

Smarter Balanced Assessments

Richland School District

December 2014 Newsletter

Information related to SBAC Assessment can be found in one location using the [SBAC Resource Tool](#) available on the RSD SharePoint.

Quick Links: (Ctrl + click to open all links)

[Practice and Training Tests \(Take a test\)](#)

[Guidelines on Tools Supports and Accommodations](#)

[Frequently asked questions](#)

[Download the Scoring Guides \(all grades\)](#)

(Using SBAC links requires Firefox or Chrome browsers only.)

2015 results will set a new baseline of student performance in Washington

Some people are predicting that the spring 2015 test results will see Washington students falling off a “performance cliff”, with scores dropping. But the new tests are not comparable so we should not compare scores from one to the other. We have a new baseline!



Think of the standards and the assessment as a new target with new results and envision two mountains:

People who successfully climb Mt Rainier (at 14,000 ft.), will find Mt McKinley (at 20,000 ft.) more challenging. Some will be able to meet the challenge, some will be close and some who previously were able to summit Rainier will not be able to summit McKinley at first.

Preparing for New Test Scores

- Smarter Balanced assessments measure the full range of the Common Core State Standards. They are designed to let teachers and parents know whether students are on track to be college- and career-ready by the time they graduate.
- Because the new standards set higher expectations for students--and the new tests are designed to assess student performance against these higher expectations--our definition of grade level performance is higher than it used to be.
- As a result, it's likely that fewer students will meet grade level standards, especially for the first few years. Results should improve as students have additional years of instruction aligned to the new standards and become better equipped to meet the challenges they present.
- This does not mean that our students are “doing worse” than they did last year. Rather, the scores represent a “new baseline” that provides a more accurate indicator for educators, students, and parents as they work to meet the rigorous demands of college and career readiness.

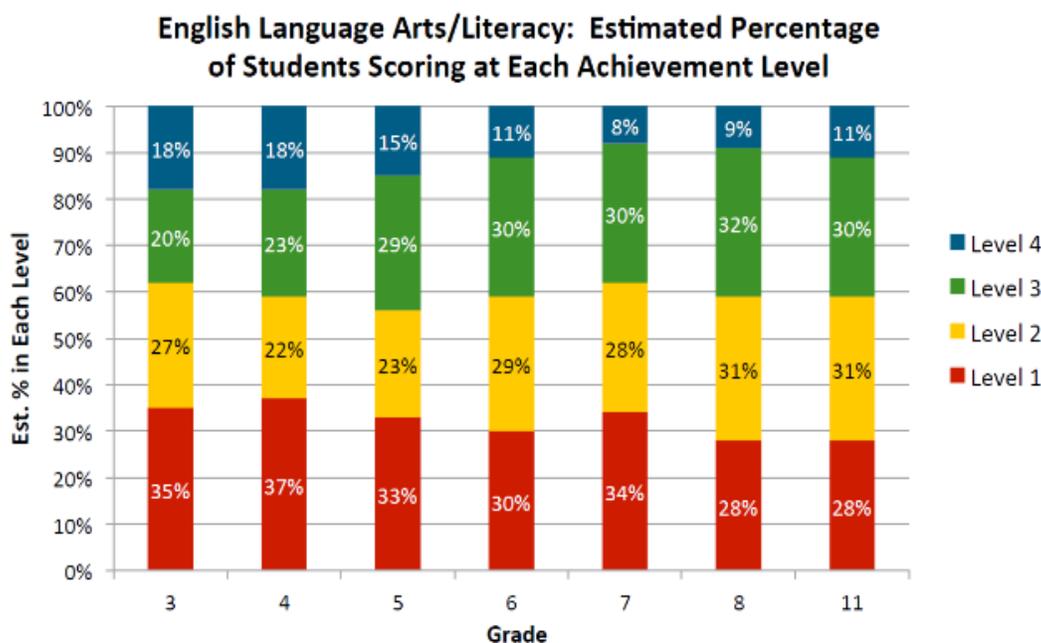
3rd Grade Scores (Enhanced Substitute Senate Bill 5946)

- Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, for any student scoring “below basic” on the statewide third grade assessment schools must:
 - Schedule a meeting before the end of the year between the parent/guardian, teacher, and principal (or designee) to explain to the parent or guardian which interventions and strategies will be used to help improve the student’s reading skills and appropriate grade placement for the student.

