



For Immediate Release:

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Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Shifts First Day of Field Test

(HARTFORD, CT)—The State Department of Education today announced that the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) has shifted the first week of the Field Test. Testing will now begin nationally – including Connecticut – on Tuesday, March 25 instead of Tuesday, March 18. By shifting the beginning of the Field Test to March 25, the national Smarter Balanced administrators can take the time needed to ensure that each student gets the right test with the right tools and supports to meet his or her individual needs.

“The SBAC organization’s delay is disappointing, and the inconvenience this creates for our districts is real. With that said, we are pleased that SBAC is being appropriately cautious regarding necessary quality assurance. Furthermore, we have the utmost confidence in Connecticut district leaders and teachers to adapt and adjust with characteristic skill and professionalism. This Department is committed to providing as much support as we can offer to help make this adjustment as smooth as possible,” said Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor. “At every level—from the classroom, to the school, to the state—the Field Test presents an opportunity to gain initial insight and valuable experience on new standards and new assessments in a low-stakes year.”

The Field Test requires collaboration among many states, districts, and assessment vendors. In the final analysis, SBAC decided that this change was needed to ensure that all the steps necessary to conduct the Field Test properly on a national basis have been taken and to ensure that teachers, students, and administrators have a productive experience with the Field Test.

One of the goals of the Field Test is to uncover challenges before the full and formal launch of the assessment system in the 2014–15 school year. The Field Test will help to ensure that the assessments are accurate and fair for all students. It also gives students the opportunity to experience the new assessments in a low-stakes environment.

Unlike the CMT and CAPT tests, not all students must take the test at the same time. This provides schools and districts the flexibility to sequence the administration of the tests into a schedule that works best for their school communities.

For coordination and planning purposes, districts could choose among four three-week “windows” to administer the SBAC Field Test to students. Districts could identify as many of the following “windows” deemed appropriate to meet their needs: March 18 - April 4; April 7 - April 25; April 28 - May 16; and/or May 19 - June 6. This change only affects the timing of the first window, which will now begin on March 25. The start and end of the other three “windows” remain the same.

The impact of this shift will vary district to district. It is possible that this shift would only affect students who were scheduled to begin taking the assessment during the first week of testing, March 18-March 24. For other districts, this shift might require other schedules to shift as well.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is a cooperative effort among more than 20 states to build a comprehensive assessment system that provides educators and parents with the information they need to help all students prepare for success in college and careers. The national scale of the Field Test is extraordinary, involving more than 3 million students and 20,000 schools.

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