

# Smarter Balanced Field Test Questions and Answers for Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) Teachers, Staff, Families and Community Partners

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**Last Updated: February 12, 2014**

Assembly Bill (AB) 484, which was signed by the Governor on October 2, 2013, requires all California Districts and Charters to participate in the spring 2014 Smarter Balanced Field Test. In January, staff at BUSD began to roll-out a preview of the new field tests to be administered this spring. This document provides answers to questions about requirements and expectations of participation in the Spring 2014 Field Test which is being administered in 44 states. The acronym FT is being used in place of Field Test. The live (i.e., operational) Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) tests, will begin in the 2014-15 school year.

## Purpose

### 1. What is the purpose of the spring 2014 Smarter Balanced Field Test (FT)?

Field testing is critical to ensure that assessment items are accessible to all students and produce results that are valid, reliable, and fair. The spring 2014 Smarter Balanced FT will test the performance of over 20,000 newly developed test items and evaluate the test delivery system. Items deemed suitable for use on the live (i.e., operational) tests, which will begin in the 2014-15 school year, will be used to populate the test item bank. Also, the FT will help ensure that the Smarter Balanced assessment items are placed on an accurate scale to determine final achievement levels (i.e., cut scores) as well as their corresponding descriptors. To this end, it is essential that all students participate in the field test and make their best effort as their answers will influence future scoring decisions.

### 2. What are the benefits for BUSD and for students, teachers and administrators?

By participating in the Smarter Balanced FT, students, teachers, and administrators will receive valuable exposure to and experience with the California's future assessment system. Students will gain hands-on experience with the functionality of technology-enhanced items and newly designed performance tasks. Teachers and administrators will gain valuable experience with administration logistics, which will help them better prepare for a smooth and successful participation in the operational assessments, which will begin in the 2014–15 school year. The district will benefit from learning where their technology gaps may be, to give time to fully prepare for the live assessments. We will all benefit by having the diversity of California's student population included in the analysis of test and item quality and development of achievement level scores and descriptors to assure test questions included in the item-bank are fair and equitable.

### 3. Will individual student, school, or district score reports be generated from the FT?

No. A field test is not a valid and reliable measure of student achievement; rather, it is designed to help

the test developers evaluate whether the individual items and the technology platform work before the first operational administration. CDE prohibits the production of individual student scores from the FT.

**4. Will my school also need to administer the California Standards Test (CST) or California Modified Assessment (CMA) or the California Alternative Performance Assessment (CAPA)?**

In California, schools will administer the Field Test in place of the ELA and Math CST and CMA; Students taking the California Alternative Performance Assessment (CAPA) will not take the Field Test and must take the CAPA in Grades 2-11. In addition, students in grades 5, 8 and 10 will take the CST or CMA in Science until such a time that there is a new Next Generation Science Standard (NGSS) test.

**5. What role will the FT play in meeting the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Academic Performance Index (API) or other state or federal accountability requirements?**

None. The data resulting from the FT will not be factored into any state or federal accountability calculations.

**6. Emerson, Oxford, Thousand Oaks participated in the 2013 Smarter Balanced spring Pilot Test. How did the pilot test influence the FT?**

Yes. Data and survey results from the Smarter Balanced Pilot Test were used to inform the development of the FT, including but not limited to adjustments and improvements to: overall test design; estimated student testing time; test and item directions; item specifications; display of test items including associated pictures, graphs, or other materials; interactive item types; and scoring rubrics.

**7. Will the Smarter Balanced spring 2014 Field Test influence the “live” test and will teachers be able to give input to the process?**

Yes. Data and survey results will be collected from students, teachers and administrators to both send to test developers and inform local decision making regarding curriculum, instruction and technology.

## **Administration Logistics**

**8. When will the FT occur?**

The FT will be conducted in Berkeley between April 7<sup>th</sup> and May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014. As during the spring 2013 Pilot Test, to assure that each school has enough Chrome Books and support; schools will assess students within a shorter window within this date range. Your site administrator will inform you of the testing window and will work with you on the specific days you are testing. (See Supports at the end of the document for Specific Site Testing Windows). **The field test will be done April 7 – May 22 by school.**

**9. Which grade levels and what content will be tested in the FT?**

Students in Grades 3-8 and Grades 9 and 11 will take the Smarter Balanced FT. In California, the 2014 FT

will engage students in online assessments in both mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

