The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) continued to make significant strides in the fourth quarter of its first year. Of significant importance is the release to member states and national experts of the Content Specifications for both English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics. These Content Specifications identify what the Summative Assessment will declare students know and can do to demonstrate their progress toward college and career readiness as defined in the Common Core State Standards. The Content Specifications specify the kinds of evidence that students will provide during the assessment. SMARTER Balanced also released three critical requests for proposals (RFPs), and, based on an RFP that was released in an earlier quarter, contracted with Measured Progress to develop the IT Systems Architecture. The newly released RFPs include Psychometric Services, Accessibility and Accommodations Policy Guidelines, and Item/Task Writing Materials.

In addition to progress in designing the assessment, SMARTER Balanced as an organization continues to evolve. Carissa Miller, Deputy Superintendent of the Assessment Division for the Idaho Department of Education, was elected as an Executive Committee Co-Chair, and Michael Hock, Assessment Director for the Vermont Department of Education, was elected as a new member of the Executive Committee. In addition, Tony Alpert joined SMARTER Balanced as Chief Operating Officer, and SMARTER Balanced hired Dr. Marty McCall as Lead Psychometrician and Dr. Jacqueline King as Director of Higher Education Collaboration. The Consortium welcomed Delaware and South Dakota as Governing States this quarter, bringing the total number of Governing States to twenty-one.

Accomplishments

- Provided the opportunity for all Consortium members to virtually attend a two-day Technical Advisory Committee meeting
- Engaged state Chiefs in the operations and long-range planning during an in-person meeting on August 31, 2011
- Hired Dr. Jacqueline King as the Director of Higher Education Collaboration, to engage higher education partners and help ensure that our assessment is a valid representation of college and career readiness
- Educated member states through webinars on Innovative Item Development and Content Specifications for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics
- Conducted stakeholder research to strengthen communication efforts
- Delivered weekly news updates to all members and stakeholders

Priorities for Next Six Months

- Create the Sustainability Task Force to provide states with a governance, budget, and procurement roadmap to prepare for the 2014 administration of the SMARTER Balanced system and end of the federal grant
- Continue refinement and implementation of a comprehensive strategy for engaging higher education partners across the Consortium
- Hire Director of Strategic Communications to better inform the assessment design, based on more strategic conversations with representatives of Congress, governors, and other state policymakers and national professional and advocacy organizations
- Launch a new public website to strengthen external stakeholder communications
- Launch a new internal collaboration site to increase collaboration and communications among the work groups and member states

Engage Our Members

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establish Rigorous Processes and Organization Structure</th>
<th>Priorities for Next Six Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Submitted annual performance report to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) and prepared for the onsite monitoring visit by USED RTTA project staff</td>
<td>• Hire specialists in English language arts and mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hired key staff members, including Lead Psychometrician and Director of Higher Education Collaboration</td>
<td>• Form English Language Learners (ELL) and Students with Disabilities (SWD) Advisory Committees that will provide guidance on development of an accessible assessment for all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developed a procurement plan aligned to the Master Work Plan for the summative assessment</td>
<td>• Continue to procure vendors through the State of Washington to perform the work as scheduled in the Master Work Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Continued management of the Master Work Plan schedule, vendors, issues, risks, and financials</td>
<td>• Develop a vendor on-boarding process to ensure clarity of Consortium requirements and consistency across contracts</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Enhanced tools and templates to support vendor procurement processes</td>
<td>• Manage vendors as they complete the required work</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Develop the IT Backbone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Selected and engaged Measured Progress to develop the IT Systems Architecture and establish the roadmap and blueprints for guiding the development of the technology necessary to support the Consortium’s assessment system</td>
<td>• Complete initial development of the IT Systems Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Launched systems architecture workshop series focused on the areas of machine and distributed scoring, reporting, dashboards, portals, item authoring, item banking, digital library, interoperability standards, test creation, test delivery platform, adaptive testing, and technology-integration framework</td>
<td>• Work with systems architect to determine how to best leverage interoperability standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continued procurement process for the development of an IT Readiness Tool that can be used by both SMARTER Balanced and PARCC states</td>
<td>• Select vendors and begin development of the Item Authoring and Item Pool application and the IT Readiness Tool</td>
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<th>Design the System</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Held a two-day Technical Advisory Committee meeting to discuss important assessment system design and policy issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Released for external review both the English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics Content Specifications, which describe the information that the Summative Assessment will make available about students based on specific pieces of evidence that students will provide during the assessment to demonstrate their progress toward mastery of the college- and career-ready knowledge and skills identified in the Common Core State Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Released RFPs for psychometric services, accessibility and accommodations policy guidelines, and development of item/task writing materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review and obtain consensus on an Interim Assessment approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Launch Transition to Common Core webinar series in partnership with CCSSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage with vendors to develop item specifications, test specifications, initial achievement level descriptors, items/tasks for pilot testing, and accessibility and accommodations policy guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refine our college and career readiness definition to guide the content of the high school assessment and the vertical articulation of grades 3–8 performance standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Work Group Status

