Five Key Messages for Smarter Balanced Assessments

- New assessments are needed due to change in learning standards
- Smarter Balanced assessments are being jointly developed by 22 states and territories (less expensive, powerful design)
- The name ‘Balanced’ is intentional – ongoing classroom based assessment as part of instruction will improve learning and boost performance on summative tests
- These tests will be more accessible to more students (translations, accommodations, supports)
- 2015 results will set a new baseline of student performance in Washington
1. New assessments are needed due to change in learning standards

How do we get from here...

Common Core State Standards specify K-12 expectations for college and career readiness

...to here?

All students leave high school college and career ready

...and what can an assessment system do to help?
Common Core Shifts for English Language Arts / Literacy

- **Building knowledge** through **content-rich** nonfiction

- Reading, writing and speaking grounded in **evidence from text**, both literary and informational

- Regular practice with **complex text** and its **academic language**
Common Core Shifts for Mathematics

- **Focus** strongly where the standards focus

- **Coherence**: Think across grades and link to major topics within grades

- **Rigor**: In major topics, pursue with equal intensity:
  - Conceptual understanding
  - Procedural skill and fluency
  - Application
Communications reflection:

- Who wouldn’t want these skills for our future teachers, doctors, engineers, civic leaders, airline pilots, etc.?
The Trail From Standards to Scores

Common Core State Standards → Claims → Assessment Targets → Items → Score, measure, certification
2. Smarter Balanced assessments are being jointly developed by 22 states and territories

- Pooling resources across states lowers the cost and improves the design of the tests.
- Current tests cost ~$60-$90 per student; new tests will be ~$30 per student.
- New tests will include Computer Adaptive Testing and performance tasks, yielding better measurement of what students have learned.
- Grade to grade assessments will be connected so students’ progress can be monitored and instructional supports can be provided as needed.
3. The name ‘Balanced’ is intentional

Common Core State Standards specify K-12 expectations for college and career readiness

Teachers and schools have information and tools they need to improve teaching and learning

Summative: College and career readiness assessments for accountability

All students leave high school college and career ready

Interim: Flexible and open assessments, used for actionable feedback

Formative Educator Resources: Digital Library with Instructional and professional learning resources that include embedded formative assessment processes
4. These tests will be more accessible to all students

- Smarter Balanced tests will have translations or glossaries in 10 languages and dialects, and American Sign Language.
- The tests have embedded accommodations and supports for students with and without disabilities (such as text-to-speech, enlarged print, color contrast).
- The interim assessments also will have these supports so the summative test administration will not be foreign.
5. 2015 results will set a new baseline of student performance in Washington

- Some people are predicting that the spring 2015 test results will see Washington students falling off a “performance cliff”, with scores dropping.

- But the new tests are not comparable so we should not compare scores from one to the other.

- We have a new baseline!
5. 2015 results, cont’

- Think of the standards and the assessment as a new target with new results…. I envision two mountains:

- People who successfully climb Mt Rainer (at 14,000 ft), will find Mt McKinley (at 20,000 ft) more challenging.

- Some will be able to meet the challenge, some will be close and some who previously were able to summit Rainier will not be able to summit McKinley at first.
So Where Are We Now and What Do People Need to Know?

- Field test is underway:
  - Helps ensure assessments are valid, reliable, and fair for all students
  - Provides teachers, schools, and students an opportunity to participate in a practice run of the assessment system
  - Evaluates performance of 20,000+ assessment items and performance tasks
  - Sets preliminary achievement standards that help track student preparedness for college and career
We’ve Seen a Lot of Positive Coverage Around the Country….

California students' verdict on new tests: Tech is a breeze, content is tougher (San Jose Mercury News)

Smarter Balanced test available to community today (Great Falls (ID) Tribune)

English Learners Get Help With Common Core Test (KQED, San Francisco)

A Fairly Smooth Start On Computerized Test's First Day (Hartford Courant)
And Locally, too!

**Students to field test new assessment exams | Mukilteo schools**

By Marci Larsen, Superintendent | Apr 02, 2014

With the arrival of spring each year, we also see the season where nearly all students take state assessments to determine whether they are meeting academic standards.

It’s usually a stressful time for both students and their teachers, especially at the high school level, where meeting state standard in the tests is a requirement to receive a diploma.

But, this year, things are slightly different. While high school students will take the tests as before to meet their graduation requirements, most elementary and middle school students will be field testing a new assessment called the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). The tests are a key part in implementing the Common Core State Standards.

