



January 14, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

Introductory information about the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment System is now available. **The Interim Assessments will be released in late January 2015.** We have compiled a two-part, user friendly <u>Frequently Asked Questions</u> (FAQ) for busy leaders and teachers. The chart below summarizes information about the Interim Assessments. More information about the Interim Assessments, available training materials, and other resources are available on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Web site: and the CSDE Smarter Balanced Assessment Portal: http://ct.portal.airast.org/

The FAQ is paired with concise "jargon-free" answers and contains "considerations" and "cautions" for district and school leaders. Brief informational tables below provide leaders with a quick overview of the available Interim Assessments. For more information regarding Interim Assessments, please contact

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Sincerely,

Ellen Cohn, Interim Chief Academic Officer

& the CSDE Academic Office Assessment Team

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| What is the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment? | The interim assessments are one of the three major components of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System—along with the end-of-year summative assessments in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, and a Digital Library of formative assessment tools and practices that support classroom instruction | Considerations: There are two options for the interim assessments: Interim Comprehensive Assessment and Interim Assessment Blocks |
|--|--|--|
| What is the purpose of Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments? | Interim Assessments are designed to support teaching and learning throughout the year. The Interim Assessments can inform instruction by: • measuring global progress of early and midyear performance • identifying areas of strength and weakness • assessing skills of incoming students | Considerations: The use of Interim Assessments is a local decision. The CSDE provides Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments as a resource to all Connecticut public schools and districts Interim Comprehensive and Block Assessments are not mandated Educators should weigh the need for measuring progress using the Interim Assessments against the need for time spent on instruction Interim assessment results can: |





What training will the CSDE provide for the administration, scoring, and interpretation of Interim Assessments? The CSDE will provide three sets of Interim
 Assessment workshops across CT in each of the
 following months: May, June, August, September,
 and October 2015. Scheduled dates and locations
 are below. Each workshop will allow a maximum of
 150 participants. Workshop registration information
 will be forthcoming.

Interim Assessment Workshops Dates and Locations

| ITBD | May 28 |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 185 Main Street | June 5 |
| New Britain, CT | August 10 |
| | September 8 |
| | October 5 |

| Trumbull Marriott | May 26 |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Merritt Parkway | June 1 |
| 180 Hawley Lane | August 3 |
| Trumbull, CT | September 9 |
| | September 30 |

| Norwich Vicinity Venue TBD | May 27 June 3 August 4 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| | September 10 October 8 |

 Districts will have full access to all Smarter Balanced online training modules and materials focused on the administration, scoring, and interpretation of Interim Assessments at http://ct.portal.airast.org/

Considerations:

- Workshops will accommodate 150 participants and additional registration information will be forthcoming
- If pursuing the use of Interim Assessments prior to CSDE training, districts should be aware that extensive training is required in the administration, rubrics, and hand-scoring of constructed response items using an electronic platform, as well as reporting and data interpretation
 - Extensive online training, resources, and materials are available through the Smarter Balanced Consortium
 - An individual or team should be designated to lead the local effort to develop experience and to provide/facilitate professional learning using the Interim Assessments
- Interim Assessments require both training time for educators and testing time for students. Leaders and educators are strongly encouraged to weigh the need for measuring progress in this manner this year against the need for critical time spent on instruction prior to the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment
- If pursuing Interim Assessment administration in the 2014-15 school year, decisions concerning the use of Interim Assessments should take into account how results will be used and communicated to stakeholders
 - In establishing student learning goals/objectives in teacher evaluation, multiple measures of progress may include Interim Comprehensive or Interim Block Assessment results, if mutually agreed upon by the educator and his or her evaluator





| | Additional resources can be found in the Smarter Balanced Digital Library: https://sso.smarterbalanced.org/auth/UI/Login Understanding the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments Using Interim Assessment Blocks to Support Teaching and Learning Understanding the Smarter Balanced Assessment System | Careful planning is required for the data use and reporting of individual or aggregated results Online professional learning includes training modules, resources, and materials, and are available through the Smarter Balanced Consortium |
|---|--|---|
| What other assessment training and support does the CSDE provide for districts? | The CSDE is also providing regional workshops titled "Connecting the Claims to Classroom Instruction," focusing on the how the Smarter Balanced "Claims" are derived from the Common Core State Standards and represent reporting categories for the summative and interim assessments Claims are broad statements of the assessment system's learning outcomes, each of which requires evidence that articulates the types of data/observations that will support interpretations of competence Each claim is accompanied by a set of assessment targets that provide more detail about the range of content and Depth of Knowledge levels Participants in these trainings will have the opportunity to engage in activities to better understand what students need to know and be able to do to demonstrate mastery of the standards | Considerations: CSDE recommends sending educators to one of the "Connecting the Claims to Classroom Instruction" workshops to build a more in-depth understanding of the CT Core Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessment prior to using the Interim Assessments Cautions: Familiarizing students and teachers with the Smarter Balanced summative assessment can be achieved through the Practice Tests and Training Tests available on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Web site |





