

FactSheet

March 2014

Common Core Testing

The Smarter Balanced Field Test

California K-12 schools are in transition, moving to new standards, new assessments and a new system of accountability over the next several years. Spring 2014 will mark an important milestone in the transition: the Smarter Balanced Field Test. This fact sheet highlights important questions and answers about the field test that board members can use and share with stakeholders.

What is a field test? The purpose of the field test is to test the test itself. It will give test-makers feedback on test content, design, the technology platform that will be used to administer the test and establish achievement levels (cut scores).

When will the field test take place? The Smarter Balanced Field Test will take place between March 18 and June 6, 2014. Each school will be assigned to one of four test windows, each six weeks long. A listing of LEAs by county and their assigned test dates are available at www.startest.org/FT-windows2014.html.

Who will participate? AB 484, signed into law on October 2, 2013 requires all students in grades 3-8 to participate. In grades 9-10, only students selected for the scientific sample will participate.

Are any students exempt? Students with disabilities whose individualized education programs require them to take the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) instead of state achievement tests are exempt from participating in the field test. In addition, English learners who have attended school in the United States for less than 12 months are exempted from the English language arts section of the field test.

How does the field test help districts? Districts will have the chance to test their technology capacity for the assessments, teachers will have the opportunity to practice administering the assessments, and students will gain some experience with online assessments and some familiarity with the kinds of test items they might see in future tests on the Common Core standards.

What content will be on the field test? Most students will take a field test that contains both mathematics and ELA items, but a small percentage of students will be assessed in only one content area.

Is there a paper and pencil version of the field test? No. One of the main purposes of the field test is to test the technology platform.

How much time will the field test take? About 3.5 hours per student, intended to be administered over a series of 45 minute test sessions, but LEAs may adjust the schedule as appropriate.

Will student, school or district level scores be released? No. The field test is not designed to produce valid and reliable measures of student performance.

Will the field test be used for any state or federal accountability requirements? No

Where can parents get more information? More in-depth information on the field test is available on the California Department of Education website at www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa.