



# THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Governance | Accountability | Achievement | Oversight | Career & College Readiness

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Draft Recommendations for Use of the 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Smarter Balanced Assessment</b>	
<b>As Related To:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Effective and accountable P-13 governance. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Comprehensive statewide K-12 accountability. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Closing achievement gap.	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Strategic oversight of the K-12 system. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Five: Career and college readiness for all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<b>Relevant To Board Roles:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System Oversight <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Convening and Facilitating
<b>Policy Considerations / Key Questions:</b>	Consideration of a feedback letter to the CORE to College Project from the Board.	
<b>Possible Board Action:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<b>Materials Included in Packet:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Graphs / Graphics <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Third-Party Materials <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint	
<b>Synopsis:</b>	<p>The Core to College Alignment Project has undertaken work over the past year to analyze potential uses of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade Common Core assessment in the Higher education system. The test is scheduled for K-12 system-wide use beginning in the 2014-15 school year, and has been under development by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).</p> <p>The State Board of Education has been asked for its input on these topics, focusing in particular on how these assessment results might be used for college course placement, admissions decisions, and perhaps also high school course-taking advisement. The Project will collect all feedback by April 1, 2014 and reconvene to finalize its policy framework in the late Spring. The timeline is premised on the idea that students should know what the stakes will be for the assessment they will be taking in the Spring of 2015.</p> <p>Dr. Bill Moore, from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and Dr. Alan Burke, Deputy Superintendent from OSPI, will present on these policy recommendations at the March meeting, and be available for questions and discussion.</p> <p>Action: The Board will be asked to construct a feedback letter for consideration by Core to College and higher education policymakers.</p>	



## Potential Discussion Questions

Re: Discussion Regarding Use of 11<sup>th</sup> Grade SBAC Assessment in Higher Education System

- For students who score a Level 1 and are not close to demonstrating college readiness by the end of their junior year, how can the K-12 system offer them a support structure through the remainder of the K-12 career to increase their post-secondary prospects?
- As we transition to the use of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade test for high school graduation (per current law), how might a two-cut-score system (one requirement for graduation, another for demonstration of college readiness) present unintended consequences for the K-12 and higher education systems? How can these be avoided?
- What impact is the use of an 11<sup>th</sup> grade test for graduation likely to have on the future use of Collections of Evidence as an alternative assessment for graduation? What policy recommendations would the Board make in this regard?
- The recommendations for use of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade assessment seem more robust in terms of course placement decisions than they do for college admissions. What are some of the attributes of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade test that make it more appropriate for use in course placement than for admissions?
- How can the results of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade assessment be leveraged most effectively to encourage the most challenging and appropriate course-taking decisions in the senior year? Could the assessment results be conveyed in a manner that makes course-taking suggestions?

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Randy Dorn, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

## **Introduction to the Draft Recommendations for the Use of the Smarter Balanced 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Assessment by Washington Institutions of Higher Education<sup>1</sup>**

A cross-sector work group representing a variety of key education stakeholder groups convened in early November to draft **system recommendations regarding the use of the Smarter Balanced 11<sup>th</sup> grade assessment as an indicator of college readiness in the placement process for postsecondary institutions in Washington** (see table following this introduction). For more details about the work group or questions about the overall process, please contact Bill Moore, Director, Core to College Alignment, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges, [bmoore@sbctc.edu](mailto:bmoore@sbctc.edu), 360-704-4346.

### Feedback Process/Timetable

We are inviting comments and input on these draft recommendations **through April 1, 2014**:

- collectively through discussions at system group meetings during the winter quarter, and
- individually by reviewing the document and providing general comments via the web at <https://c2cwa.wordpress.com> OR providing more targeted and specific feedback through an online survey: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/sbac\\_rec](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/sbac_rec)

In April 2014 the policy work group will reconvene to consider the feedback received and finalize the system recommendations. The final proposal will then be shared with key system groups and stakeholders and presented to the 2-year college presidents and 4-year provosts in late spring for their approval. The goal is to inform Smarter Balanced Consortium of Washington's decisions regarding the 11<sup>th</sup> grade assessments during the fall 2014 quarter to allow adequate time for students taking the assessment officially for the first time in spring 2015 to understand the potential consequences of the scores.

### Rationale for Recommendations:

*Supporting the implementation of the [Common Core State Standards \(CCSS\)](#). The standards represent a critical shift in state standards for K-12 students, setting consistent, high, research-based expectations for all students anchored in a clear vision of the knowledge and skills students need to succeed in first-year college courses and postsecondary professional-technical programs. The CCSS were developed through a multi-state, state-led process that involved higher education representatives from the outset – and continued collaboration will be critical for success. Successful statewide implementation of the CCSS will increase significantly the college readiness of Washington high school graduates and reduce their need for precollege work in higher education (ultimately saving money for both students and colleges).*

A survey of more than 1800 college and university faculty who teach introductory courses (Conley et al., 2011)<sup>2</sup> indicated substantial consensus that the standards are a coherent representation of the knowledge and skills necessary for success in their entry-level college courses. The Washington English and math faculty who have reviewed the standards as part of the *Core to College* work reported similar broad support for the key elements and shifts in the CCSS.