| For the 2014-15 school year, how are the Interim Assessments structured? | Watch for upcoming announcements on workshops at our PD Page http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=1955 There are two types of Interim Assessments: Interim Comprehensive Assessments ("Comprehensives") Are fully accessible to students Are in fixed form (not computer adaptive) Are designed using the same ELA and mathematics claims and assessment targets as the summative assessment Are available for students in Grades 3 through high school Any grade can be used, depending on purpose Interim Assessment Blocks ("Blocks") | Considerations: Decisions about Interim Comprehensive Assessment choice and frequency are determined locally by districts, schools, and educators The content of the Interim Comprehensive Assessment is based on "claims" and "targets" that are drawn from, and align to, the CT Core Standards in Grades 3-8 and high school Educators should have clarity regarding the purpose of the assessment and the uses of the assessment data before committing to the use of Interim Assessments Based on the purpose of the assessment for instructional planning, any grade level Interim Comprehensive Assessment may be used (e.g., a Grade 7 Interim Comprehensive Assessment can be administered above or below Grade 7) Districts or schools should consider the time needed for classroom instruction in the standards vs. the time needed for test administration of the Interim Comprehensives Cautions: Interim Comprehensive Assessments mirror the full summative assessment Interim Comprehensive Assessments are untimed tests, however average administration times are similar to the summative grade level administration Considerations: |
|--|---|---|
| | | Decisions about Interim Block Assessment choice and frequency |





| | Are in fixed form (not computer adaptive) Are shorter assessments focusing on fewer assessment targets Address more specific areas of the content Are available for students in Grades 3-8 and high school Any grade may be used, depending on purpose | are determined by local districts, schools, and educators Educators should have clarity regarding the purpose of the assessment and the uses of the assessment data before committing to the use of Interim Block Assessments Content of the Interim Block Assessment is based on "claims" and "targets" that are drawn from and align to the CT Core Standards in Grades 3-8 and high school Based on the purpose of the assessment for instructional planning, any grade level Interim Block Assessment may be used (e.g., a Grade 7 Interim Comprehensive Assessment can be administered above or below Grade 7) Interim Block Assessments may be very useful when aligned with curriculum units that address the same content |
|--|--|---|
| | | Cautions: Interim Blocks are untimed tests, however average administration time ranges from 30-60 minutes per block |
| Are the Interim Assessment test items the same as the Summative Assessment test items? | The Interim Assessment test items are the same as the summative test items, specifically: all items were developed together all items assess the claims and targets aligned to the CT Core Standards all items designed and developed using Universal Design principles all items have the same accessibility resources all items provide evidence to support claims in mathematics and English language arts/ literacy | Considerations: Interim Comprehensives and Interim Blocks can be administered multiple times during the school year Both Interim Comprehensives and Interim Blocks draw from the same pool of items, therefore students may see some of the same items more than once Cautions: Interim assessment items could become over-exposed through repeated use Repeated use may negatively impact the validity in measuring true progress |





| | The Interim Assessment items are <u>different</u> from the summative assessment items, specifically: interim assessment items are kept in a separate, non-secure pool teachers may review the interim items and their students' responses to them | While the interim items are non-secure; items are not intended for public disclosure (e.g. posting on a public web-site) |
|--|---|---|
| What else should I know about the Interim Assessment test items? | All Interim assessment items are: fully accessible for all students presented only in fixed form online tests in 2014-15, but will become adaptive as the item bank grows (earliest expected in Fall 2015, but dependent on item availability) Interim Comprehensive Assessments for both ELA/literacy and mathematics are available in the 2014-15 school year Interim Assessment Blocks are: available for use, but dependent on item availability in the interim pool | Considerations: The use of Interim Assessments is a local decision. The CSDE provides Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments as a resource to all Connecticut public schools and districts The Interim Assessments are not mandated by state or federal law Educators should weigh the need for measuring progress using the Interim Assessments against the need for time spent on instruction Cautions: If assessment reduction is a priority in the district, clarity regarding the purpose and use of Interim Assessments (either as an addition or as a replacement) is critical Interim Assessment results should not be used as a sole measure of student progress, but may be one of multiple measures of student progress Not all assessment items are available in the Interim Comprehensive or Interim Block Assessments in 2014-15 (see tables 1 – 4 for more information). Districts, schools and educators may choose to use the remainder of 2014-15 for professional learning/ informed decision-making about the use of Interim Assessment and |





