

Administrative Memo

Date: March 28, 2013
To: School Administrators
From: Michael Muenks, Coordinator of Assessment
Subject: CCR-13-008 – Change in SMARTER Balanced Volunteer Pilot

Due to the overwhelming demand for access to the Volunteer Pilot assessment from principals, teachers, parents, and the public in Missouri and across the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium has decided to release a more complete and more broadly available “practice test” in lieu of the Volunteer Pilot assessment.

The change from a Volunteer Pilot to Practice Test DOES NOT impact current testing in support of the Scientific Pilot; all schools signed up for the Scientific Pilot will continue to test as scheduled.

Like the planned Volunteer Pilot, the Practice Test will allow students to experience items that look and function like those found on the Scientific Pilot. The Practice Test will also include performance tasks (not previously planned for the Volunteer Pilot), and will be constructed to follow a test blueprint similar to the blueprint intended for the operational test. With the Practice Test, teachers will be able to construct simulated assessment events for their students. Additionally, online access to the Practice Test will not require a unique username and password, meaning that schools and districts can use the Practice Test for professional development activities and for discussions with parents, policymakers, and other interested stakeholders beginning in Summer 2013. The open access to the Practice Test will allow educators scheduling flexibility not planned for the Volunteer Pilot.

The Practice Test will provide:

- administrators and parents with access to items planned and designed for the new assessment;
- students with access to the tests over the summer, with the Practice Test being accessible right up to the rollout of the operational assessment in fall 2014; and
- a full array of item types, including performance tasks.

This modification to the Smarter Balanced plans will result in a delay to the availability of a test for those schools that had volunteered earlier. That is, the Volunteer Pilot will not be accessible April 9 as originally planned; instead, the Practice Test will be available beginning Wednesday, May 29. We understand that for many schools, this later start date may be too close to—or, in some cases, after—the end of the school year to allow an early opportunity to engage with this new release. However, we hope the benefits outlined in this memo, including the fact that the Practice Test will remain open throughout the summer and across the next school year, will mitigate the delay.