You may have heard about the Common Core State Standards, as their adoption has met with some differences in opinion.

Academic learning standards are nothing new. They are statements that define what a fourth grade student is supposed to learn in math, for example, or what a seventh grader should know in English. They are important because they help assure that students attending different schools will be taught the same thing.

For the past several years, those standards in the state of Washington have been put into a format called Common Core Standards.
Bottom Line: “Not just another test”... Smarter Balanced is being built by states for states

1. Preparing your students for a changing world
2. Supporting teachers with a suite of resources
3. Connecting learning to life after high school
4. Providing information to guide student growth
5. Keeping educators in the driver’s seat
Summative Assessment Resources to Help Schools Prepare

• Practice Tests Available since May 2013
  ✓ Both subject areas, grades 3 through 8 and 11
  ✓ Approx. 23 items & 1 performance task in each subject
  ✓ Uses same software as operational test
  ✓ Many accessibility and accommodation resources

• Training Test Now Available
  ✓ Quick Introduction to Smarter Balanced interface, item types, and resources
  ✓ 14 items combined in English and math (all item types represented)
  ✓ Grade bands (3 to 5, 6 to 8, and high school)
  ✓ Most accessibility and accommodation resources

• Also Online:
  ✓ All test design documents: blueprints, content specifications, item specifications
  ✓ Technology specifications and Bandwidth Checker
  ✓ Test Administration Manual and Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines
  ✓ Training modules on an array of topics
Formative Tools: the Digital Library
Resources in the Digital Library

- Not an assessment bank
- Not an item bank
- Not a learning management system where educators can register for training or receive credit by completing specific online courses
- Not a library for general public (will require registration and login)
- Not a site where any resource can automatically be posted; all resources must be vetted through the Quality Criteria

* Resources include the following file types: Video, HTML5, Audio, PPT, Excel, Word, and PDF.
Grounded in this Definition of Formative Assessment Process

• Formative Assessment is a deliberate **process** used by teachers and students **during instruction** that provides actionable feedback that is used to adjust ongoing teaching and learning strategies to improve students’ attainment of curricular learning targets/goals.

~ Compiled by the Digital Library National Advisory Panel
All Resources are Grounded in the Four Attributes of the Formative Assessment Process and Reviewed using Quality Criteria

Clarify Intended Learning

Elicit Evidence

Act on Evidence

Interpret Evidence
Interim Assessments
Periodic, Optional, Classroom-based Monitoring
Interim Assessment Design Principles

- Administered through the same system as Summative
- Can be administered at various points in the year
- Optional for districts
- Online administration
- Adaptive as appropriate
- Adhere to Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines
- Items drawn from same pool as Summative; full array of item types
- Not intended for accountability decisions
Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICA): Sample Use Cases

• Mid-year (e.g., February), a teacher might want to know how students are doing in preparation for the summative test, to better know what areas to focus more efforts/attention on.

• Beginning of the year, students entered a class from another state, and the teacher did not have data for them. A teacher decides to give these students the previous year’s ICA to complete the data for the class.
Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) Sample Use Cases

• A teacher is providing focused instruction on opinion in grades 3-5 writing (argumentative in the higher grades). Teacher could use a block focused on opinion writing to determine degree of students’ understanding before or after the instruction.

• An 8th grade math team of teachers wants to be informed about how their students are doing in geometry after teaching a geometry unit.
Interim Assessment User Interface, Scoring and Reporting, continued

• Reporting
  — Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA)
    • Report same information as Summative Assessment
      – Overall composite scale score
      – Achievement levels
      – Claim level information
  — Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs)
    • Report information consistent with claim level information
  — Item level reporting is a future feature (not on current work plan)
Interim Assessments Timeline

• Interim Assessments will be available in late fall of 2014
  – Items have to get through field testing, scoring, and standard setting

• Initial release will include a fixed form Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA) for each grade level and content area
  – Adaptive forms will be available as the item pool allows

• Initial release will also include a fixed form Interim Assessment Block (IAB) for most blocks
  – Adaptive IABs will be available as the item pool allows
  – All blocks will have adaptive IABs after 2014-15
Learn More and Stay Engaged