**10. How do we engage our Middle and High School students in the process?**

Two new videos that provide information to high school and middle school students about the Smarter Balanced Field Test are now available. The videos introduce students to the Field Test and explain the significant contribution they will make in helping to create the operational tests for 2014–15. The videos are posted at the following links:

- High school video: <http://youtu.be/DXXd451e580>
- Middle school video: <http://youtu.be/YKerb7NsDUE>

**11. How long will the FT take to administer?**

Teachers can expect the FT to take approximately 4 hours per student (including the 30 minute non-computer-based classroom activity) although the test is untimed. The computerized portion of the FT is intended to be administered over multiple sessions of about 45 minutes each, but may be administered in shorter or longer sessions as appropriate for the students and the school. (This is far less time than it takes to practice and administer the California Standards Tests).

**12. Can students from multiple grade levels be assessed during the same test session?**

Yes. Students from multiple grade levels can be assessed concurrently in the same room as all teachers / proctors will use a computer to monitor the progress of students who are testing.

**13. What item types will the FT include?**

The FT will engage students in a computer-based component and performance task component. Item types will include those that will be found on the operational assessments beginning in the 2014-15 school year: multiple-choice, matching, fill-in tables, drag and drop, graphing, short text, long essay (1-2 paragraphs maximum). Each FT will include a performance task (PT) and an associated classroom activity.

**14. Which subjects will the FT test?**

In 95% of grade levels and sites, the FT will test ELA and Math and a PT in either ELA or Math. In 5% of grade levels (by site), there might be either JUST ELA or JUST Math non-PT and PT assigned. As we receive information on the performance task assigned, we will share this with school sites. (By 3/10).

**14. Will the FT be adaptive?**

No. Students will receive a fixed-form test in mathematics and English language arts/literacy—with questions of varying difficulty. The FT will give students an experience similar to that of the operational

test in that each student will take a performance task component and a component designed to test new items for the adaptive test. During the FT, students will encounter the same mix of content, item types that will be present on the 2015 operational test. The 2015 operational assessment will be adaptive.

**15. What will the adaptive test look like in 2015?**

To create an adaptive test, each test item must have an established difficulty value. The Field Test will collect the statistics necessary to establish these values. The 2015 adaptive engine will provide students with questions selected adaptively based on their responses. (e.g. An easier question for a student having difficulty and a more advanced question for a student answering all questions correctly.) In addition to adapting the test questions, the scoring of answers will be technology driven.

**Teacher, Staff and Student Training**

**16. How will teachers and staff be trained to administer the FT?**

BEA and Technology Teacher Leaders and Administrators will be trained through web-based training modules. They will then schedule a second site-level training geared specifically for teachers who will be administering the test. Teachers will receive a FT Test Guide and training will include topics such as:

- Introduction to the Field Test (geared toward students)
- Performance Tasks
- Test Proctor Training and Proctor Interface
- Student Interface and Tools for Student Use

**17. Is there time before the test starts for students to practice the online test?**

Because this is a “field test” there are no requirements to practice these tools ahead of time but if time allows it is recommended that students become used to the interface and the chromebooks so they are familiar with the technology. This time could be done during the time period that was originally reserved for preparing students for the California Standards Test. Staff in BEA and Technology are available to assist schools that are interested in rolling out a “practice” session or schedule with teachers.

**18. Is there a shorter version of the practice tests that includes the tools all students can use?**

Yes. To assist students to become comfortable with these tools, the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) Consortium has now released “training tests” for students. These tests have 6-9 items given in Grade Spans (3-5, 6-8 and 9-11) that enable students to become familiar with the SBA interface. The login is: <https://sbacpt.tds.airast.org/student/> (Note that Practice Tests are also available at this site, choose “training” test when logging in.) These will again be modeled at the teacher training with a guide on the “help keys” and universal tools. Teachers are welcome to explore these training tests before the teacher training. (See Questions 18-20 for more specifics about Universal Tools.)

**19. What are other ways that students can practice the types of questions asked?**

The Instructional Technology staff created this wonderful sheet of easy games (2nd grade level) that gives students a chance to practice each of the other types of questions on the test, you can find it at: [bit.ly/berkeleykids](http://bit.ly/berkeleykids) Berkeley Evaluation and Assessment staff are available to teachers interested in trying short online *Illuminate* assessments. (See Support Staff) On April 2 and 3, BEA is offering two workshops in creating assessments and how to administer and score these assessments online. Teachers will receive \$135 / day for a 9-3:00 workshop with a 1-hour lunch. Click on: [bit.ly/Illum14](http://bit.ly/Illum14)

## **Supports for Students**

**20. Will there be a paper-and-pencil version of the FT?**

No. The FT is meant to “test the test” mimicking as close as possible the operational testing conditions. Therefore, the FT is strictly a computer-based modality.

