | 18326 | 0.725609756 |
| 4 | 6265 | 5126 | 4322 | 4684 | 3904 | 18036 | 0.71971269 |
| 3 | 5897 | 4595 | 4161 | 4034 | 3465 | 16255 | 0.689121587 |

75%