Executive Summary
With the successful launch of the Smarter Balanced Pilot Test this quarter, the Consortium achieved its most significant milestone to date. More than 650,000 students participated in the Pilot Test by the end of the testing period in May, allowing the Consortium to gather essential information about the performance of test items and the test delivery system. During this quarter, member states also reached critical decisions about the sustainability of Smarter Balanced after the federal grant ends in September 2014, approved initial achievement level descriptors, and continued to advance the new assessment system on multiple fronts including piloting translations options and defining the work for the interim assessment system.

Pilot Test Launch: The Pilot Test is the first large-scale tryout of Smarter Balanced items and performance tasks, with students from approximately 4,200 schools across Governing States participating in the Pilot Test administration. The Pilot Test is one of two large-scale tryouts of the assessments under operational conditions prior to full implementation in the 2014-15 school year. (A more comprehensive Field Test will occur in spring 2014.) The Pilot Test is being conducted in grades 3–11 in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. While it is administered online, it does not include the computer adaptive feature designed for the operational assessment in 2014-15, and participating schools will not receive student scores. Data from the Pilot will allow Smarter Balanced to conduct initial scaling of items and determine changes needed for Field Test item development. Lessons learned throughout the Pilot Test will guide future improvements, both for the Field Test and its first live administration.

Communications and Outreach: The Consortium implemented a comprehensive approach to communications surrounding the Pilot this quarter, making available to member states not only practical information for end users but also information for broader audiences. This approach included: Test Administration Manuals and webinars; weekly updates for K-12 state leads on recruitment efforts; direct contractor contact with schools that signed up for testing; contractor help desk support prior to and during testing; posting of Pilot Test participation statistics on the Smarter Balanced internal website; and notices, as necessary, in the weekly newsletter. In addition, stakeholders have remained connected through the Smarter Balanced website, Twitter, and our eNewsletter that contains additional announcements about our Pilot testing program and other Smarter Balanced developments.

Stakeholder Engagement: During this period, the Consortium continued to hold regularly scheduled weekly and monthly meetings with its state representatives, engaged members in important discussions about developments in sustainability planning, and also increased outreach to additional stakeholders, including establishing quarterly webinar briefings with the National Governors Association and National Conference of State Legislators. The third Smarter Balanced Collaboration Conference, in March, brought together representatives from the Consortium’s 25 members—including state education Chiefs, K-12 state leads, Higher Education Leads, work group co-chairs, and contractors—to facilitate coordination on the design and implementation of the next-generation assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards and plan for the sustainability of the Consortium.

Practice Test Preparations: The Consortium announced plans to release a more complete and broadly available “Practice Test,” using Pilot Test items and tasks. The Practice Tests will be available May 29, two
Executive Summary (continued)

work days after the end of the Pilot Test, and will be open and available at smarterbalanced.org throughout
the summer and into next school year. Access to the Practice Tests will not require a password or special
ticketing, making it accessible to all who are interested. The Practice Tests will be available for grades
3–8 and 11 in both English language arts/literacy and mathematics; afford teachers, administrators, and
parents access to a wide array of Smarter Balanced items and item types; and make available versions
that demonstrate several accommodations, which include text-to-speech, item-level pop-up Spanish
glossaries for construct irrelevant terms (math tests only), Braille, and American Sign Language (ASL). Not all
accommodations will be available for all grades and content areas on May 29. A second rollout in August will
include all stated accommodations for all grades and appropriate content areas, except ASL which will made
available in the Fall of 2013.

Achievement Level Descriptors and College Readiness: The Governing States approved initial
achievement level descriptors (ALDs), which distinguish among the levels of student performance in
English language arts/literacy and mathematics on the Smarter Balanced assessments. Adoption of the
initial ALDs is part of an extensive collaboration between K-12 education agencies and institutions of
higher education, and a critical effort to ensure that the grade 11 summative assessment can be used
as evidence that students are ready for entry-level, transferable, credit-bearing courses in English and
mathematics and should be exempted from remedial coursework. Smarter Balanced is developing an
integrated suite of ALDs that serve different purposes for item writing, standard setting, and reporting
results. Reporting ALDs—which will provide guidance to students and parents about how to interpret
performance on the assessments—will be developed following standard setting in 2014.

