

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Team

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

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### From the Test Director: Smarter 101 for New District Test Administrators

This week I was contacted by three individuals who have taken on the role of District Administrator (DA) for the Smarter Balanced Assessments and, being new to the duties and in one case new to the test, aren't exactly sure where to start. The good news is that we are only about half way through the test window so there is still plenty of time to get up to speed. The bad news is there is a pretty steep learning curve ahead of them. For the benefit of all newbies everywhere, here is my version of Smarter 101 for New DAs:

- **Get a DA Password** - Contact me (e-mail: [michael.hock@vermont.gov](mailto:michael.hock@vermont.gov) phone: 802-479-1288) to set up your DA password. This will provide you access to all the secure parts of the Smarter Balanced system. You will need the password to (1) set passwords for your colleagues who will be administering the test and will be authorized to view results, (2) load student information into the Test Information Distribution Engine TIDE , (3) submit appeals to reopen or reset student tests, (4) run testing sessions, and (5) manage testing and review student results.
- **Check Out the Assessment Portal** - Log into the Vermont Smarter Balanced Assessment Portal (<http://vt.portal.airast.org/>) and acquaint yourself with the various files and links that are available. The portal is where you will find pretty much everything you need to be an effective DA: manuals, training materials, an archive of these newsletters, etc. This is also where you can use your new password to sign in to the secure parts of the system, including the TIDE and the Online Reporting System (ORS).
- **Note how to Contact the Help Desk** – On the Portal launch page you'll find a "contact us" link to the Smarter Help Desk. I strongly suggest copying the e-mail and phone number onto a sticky note and stick some place really handy. You might also want to list my phone number for policy questions and Linda Moreno's phone number for questions about accommodations and supports for special populations. These are your major life lines.
- **Coordinate your Technology Infrastructure** – In order to administer the Smarter Balanced Assessment, a secure browser must be installed on each device that will be used. The secure browsers are available on the Portal.
- **Become a TIDE Master** – By clicking the District Administrator Card on the Portal's launch page, you'll find a variety of DA resources. Concentrate on those related to TIDE, particularly the TIDE manual and webinar. Most of the initial tasks will be done in TIDE.
- **Provision Passwords** – You'll need to set up passwords for all the folks who will be part of administering the assessment and using the results. You can use a

### Questions?

Please contact:

**Help Desk (AIR)** for Test Administration & Test Delivery Technologies  
[vthelpdesk@air.org](mailto:vthelpdesk@air.org)  
844-218-1184

Michael Hock (AOE) for Policies and Procedures  
[Michael.hock@vermont.gov](mailto:Michael.hock@vermont.gov)  
802-479-1288

Linda Moreno  
Accessibility and Accommodations for Special Populations  
[Linda.moreno@vermont.gov](mailto:Linda.moreno@vermont.gov)  
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trickle down approach to doing this (e.g., you set passwords for District Coordinators (DC) who will help you with many of your functions, one of which might be setting passwords for School Coordinators (SC), who in turn will set passwords for teachers (TE) and test administrators (TA).

- **Populate TIDE** – You will need to enter student names and demographic information into TIDE, and only someone with a DA password has this privilege. You'll find directions in the manual and also in TIDE on how to do the download by individual students or as a batch file if you have the student data on a school or district database.
- **Plan Accommodations and Activate Embedded Accessibility Tools** – While you are populating TIDE, you will also want to check the boxes for the embedded accessibility tools in order to make them available to students who need them. You will want to coordinate this with your special educators and/or English Language Learner specialist. The Usability, Accessibility and Accommodations (UAAG) Guide and Guidelines, available on the Portal, are your main resource for planning these supports. Note: This year only DAs can set the TTS accommodation in TIDE.
- **Train Teachers/Test Administrators** – At a minimum, anyone who will be administering the test must complete Online Test Administration Certification. The Test Delivery System (TDS) is designed to bar anyone without this certification from opening a test session. You should also encourage (or require) test administrators to read the Test Administration Manual (TAM) and watch the associated webinar.
- **Manage Testing** – The secure ORS has two “sides” – reporting and test management. On the test management side you can determine by grade, teacher or student how many students have started or completed testing. We strongly encourage you to do a thorough review of test completion before you decide to close the testing window for your schools. In order to have a scorable assessment, students must complete at least one question each on the Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) and the Performance Task (PT). It's not uncommon for a student to miss one of these or perhaps neglect to submit a completed test...which could mean that a student gets no score for a test that is basically completed.

Finally, take a deep breath and relax. The new test and its array of technologies may look daunting at first glance, but once you get rolling you'll find that it's much easier to manage than it looks, and there are lots of places to find help. Don't be afraid to ask.

*Michael Hock, State Assessment Director*

### **Educator Opportunities: Data & Item Reviewer and Interim/Digital Library Connections**

It's that time of year and Smarter Balanced is looking for experienced educators who are knowledgeable in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to serve on review panels. This is an excellent opportunity for educators to apply or expand their knowledge of the state standards and have an important role in the state assessment. Travel is required and meeting locations will vary. All travel and lodging is paid for in advance by Smarter Balanced. ALL educators are encouraged to apply. Smarter Balanced is also looking for educator experts in Science, Social Studies, English Language Learners and Special Education. Vermont is looking for 27 educators to fill these slots. Applications and details are located on the VT-SBAC [portal home page](#). Please contact Linda Moreno if you have any questions.



