The Smarter Balanced Assessments

Information for Families and Community Members
Questions?

• Why do we have a new test?

• How is the new test different from the old (STAR) test?

• How can we help our kids prepare for changes in assessment and instruction?
Outcomes

• Learn about Smarter Balanced Assessment

• Learn about Resources:
  • Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English and Math
  • Educational Technology Resources

• Discuss ways to learn more
Standards, Curriculum Assessments…

What’s the Difference?

**Standards** – *What* we want students to know and be able to do by the end of each school year.

*Examples: CCSS-Math, CCSS-ELA*

**Curriculum** – *How* we teach students. Includes lesson plans, books, student activities, projects, etc.

*Examples: SFUSD PK-12 ELA Core Curriculum, SFUSD PK-12 Math Core Curriculum*

**Assessments** – The way we *measure* what students know and can do.

*Examples: CLA, RTI, teacher created tests, Smarter Balanced Assessments*
Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

All Students

All Standards
3 Things to Know

• Literacy is everyone’s job.

• Students must **read** complex texts independently and proficiently in every discipline.

• Students must **write** argumentative and explanatory texts in every discipline (process writing and on-demand writing).
Literacy Connections

The new standards set expectations for student literacy in English Language Arts as well as literacy in **history/social studies, science, and technical subjects, (including math.)**
3 Things to Know

1. Math is not just about getting the right answer quickly.

2. Rich math includes open-ended problems where students have many ways to show their thinking.

3. Every person can grow their math brain. There is no such thing as a person who has a “math gene.”
What does pile #4 look like?

Look at the problem above. Do you know the answer? How do you know what pile #4 looks like? How did you figure out your answer? Did you do a drawing? Create a table? Write a math equation? ...

The new math standards stress critical thinking and understanding “how math works.” Students are asked to go beyond getting the right answer. They are also expected to demonstrate and understanding of math concepts by explaining their work.
English & Math

What’s the District Plan?

• New materials are built around rich, complex tasks.

• Every school has time for teachers to learn together.

• For much more detailed information, go to: sfusd.edu.
Smarter Balanced: 3 Things to Know

- New Standards in English and Math
- Computer-based and Computer-adapted
- New Item Types: selected response, constructed response, and performance tasks
Selected Response

Select all equations that are true.

- $\frac{4}{10} = 0.04$
- $\frac{17}{100} = 0.17$
- $\frac{9}{100} = 0.09$
- $\frac{6}{100} = 0.60$

Requires student to evaluate all possible choices.
Archaeologists have many different opinions about how the Grand Canyon was discovered.

Explain what archaeologists think about how the Grand Canyon was discovered. Use at least two details from the passage to support your answer.

Type your answer in the space provided.

**Students type their answers in the box.** Answers are scored for content, **not for** grammar usage, conventions, spelling, or punctuation.
Performance Task

- 30 minute classroom activity before taking this portion
- English Performance Tasks often include a detailed writing piece
- Math Performance Task often include a detailed problem-solving piece
Supports for Students

• Some supports are a part of the test (embedded) and are turned on before the test

• Other supports are provided outside the computer (non-embedded)
Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations

**Universal Tools:**
Available to all students.
*For example: breaks, strikethrough, highlighter, scratch paper, zoom.*

**Designated Supports:**
Requested by a teacher or parent.
*For example: color contrast, read aloud, glossary, Spanish translation of Math items.*

**Accommodation:**
Determined by individualized education plans (IEPs) or Section 504 plans.
*For example: American Sign Language, scribe, read-aloud.*
SBAC Field Test 2014

Last year, we tested over 28,000 students in SFUSD

Benefits of participating in the field test:

- Reduces anxiety for students
- Prepares teachers and sites
- Tests technology systems
What Students Said:

“We had to analyze the content, so it was much harder than the STAR.”

“I liked how there was not only multiple choice but there was also open response.”

“One thing I liked about taking this test is when I read the questions it reminded me of what I learned in class.”
What Teachers Said:

“I was impressed by how responsive the students were to the new format of test taking.”

“Students will need a greater ability to persist at tasks that are difficult.”

“Students need a lot more practice in problem-solving and knowing how to put together all the skills they have learned in a culminating activity.”
Technology Plan

• All sites will receive enough laptop computers for a full classroom of students.

• These will be in a cart that can be moved from classroom to classroom.

 Grades 3-8
 Opens February 26, 2015
 Grade 11
 Opens April 9, 2015
What is the District’s Plan with Smarter Balanced?

- Students are taking computer-based tests similar to SBAC Common Learning Assessments (CLAs) during the year.

- **New student assessment data system** (Amplify) helps teachers analyze student performance on district tests.

- Ongoing **meetings, workshops, newsletters, resources** to share information with principals and teachers.

- **Tips, Tools, and Resources** on SFUSD Website.
Supporting Your Student in English Language Arts

The way we taught students in the past simply does not prepare them for the higher demands of college and careers today and in the future. Schools are working to improve teaching and learning to ensure that all students will graduate high school with the skills they need to be successful.

In English Language Arts, this means three major changes. Students will continue reading and writing. But in addition to stories and literature, they will read more texts that provide facts and background knowledge in areas including science and social studies. They will read more challenging texts and be asked more questions that will require them to refer back to what they have read. There will also be an increased emphasis on building a strong vocabulary so that students can read and understand challenging material.

Supporting Students in Elementary English Language Arts:

**Primary Grades**

- Read to your student and have him or her read to you every day for at least 15 minutes. Pick out words that might be new or words that have multiple or complex meanings. Discuss those words and how they add to what the writer is saying.
- Ask your student to retell a story in his or her own words by telling what happened first, second, third, etc. In addition, ask your student to think about what the message of a story may be or what he or she learned from an informational book or article.
What you can do!

At Home…

Smarter Balanced Practice Test
• Take the Practice Test

In English
• Support your child in reading each day.
• Read a balance of fiction and non-fiction

In Math
• Find real world connections.
• Ask your child to explain their thinking.

On the Computer
• Build computer literacy
What you can do!

At Your School…

Talk with Teachers

• Ask for assessment results for CLA, F&P, SRI and IWA
• How are they using technology for instruction?

Talk with Administrators and Support Staff

• School Site Council (SSC)
• English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)
• Parent Teacher Organization or Association (PTO / PTA)
Next Steps

• What information will you share with other parents?

• What questions do you still have?
Stay in touch!

Call us!  
Achievement Assessment Office  
(415) 241-6400

Find us on the web @  
www.sfusd.edu
Join us again!

Thursday, January 22, 2015
On Track for Full Implementation
Overview of the Smarter Balanced testing plan for the spring
How to help your students get ready
How to discuss testing with teachers

Thursday, May 14, 2015
Year 1 in Review
Highlights of the first year of testing
Smarter Balanced scoring and reporting results
Planning for next year