| How are the Interim Assessments administered? | Interim Comprehensive and Interim Block Assessments use the same delivery software (browser) as the summative assessment Interim Comprehensive and Interim Block Assessments are fixed-form online tests and will become adaptive as item bank grows (anticipated in fall 2015) | careful planning for district-wide professional learning for all educators, prior to the use of Interim Assessments Considerations: Local decision-making is required regarding the control/release of Interim Assessments at the district, school, or classroom level |
|---|--|---|
| How are the Interim Assessments scored? | Most items are machine-scored Both Interim Comprehensive and Interim Block Assessments have some items that are not machine-scored Scoring of non-machine scored items is a district's responsibility A Teacher Hand Scoring System will be provided the same scoring rules are used as in the summative assessment all training materials to score test items will be provided | Considerations: Planning and decision-making is required regarding how training in scoring, as well as scoring calibration and fidelity, will be conducted and maintained locally Finding time for training and the calibration of scoring must be considered as part of the learning process Item availability for the Interim Block Assessments is found in Tables 1-4 beginning on page 10 Scoring information for the Interim Comprehensive Assessments is found in Table 5 on page 12 Scoring information for the Interim Block Assessments is found in Table 6-7 on page 13 Cautions: While hand scoring, using a rubric, is not new to CT educators, and was a standard component of CMT and CAPT assessment, districts should expect a learning curve for the Smarter Balanced hand scored items |





How are the Interim Assessments results reported?

Interim Comprehensive Assessments

- Results are reported as overall scale scores, performance level designation, and claim score information
- Reports come from the CSDE Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE)
- See figures 1-2 on page 15 for sample reports

Interim Block Assessment

- Results are reported as "Below Standard, "At/Near Standard," and "Above Standard"
- Reports come from the CSDE Test Information
 Distribution Engine (TIDE)

Considerations:

- The purpose of the assessment should be clear to involved stakeholders
- Determinations should be made prior to the use of the Interim Compressive or Interim Block Assessments, concerning:
 - access to the reports available and whether educators will be trained in interpreting assessment results
 - o the use of reports for evaluating programs or schools
 - the use of reports in the educator evaluation and support system established in the district
 - ✓ Multiple measures of progress may include Interim Assessment results if mutually agreed upon by the educator and his or her evaluator
 - parent notification and reports, as well as parent guide for interpreting reports
- Planning and decision making is required at the local level prior to using reports

Cautions:

 Careful planning is required for the data use and reporting of individual or aggregated results





AVAILABLE INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

| GRADE 3 - 5 | GRADE 6 - 8 | HIGH SCHOOL |
|--|---|--|
| Read Literary Texts | Read Literary Texts | Read Literary Texts |
| Read Informational Texts | Read Informational Texts | Read Informational Texts |
| Edit/Revise | Edit/Revise | Edit/Revise |
| Brief Writes | Brief Writes | Brief Writes |
| Listen/Interpret | Listen/Interpret | Listen/Interpret |
| Research | Research | Research |
| Narrative Performance Task * Grade 4-5 only in 2014-15 | Narrative Performance Task *Not available in 2014-15 | |
| nformational Performance Task * Not available in 2014-15 | Explanatory Performance Task *Not available in 2014-15 | Explanatory Performance Task *Not available in 2014-15 |
| Opinion Performance Task * Grade 3 only in 2014-15 | Argument Performance Task | Argument Performance Task |

| Table 2. 2014-15 AVAILABLE INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENTS - MATHEMATICS | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 | GRADE 5 | | |
| Operations and Algebraic Thinking | Operations and Algebraic Thinking | Operations and Algebraic Thinking | | |
| Numbers and Operations in Base 10 * Not available in 2014-15 | Numbers and Operations in Base 10 | Numbers and Operations in Base 10 | | |
| Fractions | Fractions | Fractions | | |
| | Geometry * Not available in 2014-15 | Geometry * Not available in 2014-15 | | |
| Measurement and Data | Measurement and Data * Not available in 2014-15 | Measurement and Data * Not available in 2014-15 | | |
| Mathematics Performance Task | Mathematics Performance Task | Mathematics Performance Task | | |





| Table 3. 2014-15 AVAILABLE INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENTS - MATHEMATICS | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| GRADE 6 | GRADE 7 | GRADE 8 | | | |
| Ratio and Proportional Relationships | Ratio and Proportional Relationships | Expressions & Equations I (and Proportionality) ** | | | |
| Number System | Number System | Expressions & Equations II ** | | | |
| Expressions and Equations | Expressions and Equations | Functions | | | |
| Geometry | Geometry * Not available in 2014-15 | Geometry | | | |
| Statistics and Probability * Not available in 2014-15 | Statistics and Probability * Not available in 2014-15 | Mathematics Performance Task | | | |
| Mathematics Performance Task | Mathematics Performance Task | | | | |

^{* *} Available as a single Expressions & Equations Block in Grade 8 in 2014-2015

| Table 4. 2014-15 AVAILABLE INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENTS - MATHEMATICS | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| | HIGH SCHOOL | | | | |
| Algebra and Functions - Linear Functions | Geometry - Transformations in Geometry * Not available in 2014-15 | Interpreting Categorical and Quantitative Data * Not available in 2014-15 | | | |
| Algebra and Functions - Quadratic Functions | Geometry - Right Triangle Ratios in Geometry | Probability * Not available in 2014-15 | | | |
| Algebra and Functions - Exponential Functions | Geometry - Three - Dimensional Geometry * Not available in 2014-15 | Making Inferences and Justifying Conclusions * Not available in 2014-15 | | | |
| Algebra and Functions - Polynomials Functions * Not available in 2014-15 | Geometry – Proofs * Not available in 2014-15 | Mathematics Performance Task | | | |
| Algebra and Functions - Radicals Functions * Not available in 2014-15 | Geometry – Circles * Not available in 2014-15 | | | | |
| Algebra and Functions - Rational Functions * Not available in 2014-15 | Geometry – Applications * Not available in 2014-15 | | | | |





INTERIM ASSESSMENT SCORING INFORMATION

Table 5. INTERIM COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT - HAND SCORED VS. MACHINE SCORED ITEMS ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS

| Grade | Subject | Test Name | CAT Short Answer | Performance Task Short Answer | Performance Task Essay | Total Items |
|-------|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| 3 | ELA | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 3 | 2 | 1 | 47 |
| | Mathematics | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 0 | 4 | 0 | 37 |
| 4 | ELA | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 3 | 2 | 1 | 48 |
| | Mathematics | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 0 | 3 | 0 | 36 |
| 5 | ELA | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 3 | 2 | 1 | 47 |
| | Mathematics | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 0 | 2 | 0 | 37 |
| 6 | ELA | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 3 | 2 | 1 | 49 |
| | Mathematics | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 0 | 2 | 0 | 36 |
| 7 | ELA | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 3 | 2 | 1 | 49 |
| | Mathematics | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 0 | 2 | 0 | 37 |
| 8 | ELA | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 3 | 2 | 1 | 49 |
| | Mathematics | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 0 | 2 | 0 | 37 |
| 11 | ELA | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 3 | 2 | 1 | 46 |
| | Mathematics | Interim Comprehensive Assessment | 1 | 4 | 0 | 39 |





| | ENGLISH LA | ANGUAGE ARTS | | |
|-------|----------------------------|--------------|-------|-------------|
| Grade | Assessment Block | Short Answer | Essay | Total Items |
| 3 | Reading Literary Text | 1 | | 15 |
| | Reading Informational Text | 1 | | 16 |
| | Edit and Revise | 0 | | 15 |
| | Brief Writes | 6 | | 6 |
| | Listen and Interpret | 0 | | 15 |
| | Research | 0 | | 17 |
| | Opinion Performance Task | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| _ | Reading Literary Text | 1 | | 15 |
| 4 | Reading Informational Text | 1 | | 14 |
| | Edit and Revise | 0 | | 16 |
| | Brief Writes | 6 | | 6 |
| | Listen and Interpret | 0 | | 15 |
| | Research | 0 | | 18 |
| | Narrative Performance Task | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| | Reading Literary Text | 1 | | 15 |
| 5 | Reading Informational Text | 1 | | 15 |
| | Edit and Revise | 0 | | 13 |
| | Brief Writes | 6 | | 6 |
| | Listen and Interpret | 0 | | 14 |
| | Research | 0 | | 17 |
| | Narrative Performance Task | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| | Reading Literary Text | 1 | | 15 |
| 6 | Reading Informational Text | 1 | | 16 |
| | Edit and Revise | 0 | | 18 |
| | Brief Writes | 6 | | 6 |
| | Listen and Interpret | 0 | | 15 |
| | Research | 0 | | 18 |
| | Argument Performance Task | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| | Reading Literary Text | 1 | | 16 |
| _ | Reading Informational Text | 1 | | 16 |
| 7 | Edit and Revise | 0 | | 17 |
| | Brief Writes | 6 | | 6 |
| | Listen and Interpret | 0 | | 15 |
| | Research | 0 | | 15 |
| | Argument Performance Task | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| 8 | Reading Literary Text | 1 | | 16 |
| | Reading Informational Text | 1 | | 16 |
| | Edit and Revise | 0 | | 14 |
| | Brief Writes | 6 | | 6 |