**21. Which accommodations will be available for the FT?**

Students needing text-to-speech or translations or other specific non-embedded tools as per their IEP or English Learner level will be pre-coded through the Registration Process (see Registration below). Teachers will receive a list of students who have these tools turned on. Text to Speech is an online tool where a student plugs in a headphone and the allowable portions of the test are read to them. Read aloud is a non-embedded tool where a teacher reads the questions out loud to a student in a separate work environment.

**22. Will the use of scratch paper be allowed during the FT?**

Yes. The use of scratch paper is permitted as a non-embedded universal tool.

**23. What are other Universal Tools any student can use?**

Other tools that all students may use include:

*Embedded (within the test interface)*

- Breaks - The number of items per session can be designed by student need. Note: After 20 minutes, previous sessions' answers cannot be corrected/
- Digital Clock (for both teacher and student) to track time on the test
- Digital Notepad - For a student to take notes on the computer
- English or Spanish Glossary for construct-irrelevant terms via a pop-up window
- Expandable Passages to take up a larger portion of the screen
- Highlighter
- Keyboard Navigation - Navigation through text using a keyboard
- Mark for Review - allows a student to mark an answer and go back to it (limited by segment)
- Math Tools - such as a ruler and protractor to use for math-related items
- Spell Check - gives the student an indicator that a word is misspelled in ELA items. Math items are not scored for spelling.

- Strikethrough - allows a student to cross out wrong answers
- Writing Tools - Bold, Italic, Bullets and Undo / Redo are available for the student
- Zoom - To allow text or graphics to appear larger.

Non-Embedded (outside of the computer test administration)

- English Dictionary for ELA Performance task full-writes
- Thesaurus for ELA Performance task full-writes

**24. Will students be able to use a calculator during the FT?**

The Smarter Balanced mathematics assessments for grades six and above allow students to access an embedded calculator appropriate to their grade level. Students in grade six will access a basic calculator, and students in grades seven and above will access a scientific calculator. The available Training Tests provide a mathematics band for grades six through eight. When accessing the Training Test, students should be sure to select their current grade so that they may experience the computer-based testing features and functions, including the calculator. Training tests are at: [sbacpt.tds.airast.org/student/](http://sbacpt.tds.airast.org/student/)

## Technology and Supports

**25. Will we have more support on site when we are taking the tests?**

Yes, we will be scheduling one zone technician on-site to assist with technology issues and one teacher-leader to assist with login issues and the teacher interface.

**26. How will we assure that we have the necessary technology during our testing window?**

The Technology and Assessment Directors are working with the Site Principals to assure that we have scheduled the test so that additional chromebooks and headphones can be made available during the testing time. In addition, internet access will be modified to enable the necessary classrooms to be able to administer the test without freezing up. It is also essential that as much as possible, teachers seamlessly weave technology tools into ongoing lessons.

**27. What kind of support can teachers provide for students who are struggling with the student testing interface?**

Teachers can provide assistance by guiding students to the help tools within the system. They may not provide guidance on answers. More information will be provided at the follow-up teacher training.

**28. How can I prepare my students for the tech skills to navigate the SBA (and the online world)?**

As we add more chromebooks and other technology, we encourage teachers to incorporate technology

into their curriculum. The Technology Teacher leaders are available and willing to assist you in this process. (See Support Staff)

- Have students use Berkeley.net accounts and use Google Drive to share, edit, and present.
- Give opportunities for reading online using the new ebooks in the school libraries.
- Have a typing station or club in your classroom or site.
- Build a word wall of technology-related vocabulary.

## **29. What is the plan for technology as we move to the operational test in 2014-2015?**

Our technology plan will address both professional development and hardware needs. We will continue to add additional technology to each site and provide integrated technology support and professional development. The plan will include research on how to best teach students technology skills while recognizing the developmental progressions of learning.