- To experience the assessment yourself, take the Practice Test: [www.SmarterBalanced.org/practice-test](http://www.SmarterBalanced.org/practice-test)
- For the latest news and developments on Smarter Balanced in Washington: [http://www.k12.wa.us/smarter/default.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/smarter/default.aspx)
- Materials for administration, as well as communication templates for parents and community: [http://sbac.portal.airast.org/field-test/resources/](http://sbac.portal.airast.org/field-test/resources/)
- For questions about Smarter Balanced or the assessment system transitions, contact: Assessment@k12.wa.us 360-725-6348
Important OSPI Web Sites to Learn More and to Stay Connected…

- **OSPI CCSS/NGSS Webinar Series:**
  - [http://www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/UpdatesEvents.aspx#Webinar](http://www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/UpdatesEvents.aspx#Webinar)

- **OSPI Smarter Balanced Webinar Series:**
  - [http://www.k12.wa.us/smarterbalanced/](http://www.k12.wa.us/smarterbalanced/)
  - Feb. 4 webinar includes latest info on INTERIM Assessments!

Both webinar series include the latest resources and information related to implementation and Smarter Balanced Assessment System components.

*All Webinars are recorded and ppts are downloadable for your use.*
Statewide Communications Campaign

- Audience is public (parents, community, educators, lawmakers)
- Build awareness and support for CCSS
- Prepare for initial decline in test scores in transition to more rigorous assessments
- Counter misinformation/myths

http://www.readywa.org/
Thank you!
Changes in the State Assessment

Presented by:
Nancy Katims, Ph.D.
Edmonds School District
Director of Assessment, Research & Evaluation

January 2014
Agenda

• Introductions
• Overview of the Smarter Balanced Assessment
• Overview of this spring’s field test
• Strategies schools and teachers are using to prepare
• Suggestions for parents
• Opportunity to talk with district staff about questions of interest
Objectives --
To answer these questions . .

• Why is the state assessment changing?
• What does the new state assessment look like?
• What is the purpose of this spring’s field test?
• What are schools and teachers doing to prepare?
• What can parents do to help?
Why is the state assessment changing?

• To answer this question, we need to first understand the purpose of the state assessment.

• The state assessment is one of many assessments we give our students to keep track of their learning. All major decisions about a student are based on multiple pieces of information about the student’s achievement.

• The purpose of the state assessment is to measure how well all our students are progressing on learning the state standards.
Why is the state assessment changing?

- **Standards** are statements of what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level, and are designed to prepare our students for being successful in whatever future they choose.

- We must prepare all our students to live and work successfully in the **world of the future**, one of constant change and innovation.
Why is the state assessment changing?

- Washington State *first* developed state standards in the 1990’s.
- These standards have been *revised* a few times since then, to keep up with the changing times.
Why is the state assessment changing?

The Common Core Standards:
- Were developed by teachers, content experts, and state leaders from across the country.
- Have been adopted by more than 45 states.
- Are designed to help students develop a deeper understanding of subject matter, think critically, and apply what they learn to the real world.
- Video: [http://www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/default.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/default.aspx)
Why is the state assessment changing?

• So, the state assessment is changing in order to measure our students’ progress on the new Common Core State Standards, designed to help students be ready for college and career.

• The new assessment is called the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA).
What does the SBA look like?

- Written by educators and test experts from across 25 states, who will all share the test and use common scoring
- Will be fully implemented in 2014-15
- Administered online, using “adaptive” testing
- Will provide achievement scores and growth information for individual students and groups
- Will be given in grades 3-8 and 11
What does the SBA look like?

- For **grades 3-8** -- will replace MSP in reading, writing and math
- For **high school** -- will replace HSPE/EOCs in a phased-in approach (SBA will be a graduation requirement for the Class of 2019 when they reach 11th grade)
- **Science** MSP will continue to be given in grades 5 and 8, and Biology EOC will be given in high school, until a new assessment for the Next Generation Science Standards is ready.
What does the SBA look like?

Two subject area tests:

• **English/Language Arts**
  ▫ Reading across the content areas
  ▫ Writing
  ▫ Listening
  ▫ Research/Inquiry

• **Mathematics**
  ▫ Understanding of math concepts
  ▫ Math skills and fluency
  ▫ Application to real-life problems
What does the SBA look like?

- The test is **not** timed.
- Estimated times vary by grade level from about 3 – 4.5 hours per subject area test.
- Students may take each subject area test over 1 to 3 days.
What does the SBA look like?

