

Test scores & beyond



How to talk about the SBAC results and integrate them into daily instruction

Teachers and parents across California now have in their hands the results of the first [Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium](#) (SBAC) tests, which measure student understanding of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics under the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress system in grades 3-8 and 11.

The results, while initially daunting to decipher, provide educators with a wealth of information and an opportunity to adjust instruction to student needs. With educators already looking ahead to the Spring 2016 exams and seeking ways to help students improve, this Bulletin provides in-depth information on how to interpret scores, communicate about them to parents, and use the information to make positive changes for students.

Parent-teacher conferences are vital tools in creating a positive working relationship between teachers and parents and can be intimidating even when there isn't a new testing model to discuss. But a few key ideas (which you'll find on page two) can help explain what the tests mean for children, as well as jump-start the conversation about how educators and guardians can help students improve.



In this Bulletin...

- Discussing results at **parent-teacher conferences**
- Integrating the SBAC into **daily teaching practice**
- **Using data** to analyze results
- Lessons learned/ integrating **tools and technology**



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“ Teachers can also describe actions they are taking to personalize learning for students and prepare them for success in the coming years.

The parent-teacher conference

- **A more rigorous test:** Questions that require abstract thinking, synthesis, and analysis compose 50-60 percent of the SBAC. This is a dramatic increase in rigor over past assessments. We're asking your child to think and process information differently.
- **A K-12 plan for learning:** Common Core organizes and sequences learning activities to build understanding from grade to grade. SBAC helps gauge student learning relative to these standards and ensure your child is ready for success in the next grade, and ultimately, college and career. However, your child's SBAC results will not affect his or her grades or ability to progress in school.
- **SBAC encourages thinking in four domains:**
 1. Recall and basic comprehension
 2. Concepts that involve some mental processing
 3. Concepts that require abstract thinking/ reasoning and complex inferences
 4. Extended analysis requiring synthesis and analysis

Conferences also provide an excellent opportunity to explain to parents and guardians how Smarter Balanced assessments fit within a district's continuum of metrics to guide and support instruction.

It's a good idea to review these scores in combination with other student performance information such as progress reports, local curriculum-based measures, and portfolios. Teachers can also describe actions they are taking to personalize learning for students and prepare them for success in the coming years.

Each question on the new assessments is focused on one or more claims, or areas of learning, for ELA and math. This detailed information can help teachers and parents interpret a student's strengths and weaknesses. For detailed information on understanding and interpreting claims, visit www.scoe.org/sbac-results.

SBAC as daily practice

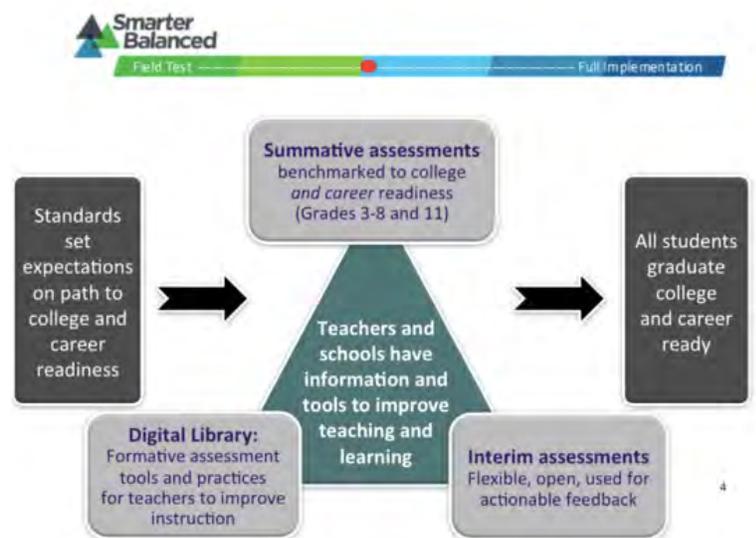


The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is focused on supporting schools in every aspect of implementing California's Common Core standards. This fall, the spotlight has been on end-of-year exams, but those exams are meant to be just one measure of student progress. It is important to utilize other SBAC assessment tools throughout the year. They include:

To access these tools, contact your school district's assessment coordinator.

SBAC Digital Library: This is an [interactive resource](#), vetted by K-12 educators and aimed at helping teachers refine and develop formative assessment skills. Subject- and grade-specific resources help teachers gauge student learning during daily instruction. Users can rate materials and share expertise with educators across the country.

SBAC Interim Assessments: Smarter Balanced provides educators with optional electronic assessments that can be used throughout the school year. They are flexible and designed to provide actionable feedback for educators. Teachers can use these tests in connection with specific learning topics or school progress reporting periods.



Using test results to improve **student learning**

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The 2015 Smarter Balanced assessments can provide school data teams and individual teachers with important information as they work with students in the 2015-16 school year. Here are some ways to reflect on and utilize the data.

Questions to ask when examining results for your students from the *prior year*:

- How do results match areas where I provided instruction?
- Looking at students who met or exceeded standards, what factors contributed to their success?
- For students who were below standard, which instructional strategies or supplemental resources would I change?
- How could instructional time be adjusted to increase the number of students who are near or above standard?