| | Listen and Interpret | 0 | | 15 |
|----|------------------------------|---|---|----|
| | Research | 0 | | 17 |
| | Argument Performance Task | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| | Reading Literary Text | 1 | | 16 |
| 11 | Reading Informational Text | 1 | | 15 |
| | Edit and Revise | 0 | | 18 |
| | Brief Writes | 6 | | 6 |
| | Listen and Interpret | 0 | | 15 |
| | Research | 0 | | 17 |
| | Explanatory Performance Task | 2 | 1 | |

| | TABLE 7. INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENTS - HAND SCORE COUNT VS. TOTAL ITEMS MATHEMATICS | | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------|-------------|--|--|
| Grade | Assessment Block | Hand-scored Items | Total Items | | |
| 3 | Operations and Algebraic Thinking | 0 | 15 | | |
| | Fractions | 0 | 13 | | |
| | Measurement and Data | 0 | 15 | | |
| | Mathematics Performance Task | 4 | | | |
| 4 | Operations and Algebraic Thinking | 0 | 15 | | |
| | Numbers and Operations in Base 10 | 0 | 15 | | |
| | Fractions | 0 | 16 | | |
| | Mathematics Performance Task | 3 | | | |
| 5 | Measurement and Data | 0 | 14 | | |
| | Numbers and Operations in Base 10 | 0 | 16 | | |
| | Fractions | 0 | 15 | | |
| | Mathematics Performance Task | 2 | | | |
| 6 | Ratio and Proportional Relationships | 0 | 14 | | |
| | Expressions and Equations | 0 | 15 | | |
| | Geometry | 0 | 13 | | |
| | Mathematics Performance Task | 2 | | | |
| 7 | Ratio and Proportional Relationships | 0 | | | |
| | Number System | 0 | 14 | | |
| | Expressions and Equations | 0 | 15 | | |
| | Mathematics Performance Task | 2 | 14 | | |
| 8 | Expressions & Equations II Block | 0 | 14 | | |
| | Functions Block | 0 | 15 | | |
| | Geometry Block | 0 | 14 | | |
| | Mathematics Performance Task | 2 | | | |
| 11 | Algebra and Functions - Linear Functions | 0 | 15 | | |
| | Algebra and Functions - Quadratic Functions | 0 | 12 | | |
| | Geometry - Right Triangle Ratios in Geometry | 0 | 13 | | |
| | Mathematics Performance Task | 4 | | | |





SAMPLE INTERIM COMPREHENSIVE REPORTS

Figure 1. Sample Class Report - Interim Comprehensive Assessment - Overview

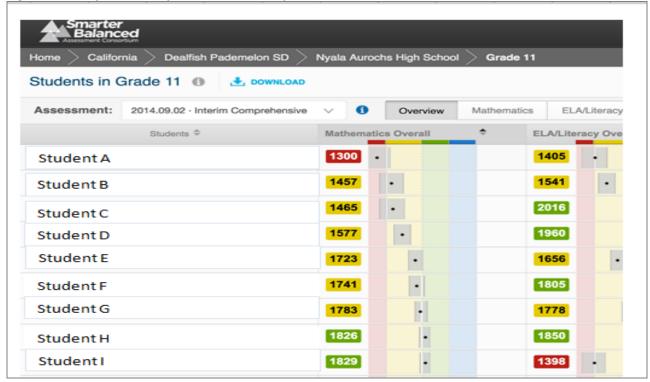


Figure 2. Sample Individual Report - Interim Comprehensive Assessment - Mathematics