### From the Director's in-box



#### From the Inbox

To: Michael Hock  
 From: A Teacher  
 Re: Scoring of SBAC Writing

*I'm wondering how writing is scored on Smarter Balanced? How many different people look at each piece of writing? Does one person score each piece of writing, or are writing pieces scored by a team of people?*

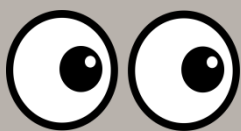
All of Vermont's "human Scoring" for Smarter Balanced is coordinated by our scoring contractor, Measurement Incorporated (MI) of Durham, NC. To understand the rigor of MI's procedures, it's helpful to consider the entire training and quality control process:

- Scorers are trained on the specific items they will be scoring, using a variety of exemplar pieces taken from real student work.
- Scorers go through a calibration process during which they score items that have been pre-scored by the scoring experts. If they don't calibrate well they are retrained, and if they still don't calibrate well they are invited to find new work.
- 15% of test items are double-blind scored, and analyzed for agreement. This is used to determine the student's score of record and also as a check of scorer accuracy. Depending on the type of item, different levels of inter-scorer agreement are required: 80% for 4-point items, 85% for 3-point items, 95% for 2-point items, and 100% for 1-point items. Scorers who do not meet these minimums are pulled from scoring for retraining and the student is assigned a score of record by the scoring expert.
- At least once a day, a calibration piece is seeded into the scoring. The scorer has no way of knowing that it is a calibration piece. If the scorer doesn't match the expert scorer, the scorer is pulled from scoring for retraining and all the pieces that were scored since the last calibration are put back in the queue for rescoring by someone who passed calibration.
- At least once a day, expert scoring staff does what's called a "read-behind" during which they review a scorers responses and provide feedback.

The scorers all work from training packs that include, for each item, a rubric, exemplars representing each item point, and scoring notes. If you would like to see what a writing pack looks like and you have a system password, you can look at the "Teacher Hand Scoring" materials that are part of the interim assessment.

#### Check It Out! Assistive Technology Typology

On the [Smarter Balanced website](#), there is a document that categorizes technology products used in classroom instruction and computerized assessments. Assistive Technology Partners / University of Colorado created the product using a collaborative team comprised of nationally known experts in the field of testing accommodations. The bibliography is also included in the document. Check out the interactive document here.



### ZOOM Text Feature

Have you ever wanted to make the zoom text larger than the default sizes? Trisha Klein, Director of Student Support Services for Smarter Balanced, and a former educator for Vermont’s Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, (in conjunction with AIR) has provided us with a series of steps that can provide additional magnification. *The steps are specific to using the Magnification program Zoom Text in Permissive Mode for students with a visual impairment that need additional magnification than the built-in Zoom can accommodate while in the secure browser.* This “fix” stemmed from a report filed by a school in Colchester. They were unable to access the assessment in the secure browser with Zoom Text. Below is the fix.

- Make sure Zoom Text is not running
- Go to the following directory depending on 32 vs 64 bit operating system
  - C:\Program Files (x86)\ZoomText 10.1\
  - C:\Program Files\ZoomText 10.1\
- Right click on the file called “ZoomTextConfig”
- On roughly the 16<sup>th</sup> row in this XML file there is a line that looks like this:

```
<Property name="D2DPatch" value="*,~dwm,~firefox,~thunderbird"/> <!-- note that it takes care of D2D private patches -->
```

Add the name of your state’s secure browser here like this example for California:

```
<Property name="D2DPatch" value="*,~dwm,~firefox,~casecurebrowser,~thunderbird"/><!-- note that it takes care of D2D private patches -->
```

Save the file7.)

Please continue to report any technological difficulties to the VT Help Desk, even if you do not think it will help.

### Question of the Week

I have students who come to me from different schools. What do I do if I am administering the MA PT and my students have different classroom activities? In situations such as this, the School Testing Coordinator can:

- Log into TIDE
- Pull up the student’s information
- Go to the Performance Task section of the student’s profile
- Choose the appropriate Classroom Activity for each content area [Click Save]

### Testing Progress: Completion Tally: Frlday 4/29/2106

2016 SBAC Assessment Tally – Vermont: Week 7					
Total # of Students Registered:	Completed the CAT Summative Assessments		Completed the Performance Tasks		Total # of Tests Completed to Date:
45,295					82,372 (45.5%)
Grade / #	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	All
11: 8,947	4,903	4,678	4,875	4,531	18,987
8: 6,061	3,443	2,795	3,301	2,754	12,293
7: 5,967	3,311	2,556	3,064	2,433	11,364
6: 6,068	2,762	2,426	2,611	2,163	9,962
5: 6,130	2,634	2,149	2,360	2,075	9,218
4: 5,944	3,060	2,749	3,006	2,551	11,366
3: 6,178	2,558	2,088	2,515	2,021	9,182