- For students to be placed in 4th grade, strategies must include an “intensive improvement strategy” provided by the district that includes a summer program or other option agreed upon by the family and school.
- “Fully inform” and obtain consent from the parents and/or guardians about all decisions.
- Beginning in the 2015–16 school year school districts must implement an intensive reading and literacy improvement strategy from a state menu for any student who scored basic or below basic in the previous year on the third grade statewide English language arts assessment.

What does this mean for 3rd grade teachers?

Initial achievement levels based on the pilot studies completed across the country during the 2013-14 school year were released in November. The projections, based on the established cut scores, indicate that approximately 38% of all 3rd grade students who take the spring 2015 SBAC assessment will perform at levels 3 and 4 (at or above grade level). Another 27% will perform at the “basic” level (level 2) leaving 35% or approximately 9 students in a typical 3rd grade classroom performing at the “below basic” level (level 1) triggering the development of an intervention plan and a conference with parents/guardians prior to the last day of school.



Estimates based on Spring 2014 Smarter Balanced field test in 21 states and USVI.

The Richland School District Association is currently working with the Richland Education Association and school principals to develop both a communication plan and a support plan for the required conferences as well as for the “intensive improvement strategy” that all districts are required to provide. More communication regarding this will be forthcoming.

Because the new content standards set higher expectations for students and the new tests are designed to assess student performance against those higher standards, the bar has been raised. It’s not surprising that fewer students could score at Level 3 or higher. However, over time the performance of students will improve.



Dear Parents and Guardians:

We are pleased to announce the availability of the Smarter Balanced Practice Tests (commonly referred to as SBAC). Smarter Balanced is the system of academic tests that will replace the MSP and HSPE tests in reading, writing and math. The Smarter Balanced tests are based on the Common Core State Standards adopted by Washington in August 2010 and will be administered for the first time this spring (2015).

The Smarter Balanced tests will generally be taken on computers, and the Practice Tests provide a good idea of what the new tests will look like. The Practice Tests are available for everyone to use at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/practice-test/>. There is a Practice Test for each of grades 3 through 8 and grade 11 in both English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Once a grade is selected you will find three tests in each content area (see screen shot below).

Training Test

The first is a “training test” and parents can help students utilize the various tools that students will see on the assessments. Students should also have the opportunity to work independently through the training test and ask clarifying questions.

Practice Tests

The second type of assessment is the practice test which contains about 30 questions. Some of the questions (depending on grade level and content area) will require short answer responses that students will enter on the computer. Students should have at least one experience working through the practice test items on the computer. (Students will not receive any feedback on the practice test items. The purpose for practicing on the computer is to see what the items look like when they pop up on the computer.)

Performance Tasks

English/Language Arts

The ELA performance task requires that students read information from several sources. They may take notes either electronically (you will learn about this in the training test experience) or by hand. The ELA performance task takes two sittings. Students complete the research phase the first day and are presented with a writing prompt the second day.

Math

The math performance task presents students with a challenge that then requires the students to apply a variety of math skills to solve several questions. Some of the questions (depending on grade level and content area) will require short answer responses that students will enter on the computer.

 <u>Start Math Grades 3-5 Training Test</u> This is opportunity 1 of 99	 <u>Start ELA Grades 3-5 Training Test</u> This is opportunity 1 of 99
 <u>Start G5 Math Practice Test</u> This is opportunity 1 of 99	 <u>Start G5 ELA Practice Test</u> This is opportunity 1 of 99
 <u>Start G5 Math Performance Task</u> This is opportunity 1 of 99	 <u>Start G5 ELA Performance Task</u> This is opportunity 1 of 99

I encourage you to explore the Practice Tests with your child and discuss them with each other. Your child will also be able to use the Practice Tests on our school computers and on any Internet accessible computer and many tablet devices. The Smarter Balanced Practice Tests will be available through the 2014-15 school year.

If you have questions about the Smarter Balanced Practice Tests, please contact the Assessment Department at 967-6003.

Mike Hansen
Assistant Superintendent
K-5 and Assessment