Questions to ask when examining results for *current students*:

- What are the strengths and needs in my classes highlighted in these scores?
- Do these strengths and needs correspond with those highlighted in local tests and reports?
- If there are patterns of need, what changes can I make to the year's instructional plan to increase the number of students who are successful?
- How can I use formative assessment and SBAC interim assessments to measure learning?
- What assistive technology can I use to support student learning?

Tools for **analysis**

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Data teams can review school and grade-level data using any combination of tools including data analysis systems ([Illuminate](#), [Data Director](#), [OARS](#)), student information systems ([Aeries](#), [Schoolwise](#)) or Microsoft Excel spreadsheet pivot tables. When choosing the right tool, consider:

- Options to break down data into significant subgroups
- Reports/ tables to see big picture trends
- Ability to “drill down” to see student names and needs

Using a chosen tool, data teams can evaluate and understand scores for individuals, classes, grades, and school subgroups (such as students with disabilities, English learners, or economically disadvantaged students). Specific areas to explore include:

- **Achievement Level Descriptors:** [These](#) provide specific information about the concepts and skills measured with SBAC. As an example, a sixth-grade teacher receiving a group of students in the fall can look at individual students' levels or class averages to anticipate student needs.
- **Achievement Level Ranges and Student Scores:** At the beginning of the year, educators can look at a group of students' achievement levels (they fall on a range from 1 to 4, with 4 signaling mastery of the subject) and specific scores to better understand the group's strengths and needs. This information can also help map learning outcomes for the first semester. It can help identify students needing extra assistance or intervention as well as those who would benefit from extended learning opportunities and acceleration.
- **Claim Reports - Targets and Standards:** These provide teachers with the next layer of detail about scores. Claims are specific areas of focus within ELA and math, such as reading, writing and problem solving. Each claim breaks into multiple components that more closely match curriculum. These components are called “targets.” As an example, a teacher could measure fifth-grade reading skills (a claim), using the data to see how well students met targets like summarizing central ideas, key events, procedures and topics; identifying or interpreting figurative language like metaphors; and using supporting evidence to support interpretations of information.

To see SBAC claims, targets, and standards broken down by subject and grade, visit <http://tinyurl.com/sbac-claim-reports>.



Looking ahead: Integrating technology tools

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The 2015 SBAC results have illuminated the need for more work in four key areas with technology. Educators across Sonoma County are encouraged to incorporate these concepts into their instruction going forward.

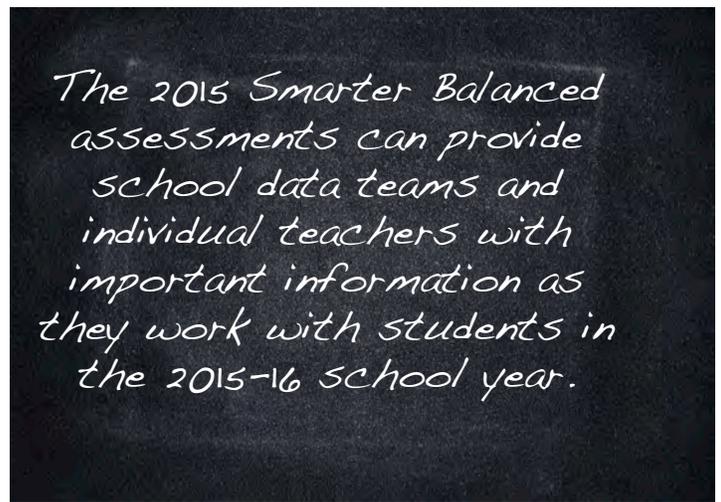
Communicating with technology: This goes beyond teaching basic keyboarding skills. Educators should have students regularly use digital platforms to compose thoughts and express understanding. Experts encourage use of [Google Documents](#) to promote learning in this area.

Calculators and spreadsheets: Students need increased access to and understanding of these computing tools, which can help students make estimations, forecast ideas, and model data concepts from the real world. For professional development opportunities, check SCOE [class offerings](#) in mathematics, NGSS, and Technology for Learning.

Reading electronic texts: Students encountered challenges reading complex electronic text documents, operating multiple windows, and highlighting important details. Students and teachers need experience managing and processing electronic documents. One source of high-quality, free electronic reading materials is the SCOE digital library. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Accommodations for different learning styles: Students with different learning styles have access to a variety of [accessibility tools](#) when taking the SBAC. However, many students didn't know how to use the tools. It's important to incorporate them into daily learning so that students will be more familiar

come testing time. For more information and resources, visit www.scoe.org/sbac-tech.



Learn
More

Follow SCOE's testing and technology expert

- Stay abreast of the latest SBAC news by following SCOE Director of Technology for Learners, Rick Phelan, on Twitter at @SonomaEdTech.

SBAC Resources

- Find a wealth of resources on the Smarter Balanced assessments and California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress at www.scoe.org/sbac.

Questions about this publication?

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