Technology: Important advancements were made in the Consortium’s use of technology this quarter.
The Item Authoring Tool continued development; the Digital Library application was initiated; and
substantial progress was made in the open-source test engine application, with completion of several
components of the test engine for the Operational Test.

Accessibility: The Consortium piloted various translation options this quarter, including text to
speech, Braille, and English glossaries. Smarter Balanced successfully administered a language survey
in which 21 states participated, capturing data from each state on the languages that ELLs use, the
supports states provide on summative assessments, and the number of students recently arrived in the
U.S. and the languages they speak. These data will help the Consortium determine appropriate languages
and translation options to ensure accessibility of the assessment system.

Post-grant Sustainability: Governing states approved a motion to establish an affiliation with the
National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at the University
of California, Los Angeles Graduate School of Education and Information Studies to begin after the
conclusion of the federal grant in 2014. The affiliation with CRESST—recognized as one of the premier
educational assessment and research centers in the nation—maintains and strengthens the work of
the state-led Consortium well into the future. States also voted to accept the recommendations of a
Executive Summary (continued)

Sustainability Task Force (made up of member state representatives), including a scope of services to be provided by Smarter Balanced.

Organization: The U.S. Virgin Islands became the first Affiliate member of the Consortium. The territory joins the 21 Governing States and three Advisory States. Smarter Balanced Governing States voted in July 2012 to create a new membership category, allowing territories and commonwealths of the United States and/or the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) that support the work of Smarter Balanced to join as Affiliate members. Affiliate members can participate in Consortium activities and contribute to policy, logistical, and implementation discussions involving the development of the assessment system, including participation in Smarter Balanced work groups.

Within the organization, Chrystyna Mursky, PhD, joined the Smarter Balanced staff as Director of Professional Learning, overseeing the development of formative assessment strategies and professional learning opportunities for teachers, a key component of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System. Luci Willits, Chief of Staff for the Idaho State Department of Education, was elected to the at-large seat on the Executive Committee.

The Consortium’s fiscal agent, the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, successfully completed a formal audit of the Request for Proposal (RFP) process and internal controls for fiscal year 2012 (July 1, 2011–June 30, 2012). Smarter Balanced also began the process for submitting materials to the U.S. Department of Education for the Race to the Top Technical Review, which focuses both on the Consortium’s process for ensuring that assessment results are valid for the intended purposes, and on the Consortium’s approach to and process for developing assessment items and tasks that represent the full range of the college-and career-ready content standards.

Procurement: Seventeen of a total of 21 contracts have been awarded to date. During this quarter, the apparent successful bidder for Field Test item writing and scoring was determined, and the RFP for Test Administration for the Field Test was released to vendors.
Highlights for Next Quarter (APRIL–JUNE 2013)

Over the coming months:

- The Formative Assessment Advisory Panel will begin development of Digital Library quality criteria policies, which will be used to evaluate and approve resources for the Digital Library. Panel members represent diverse expertise in classroom instruction, formative assessment, support for English language learners, gifted education, special education, English language arts, mathematics, online learning, and rural and urban education.

- Member states will begin recruiting and building State Networks of Educators to provide feedback on the Digital Library technology application and professional learning resources.

- Practice Test preparations will be finalized, and the Practice Test will be released.

- Smarter Balanced will welcome a Chief Technology Officer to ensure that the Smarter Balanced Assessment System is supported by a robust technology infrastructure.

- The Smarter Balanced college content-readiness policy will be voted on by the Governing States for approval. This policy will provide an operational definition of college content-readiness in the context of the Smarter Balanced ELA/literacy and mathematics assessments and describe the implications of student performance on the grade 11 summative assessments for grade 12 and the first term of college.

- A Career Readiness Task Force will be established, composed of K-12 career technical education and community college representatives.

- The hiring process will continue for a Director of State Services to act as the primary point of contact for K-12 state leads.

- New communications resources, including a state leads–focused page on the internal Collaboration Site, will provide greater visibility into upcoming events affecting state leads and other key stakeholders.

- An advisory group will be formed to focus on student reporting for grade 11.

- Field Test preparations will continue, including updating the item specifications, defining the CAT (computer adaptive testing) algorithm and item development plan, revising item writer training processes and materials, and editing test administration manuals based on Pilot testing lessons learned. Pilot item and data review will support Field Test preparations.
## Procurements Managed by the State of Washington

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<tr>
<th>RFP ID</th>
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Status current as of 04/11/2013