

Administrative Memo

Date: January 10, 2013
To: School Administrators
From: Sharon Helwig, Ph.D.
Assistant Commissioner
Subject: CCR-13-002 – Technology Readiness for the Smarter Balanced Assessments in 2014-2015

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update to previous administrative memoranda and communications sent to District Instruction Technology and Test Coordinators regarding school district technology readiness for the Smarter Balanced assessments in 2014-2015 and the Technology Readiness Tool.

The October 2012 state-level Technology Readiness Tool summary report, found at <http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/assess/documents/asmt-sbac-mo-device-summary-1012.pdf>, shows that the devices reported by Missouri school districts are adequate for the first administration of the Smarter Balanced assessments, based on the minimum specifications for the assessment platform. Please note that the October 2012 state summary report did not provide information about school district device distribution and local bandwidth.

The next phase of the Technology Readiness Tool's reports will be available the end of January 2013. School districts will be able to see their current readiness status information in the "Results and Indicators" tab. These include:

- Device Indicators – Reports the total devices and total devices meeting either the minimum or recommended requirements.
- Device to Test-Taker Indicators – Reports the number of devices meeting either the minimum or recommended requirements, the number of test takers in the building, testing window in days, and the sessions per day selected as determined by the district.
- Network Indicators – Reports the network bandwidth and infrastructure for each building. Bandwidth should be confirmed using the bandwidth checking tool that Smarter Balanced has provided for school district use.
- Staff & Personnel Report – Reports answers to the staffing survey on a Likert Scale.
- School Exception Report – Reports any missing data. There are seven reports that can be run on this page.
- Submission Status Report – Shows if a specific question is completed on the surveys of each building.

Please note: the Technology Readiness Report is based solely on the accuracy and completeness of the data entered at the school district level. Many of the functions within the “Results and Indicators Tab” will not work if the data is not entered into the Tool. District data can be entered at any time and the reports will be updated nightly.

The largest variable in Missouri’s readiness for online testing in 2014-2015 is building level bandwidth availability. The Technology Readiness Tool collects and reports static bandwidth information at the building level; however, bandwidth usage varies widely throughout the typical school day. Smarter Balanced has developed a tool for checking bandwidth that can be used by school districts to run a practical check multiple times throughout the school day in individual school buildings to assist in the determination of actual bandwidth availability. Instructions for and access to the Bandwidth Checker Tool may be found at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Bandwidth-Check-Instructions.pdf>.

It is imperative that Missouri’s school buildings’ bandwidth be entered into the Technology Readiness Tool by February 15, 2013 in order to provide decision makers at all levels an accurate picture of the level of technology readiness and needs. In addition, other scheduled upcoming dates on which data for reports will be pulled from the Tool are June 15 and December 15 of both 2013 and 2014. Prior to each of these dates, school districts **must ensure** that all information in the Technology Readiness Tool is current.

As school districts contemplate new device purchases, the Department encourages school districts to use the Smarter Balanced new hardware guidelines for those devices that will be used for assessment. The guidelines may be found at http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/SmarterBalanced_NewHardwareGuidelines.pdf.

Please contact the Assessment Section at (573) 751-3545 regarding any questions about-- or for-- assistance with the Technology Readiness Tool.