



Smarter Balanced Assessments are coming

Have you heard that state assessments are changing?

As a result of shifting to Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Washington state has mandated that all school districts begin using Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) in 2014-15. The new assessments are aligned to the CCSS.

SBA will replace the reading, writing and math Measurement of Student Progress (MSP) tests for students in grades three through eight. Students in grade 10 and 11 will also take the SBA. (English language arts [ELA] at grade 10; ELA and math at grade 11.) Grade 10 Proficiency Exams (HSPE) and End of Course (EOC) exams will be phased out over the next few years. Tenth graders will take Common Core aligned ELA exit exams in and math to fulfill graduation requirements until the class of 2019 when graduation requirements change.

How are the Smarter Balanced Assessments different?

- They are aligned to the English language arts and math CCSS.
- The English language arts SBA includes both reading and writing assessments for every grade level tested.
- They include two different types of tests: Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) and Performance Tasks (PT) with an in-class activity.
 1. **CAT** is an online testing method. Questions appear based on whether or not a student answers the previous question correctly or incorrectly. This gives a more accurate measure of each student's performance level.
 2. **PT** are extended activities that measure a student's ability to integrate knowledge and skills across multiple standards—a key component of college and career readiness. Performance tasks will be used to better measure capacities such as depth of understanding, research skills and complex analysis.
 - In-class activities are 20 to 30 minutes. The activities involve research and structured classroom discussion to prepare for the PT. This ensures that students have background knowledge to successfully complete the PT.

How are SBA given?

Smarter Balanced Assessments are administered online. Students use a Chromebook computer to take the tests.

When will students be taking these exams?

The state of Washington has established a testing window between March 9 and June 15. Our district testing schedule will be designed to make the best use of student instructional time and use resources efficiently. View the daily testing schedule on the assessment calendar. Testing begins April 13.

How are we preparing students?

The district has been actively implementing the Common Core State Standards since 2012-13. Curriculum specialists and teachers have been developing and using lessons and assessments aligned to the state standards.

In addition, we are ensuring students will be ready for online testing by increasing technology use in classrooms. Starting in the 2013-14, a steering team of teachers, administrators, specialists and technology staff began creating a comprehensive plan to ensure that students are confident and ready to show their learning on these new assessments.

Students have also been preparing for the SBA by using the Practice Tests which allows students, parents and staff to experience questions that look and function like those that will be administered on the Smarter Balanced state assessments.

Additionally, there is a Training Test which provides students and staff with the opportunity to become familiar with test-taking embedded features and tools. Such as, highlighting text, flagging an answer to review later, and dragging and dropping answer responses.