## **Curriculum Supports**

### **30. How can I prepare my students for the SBA for English Language Arts?**

- Continue your transition to the use of Common Core Standards within your ELA instruction and increase the number of minutes where students actively read grade level text and respond to it.
- Use CCSS aligned formative and summative assessments that include academic testing language.
- Assign on-demand writing assignments frequently.
- Practice having them do discreet writing tasks, such as "write a conclusion sentence for this paragraph."
- Connect writing tasks directly to the texts they are reading. (citing evidence)
- Have them read multiple sources on the same topic.
- Mix up the length and timeframes you give students to write: paragraphs, sentences, essays, etc. 10 minutes, one period, extended time frames.
- Give frequent opportunities to read grade level or above texts- even if that is not their independent reading level.

### **31. How can I prepare my students for SBA in mathematics?**

- Continue the transition to the use of Common Core Standards within your mathematics instruction.
- Use CCSS formative and summative assessments that include literacy skill and strategies for reading in math, depth of knowledge within mathematics
- Use word walls that include academic vocabulary in mathematics

## **Student Registration**

### **32. How will students be registered for the FT? What about students needing supports?**

The CDE will upload student demographic and program-level data to the FT registration system (i.e., Test

Information Distribution Engine) on behalf of BUSD. Teachers will receive a “login” card for each of their students during the “test administration” training happening in March. The Evaluation and Assessment Office and Special Education / English Learner Staff are working together to ensure student accessibility and accommodation information is entered into the FT registration system. This will be entered before the test and teachers informed on how this will look different for students.

### **33. Are any students exempted from the FT?**

Only students from private or alternative schools or those who are taking the California Alternative Performance Assessment (CAPA) and English Learners who are in the US less than 12 months.

#### **Related Content**

- [Assembly Bill 484 Questions and Answers](#) - Questions and answers regarding Assembly Bill (AB) 484, which establishes California's new statewide student assessment system. AB 484 was signed into law on October 2, 2013.
- [Spring 2014 Smarter Balanced Field Test](#) - Information on the Smarter Balanced Field Test that will be administered in the spring 2014.
- [Common Core State Standards](#) - Information on the Common Core State Standards

#### **SBA Support Staff at Berkeley Unified School District:**

##### **Instructional Technology**

***Zone Technicians (Hardware / Software Support) by site testing windows. (See Site Principal for Grade Level Specific Dates within the Window)***

*Note: Zone Techs and One other Support will be on-site during testing thus the dates.*

##### **Jack Coglizer**

Willard Middle -- 4/7 to 4/18\*\* (Not testing on 4/10 and 4/11)

Emerson - 4/21 to 4/25

LeConte - 4/28 to 5/2

Malcolm X - 5/5 to 5/16\*\* (Not testing on 5/8 and 5/9)

##### **Anne Robert**

Cragmont - 4/7 to 4/11\*\* (Not testing on 4/10 and 4/11)

Washington - 4/14 to 4/18

Longfellow Middle - 4/21 to 5/2

Berkeley Arts Magnet - 5/5-5/16\*\* (Not testing on 5/8 and 5/9)

##### **Roland Anderson**

Oxford - 4/7 to 4/11\*\* (Not testing on 4/10 and 4/11)

Rosa - 4/14 to 4/18

Jefferson - 4/21 to 4/25



Thousand Oaks - 4/28 to 5/9\*\* (Not testing on 5/8 and 5/9)

John Muir - 5/12 to 5/16

**Matt Albinson, Gary Gibson, Antonio Castro** - Berkeley High School: 4/7 to 4/25\*\* (Not testing on 4/10 and 4/11)

### **Berkeley Evaluation and Assessment**

***Student Registration:*** Debbi D'Angelo and Vivian Wiggins

***Smarter Balanced Assessment and Illuminate Online Assessment Training:***

Colleen Sweeney - Malcolm X, Thousand Oaks, BTA, BIS, Longfellow, King

Navdeep Dosanjh - Berkeley Arts Magnet, Emerson, Jefferson, John Muir, LeConte, Washington

David Stevens - Cragmont, Oxford, BHS

Aryn Faur - Longfellow, King, Willard

### **Professional Development for CCSS / SBA and District**

***Elementary Literacy*** - Tom Prince

***Elementary Math*** - Lori MacDonald

***Middle School ELA*** - Aryn Faur

***Middle School Math*** - Rebecca Burke

***Response to Intervention and ELA*** - Dana Blanchard

***Technology Instruction and Smarter Balanced Assessment Technology Tools:***

Wally Gutierrez

Allison Krasnow

### ***Digital Media and Libraries***

Becca Todd

### ***Student Supports in CCSS and SBA***

***English Learners:*** Nabila Massoumi and Heather Tugwell

***Special Education:*** Julie Venuto