

From March 25 to June 13, 2014, more than 4.2 million students, 16,549 schools, and thousands of teachers participated in the Smarter Balanced Field Test—the largest online assessment ever.

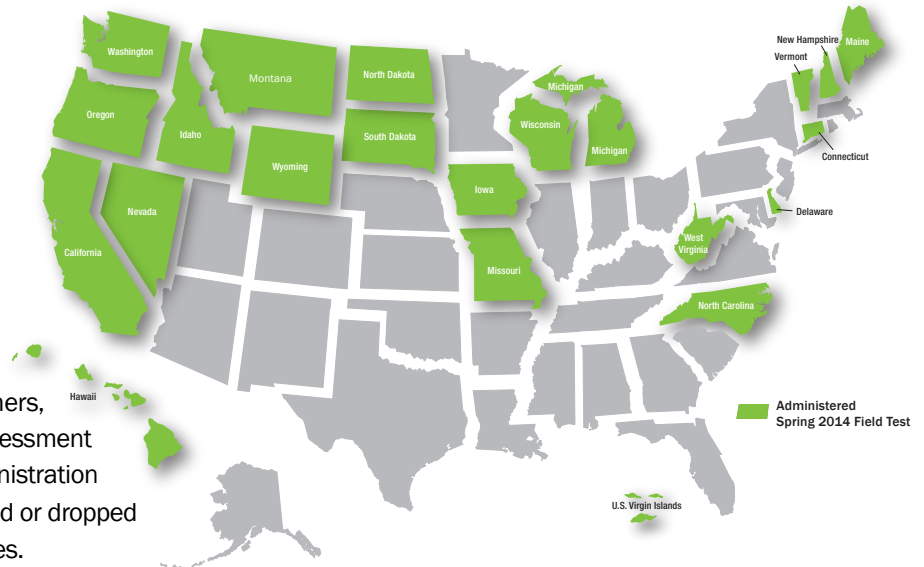
The Field Test helped Smarter Balanced ensure that test questions are accurate and fair for all students. The Field Test also gave students, teachers, and schools an opportunity to experience the assessment under real-world conditions and prepare for administration in spring 2015. Because questions may be revised or dropped after the Field Test, students did not receive scores.

Smarter Balanced member states learned important lessons about test administration and technology readiness that will be used to improve the assessments next year. In addition, almost all member states conducted surveys of students, teachers, and administrators to elicit feedback about the test and the testing process.

Smarter Balanced is commissioning a thorough, independent review of this feedback and will release a complete report later this summer. However, based on state feedback to date, help desk calls, and other indicators, the Consortium has already identified the following lessons:

The technology performed well

- The test delivery platform functioned well, with limited glitches given the volume of testing: approximately 184,000 simultaneous users on peak days.
- Software and system issues were identified and resolved quickly.
- Schools tested technology and bandwidth under real-world conditions and identified practical steps to eliminate glitches, such as disabling automatic software updates that could disrupt student testing.



Field Test by the Numbers

4.2 MILLION STUDENTS

16.5 THOUSAND SCHOOLS

12.2 MILLION TESTS COMPLETED*

4.5 million tests administered with accessibility features

1,100 Help Desk inquiries per day

"It made me want to try, since I got to explain my reasoning and explain why I chose what I chose."

- 8th grade student, Idaho

*Smarter Balanced assessments consist of two parts. Each "test" reported is one of the two parts of the English language arts (ELA)/literacy or math assessment.

Maintaining test security in the age of social media can be a challenge

- Smarter Balanced worked with states to develop a successful process for finding test questions posted online by students.
- District Test Coordinators, administrators, and teachers focused on strengthening test security, and the numbers of postings decreased dramatically.

Ongoing communication is essential

- Smarter Balanced provided schools with communications materials to reach out to parents and respond to media inquiries about the Field Test.
- After identifying areas that caused confusion in some schools, the Test Administration Manual and test system user guides were edited for clarity.
- Smarter Balanced will continue to improve these documents as we collect feedback from schools.

“[Students] think it’s way cooler to take the test online rather than the old bubble-in multiple choice.”

- Superintendent and principal, California

All students can participate in online assessments

- Students could access an unprecedented number of language supports, including interactive glossaries in 10 languages and multiple dialects, as well as full Spanish translations of the math assessment.
- Students who are deaf or hard of hearing received tests in American Sign Language, signed by recorded human interpreters.
- Refreshable Braille keyboards and real-time embossers allowed students who are blind to receive their online tests in Braille.



Next Steps

Information from the Field Test will be used this fall to establish achievement levels for the assessment system. Achievement level setting is the process for establishing one or more cut scores on an assessment, making it possible to create categories of performance. In addition, Smarter Balanced will:

- ✓ Review question responses and flag questions for editing or deletion
- ✓ Review the directions for test items and performance tasks to ensure that they are clear for teachers and students
- ✓ Analyze teacher and student surveys conducted by states and publish a report later this summer
- ✓ Launch a Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines Committee to review additional universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for inclusion in the operational assessments