Many online tools are built into the SBA, such as:

- Highlighter
- Calculator
- Zoom
- Digital notepad
- English dictionary and glossary

In addition, all students will be allowed to have scratch paper, protractor, ruler, and other tools.
What does the SBA look like?

Includes a variety of types of questions:
- Multiple choice
- Short answer
- Technology-enhanced items
- Performance tasks - Questions with multiple parts, including short answers and essays, based on a real-world situation
There has been much debate about the role of sleep and the role of napping. How many hours of sleep is enough? What is too much sleep? What is too little sleep? How do naps fit into sleep cycles?

The issue of “napping” will be one of the topics for an upcoming school debate club. To prepare for this debate, and to decide which side of “napping” you are on, you have been conducting research on the topic. As part of your research, you have found two articles and a newspaper column about sleep.

(continued)
Example of SBA Task - continued

After you have reviewed these sources, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly scan the sources and the three questions that follow. Then, go back and read the sources carefully to gain the information you will need to answer the questions and finalize your debate stance.

You will then write an argumentative essay on a topic related to the sources.
How to Find SBA Examples

Sample Items and Performance Tasks

Practice Tests
http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/
What does the SBA look like?

Accommodations will be available for students with disabilities and for those who are English Language Learners (ELL) in a similar way as on the current state tests, such as:

- ASL
- Braille
- Text to speech
- Translations
- Bilingual dictionaries
What does the SBA look like?

- **Alternative assessments** will continue to be available for **students with disabilities** at all tested grade levels.

- Alternative **options for high school graduation** will also continue to be available, for students who have difficulty in a standard testing environment.
What does the SBA look like?

In addition to the spring test, we will be given access to:

- Online “interim” tests using SBA-type questions that teachers can use throughout the school year as part of teaching.
- Other resources for teachers to use for professional development.
What does the SBA look like?

The cost of the SBA for the state will be less than the cost of our current state assessment:

- SBA tests will cost the state about $30/student.
  - Includes both subject area tests
  - Includes additional online resources

- Current Reading, Writing, and Math tests are about $30 per test, or $60 - $90 per student.
What is the purpose of this spring’s field test?

The field test is designed to:

• Test over 22,000 items to ensure that the actual test that will be used starting in 2015 will be valid, reliable, and fair for all students.

• Determine what scores will be used as “meeting standard” at each grade level.

• Make sure that any “bugs” in the online testing system are found and corrected before implementation of the actual test.
What is the purpose of this spring’s field test?

Most schools in the Edmonds School District will be field testing the SBA this spring:

- **Students** will get hands-on experience with the new test before it “counts.”
- **Staff** will get experience giving the test, to better prepare for successful implementation of the actual test in Spring 2015.
- Our student population will be represented in the field test data that is used to develop the final state test.
What is the purpose of this spring’s field test?

• Students will have the opportunity to complete a district questionnaire about their testing experience telling us:
  ▫ What they felt confident doing
  ▫ What they did not feel confident doing
  ▫ What learning they think would help them for next year

• The results will be given to each school for their students.
What is the purpose of this spring’s field test?

- Because the field test is designed to “test the test,” and is not yet ready to determine students’ achievement levels on the test, there will be no scores for individual students, schools, or districts.

- Elementary and middle schools that are giving the field test do not have to give the MSP in Reading, Writing, or Math this spring.
What is the purpose of this spring’s field test?

Doing field testing without giving scores is the standard procedure for the development of any large-scale test.

- Washington State’s first state assessment – the WASL – was field tested with no scores for each grade band of students.

- Every year there are “pilot” items on the state test that are not scored.
About the field test

Each school will have a **test schedule** designed to meet the needs of the school:

- Many **middle** schools will be able to complete testing in one week.
- Many **elementary** schools will be able to complete testing in two weeks (but no students will be taking tests throughout this time!).
- Each school will inform parents of the schedule for their children.
What are schools and teachers doing to prepare?

Teachers are:

- learning about the Common Core Standards
- reviewing SBA sample items / practice tests and sharing them with students.

School and district staff are planning:

- distribution of new technology resources.
- test schedules to avoid conflicts.
- appropriate professional development for teachers.
What can parents do to help?

Communicate about the field test at a level appropriate for your child’s age.

Key messages to students:
• Try your best, because the test makers will be using the information to help make the test a good test for the future.
• Don’t be stressed out if there are questions that seem too hard for you, because the test makers are trying out all kind of questions.
• You’ll have a chance to tell adults about what will help you do well on the test next year.
Questions?