### Accessibility and Accommodations

**Accomplishments**
- Released RFP for Accessibility and Accommodations Policy Guidelines

**Priorities for Next Six Months**
- Oversee the development of Accessibility and Accommodations Policy Guidelines for use by multiple work groups

### Formative Assessment Practices and Professional Learning

**Accomplishments**
- Refined the technology components of Digital Library Vision

**Priorities for Next Six Months**
- Develop a Master Work Plan for Formative Assessment Practices and Professional Learning
- Oversee development and distribution of RFP for Professional Development on Assessment Literacy

### Item Development

**Accomplishments**
- Partnered with the Performance Tasks Work Group to procure vendors for the development of item specifications

**Priorities for Next Six Months**
- Partner with the Performance Tasks Work Group to procure and oversee vendors to develop Pilot Test items/tasks and guidelines for item/task writing

### Performance Tasks

**Accomplishments**
- Partnered with the Item Development Work Group to procure vendors for the development of item specifications

**Priorities for Next Six Months**
- Partner with the Item Development Work Group to procure and oversee vendors to write Pilot Test items/tasks and guidelines for item/task writing

### Reporting

**Accomplishments**
- Began development of RFP for Reporting System

**Priorities for Next Six Months**
- Coordinate with the Technology Approach Work Group on procurement activities for the Reporting System

### Technology Approach

**Accomplishments**
- Initiated IT Systems Architecture contract with Measured Progress and launched three weeks of systems architecture workshops
- Entered contract negotiations with IT Readiness Tool vendor

**Priorities for Next Six Months**
- Develop IT Systems Architecture
- Oversee development of IT Readiness Tool
- Procure and oversee vendors to develop the Item Authoring and Item Pool application and the Test Engine
- Coordinate with the Reporting Work Group to procure Reporting System vendor

### Test Administration

**Accomplishments**
- Coordinated efforts with the Technology Approach Work Group to ensure strong integration among procurement efforts

**Priorities for Next Six Months**
- Procure and oversee vendor to plan and develop test administration materials and policy guidelines
- Coordinate with the Accessibility and Accommodations Work Group to finalize Consortium policy on test administration policies and procedures for SEAs and LEAs

### Test Design

**Accomplishments**
- Oversaw development of RFP for Test and CAT Specifications

**Priorities for Next Six Months**
- Monitor and accept final deliverables for test blueprints and initial CAT simulation studies
- Evaluate impact of constraints on CAT and paper test blueprints and forms

### Transition to Common Core State Standards

**Accomplishments**
- Partnered with CCSSO on the ICCS Collaboration Site
- Proposed a webinar series on Transition to the CCSS topics

**Priorities for Next Six Months**
- Implement webinar series in collaboration with CCSSO
- Support collaboration with national content organizations

### Validation and Psychometrics

**Accomplishments**
- Oversaw development and posting of RFP for Psychometric Services
- Co-led development of RFP for Test and CAT Specifications

**Priorities for Next Six Months**
- Propose approach for fulfilling research agenda and validation activities
- Procure and oversee vendor to perform Psychometric Services
- Procure and oversee vendor to develop Initial Achievement Level Descriptors