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<sup>1</sup> These recommendations are intended for public institutions but may be adopted by individual independent colleges as well.

<sup>2</sup> Conley, D., K. Drummond, A. de Gonzalez, J. Rooseboom, and O. Stout. (2011). *Reaching the goal: The applicability and importance of the Common Core State Standards to college and career readiness*. Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center. Available at <https://www.epiconline.org/>

*Significance of the Smarter Balanced assessment as an indicator of college readiness.* To establish clear and consistent assessments of these rigorous new standards for college and career readiness, two consortia have developed state-of-the-art assessments that will replace the existing K-12 student assessments required for federal accountability, effective spring 2015. Washington has joined the [Smarter Balanced](#) assessment consortium (SBAC); by current Washington state legislation, the 11<sup>th</sup> grade SBAC assessment will be required for high school graduation for the Class of 2019 (but with a separate cut score likely to be below the designated college-readiness level). In the absence of a clear college-readiness benchmark for high school graduates in Washington there will continue to be a gap between academic preparation in high school and the skills/knowledge expectations for succeeding in entry-level college courses, increasing the need for meaningful incentives to encourage student achievement of the new standards.

The use of the SBAC 11<sup>th</sup> grade scores in higher education as a meaningful indicator of college readiness will help encourage students to meet the standards. Considering these scores as part of the placement process is also timely as national research continues to question the quality and efficacy of existing placement tests.<sup>3</sup> Most Washington public higher education institutions are examining the predictive power of the tests being used for placement, shifting away from single point in time placement test scores toward multiple or alternative measures that provide a richer understanding of student potential for success in college-level work, such as transcript-based placement efforts. Incorporating Smarter Balanced 11<sup>th</sup> grade scores into these ongoing efforts provides real advantages over existing testing alternatives:

- a) **Cost.** The test will be taken by all high school juniors and funded as part of the K-12 state assessment system.
- b) **Variety and Level of Expectations.** Students will encounter new item types, computer-enhanced items, many more constructed-response items, and performance tasks that ask them to write and to use a broad array of knowledge and skills to solve complex real-world problems.
- c) **Transparency and Ownership.** The test has been designed and will be overseen through the Smarter Balanced consortium of states with ongoing input from hundreds of teachers, higher education faculty, state content specialists and testing experts. The key documents describing the assessment (content specifications, item specifications, item writing training materials, test blueprints, accommodations framework, achievement level descriptors, technology specifications, etc.) are available to the public on the [Smarter Balanced website](#).

#### Background:

Washington is among 45 states, 2 territories and the District of Columbia implementing the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for college- and career-readiness in English Language Arts and Mathematics for grades K-12. As part of this implementation process, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium has asked postsecondary education institutions to decide *whether and how the 11<sup>th</sup> grade assessment will be used in placement decisions for high school graduates entering higher education.*

During the 2012-13 academic year the Washington [Core to College project](#) provided background information about the Common Core and the Smarter Balanced assessment, meeting with various faculty and administrator groups to share updates from the Smarter Balanced consortium, including its approval of a proposed college content-readiness policy framework in late spring 2013. In early November the project convened a statewide policy work group (representing key educational stakeholders from higher education and K-12); at that meeting this group drafted the specific recommendations for Washington's potential use of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade assessment included below.

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<sup>3</sup> e.g., recent work from [the Community College Research Center](#)

**Draft Recommendations for Higher Education Use of Smarter Balanced 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Assessment**

SBAC Score Level	Math	English	Additional Comments
For students scoring at level 4 on the 11 <sup>th</sup> grade assessment...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Fully exempt</b> from remediation</li> <li>➤ Placement into any <b>entry college-level</b> math course (including pre-calculus) without additional testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Fully exempt</b> from remediation</li> <li>➤ Placement into any <b>entry college-level</b> English course (including but not limited to English Composition or its equivalent) without additional testing</li> </ul>	Students are expected and should be <b>advised</b> to take dual credit and other opportunities for earning college credit during their senior year
For students scoring at level 3 on the 11 <sup>th</sup> grade assessment...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Fully exempt</b> from remediation for placement into liberal arts math or statistics (Math &amp;107, Math &amp;146 or their equivalents) without additional testing</li> <li>➤ <b>Conditionally exempt</b> from remediation for placement into other entry college-level math courses, contingent on successful completion of a post-Algebra II math course in senior year of high school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Fully exempt</b> from remediation</li> <li>➤ Placement into any <b>entry college-level</b> English course (including but not limited to English Composition or its equivalent) without additional testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students are encouraged to consider appropriate advanced courses leading to college credit while in high school</li> <li>➤ Would like to see a more detailed analysis of Smarter Balanced threshold achievement level descriptors, especially in math</li> </ul>
For students scoring at level 2 (below “college-ready”) on the 11 <sup>th</sup> grade assessment...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Conditionally exempt</b> from remediation, contingent on successful completion of math course in senior year (Algebra II or higher) <u>or</u> math college readiness <b>transition course</b>; <u>and</u> end-of-course assessment</li> <li>➤ Placement to be determined based on design of transition course and assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Conditionally exempt</b> from remediation, contingent on successful completion of English course in senior year or college readiness <b>transition course</b>; and end-of-course assessment</li> <li>➤ Placement to be determined based on design of transition course and assessment (additional measures to be considered: self-directed placement, writing samples, reading scores on placement tests)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If district retests students and student earns a 3 then he/she follows the level 3 rubric</li> <li>➤ Transition courses to be designed through partnership between higher education and school districts</li> <li>➤ Scaling transcript-based placement critical to success of this approach</li> <li>➤ Overall high school GPA might be considered as another possible measure</li> </ul>

Additional Questions for Consideration	Recommendation and/or Suggestions for Next Steps
<p>1. <b>How long will the scores be valid?</b></p>	<p><b>MATH:</b> One year, i.e., scores will be considered valid only for students who matriculate directly from high school to college.</p> <p><b>ENGLISH:</b> Three years [pending some research into literature on deterioration of literacy skills over time]</p>
<p>2. <b>How can we use the 11<sup>th</sup> grade assessment for Running Start and other dual credit programs for high school students?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Unless at some point students are able to take the assessment as sophomores, the current 11<sup>th</sup> grade Smarter Balanced assessment comes too late for most Running Start students, who enter the program at the beginning of their junior year.</li> <li>➤ For students who do begin Running Start as seniors, the Smarter Balanced assessment can serve a similar role to what it offers for students entering college after high school (see above).</li> <li>➤ As with alternative placement measures at most colleges, students would be entitled to the highest placement option available if there were a discrepancy between the initial placement test results and the Smarter Balanced placement.</li> <li>➤ Need to consult with and get feedback from the statewide council of dual credit program coordinators.</li> </ul>
<p>3. <b>How, if at all, will we use the 11<sup>th</sup> grade assessment as a consideration in the admissions process for baccalaureate institutions?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Currently there appears to be insufficient levels of differentiation needed in an admissions test, so the assessment could not be used formally in the admissions decision-making process for entering students.</li> <li>➤ There was general agreement that baccalaureate institutions would like to support the implementation of the Common Core and encourage students to achieve these higher standards; there was also agreement that the more information institutions have on students in terms of their overall academic performance and general profile, the better. Thus we need to draft language that conveys that support and indicates that Smarter Balanced assessment scores can be useful additional sources of information without suggesting they will be factored formally into admissions decisions.</li> <li>➤ What would be involved in modifying the WSAC language related to the Minimum Admissions Standards to include a reference to the Smarter Balanced assessment scores as another possible source of information for students to share with baccalaureate institutions?</li> <li>➤ There was some agreement among the K-12 representatives that some kind of reference to the Smarter Balanced score in the admissions process could be helpful but that the clear and direct link to placement, especially if well- and broadly-advertised, would be a very important incentive for many students.</li> </ul>

# DRAFT SMARTER BALANCED RECOMMENDATIONS

SMARTER BALANCED SCORE	POSTSECONDARY PLACEMENT OPTIONS	12 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE REQUIREMENTS
<p><b>LEVEL 4</b> (college-ready)</p>	<p>Math or English: Any entry-level college course</p>	<p>None*</p>
<p><b>LEVEL 3</b> (college-ready)</p>	<p><b>MATH</b> Liberal arts math, statistics Other entry-level college math courses</p>	<p>None* Post-algebra II math course</p>
	<p><b>ENGLISH</b> Any entry-level college course</p>	<p>None*</p>
<p><b>LEVEL 2</b></p>	<p><b>MATH</b> Entry-level college courses (to be determined)</p>	<p>Post-algebra II or college readiness math course**</p>
	<p><b>ENGLISH</b> Any entry-level college course</p>	<p>Senior English or college readiness course**</p>
<p><b>LEVEL 1</b></p>	<p>Math or English: Any entry-level college course</p>	<p>Intensive support, retesting (Entry placement testing required)</p>

\* HS students take 4 years of English; math or QR course in senior year required for baccalaureate-bound students

\*\* "College readiness " courses will include required end-of-course assessment