



## Smarter Balanced and Parents: Preparing Students for Success after High School

More than 40 states are implementing the Common Core State Standards, which provide consistent learning goals for students regardless of their background or where they live. These standards are designed to make sure that all students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college and career.

To help students meet these goals, Smarter Balanced is working with educators and parents to develop assessments that will replace current state assessments in English language arts/literacy and mathematics in the 2014-15 school year. The Smarter Balanced assessment system will provide teachers with new tools to monitor student progress and resources to meet each student's unique needs.

### Key Features of Smarter Balanced

- ▶ Measures student achievement and growth in English language arts/literacy and mathematics in grades 3-8 and high school.
- ▶ Includes accommodations for students with disabilities and English language learners so that all students can demonstrate what they know.
- ▶ Administered online with questions and performance tasks that measure critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- ▶ Expectations of student performance linked to international benchmarks.

### Preparation for College and Career

A high school diploma should mean students are ready to take their next step in life—by going to college, pursuing career training or entering the workforce. Smarter Balanced assessments measure college and career readiness so that parents and teachers can help them stay on track to graduation.

### Supporting Teaching and Learning

In addition to a year-end assessment, teachers will be able to administer interim assessments throughout the school year to monitor student progress. Results from the interim assessment will be available quickly, giving teachers the information they need to address student needs before the end of the year. In addition, teachers will have access to a digital library of resources and professional learning opportunities to help students succeed.

### Feedback for Teachers and Parents

An online system will provide clear, easy-to-understand reports on student performance for teachers, parents and schools. Teachers can use these reports to inform their instruction, and parents will have better information about their child's progress. Parents will also be able to see how student achievement at their school compares to performance at the district and state level.

### Assessment Implementation Timeline

- ▶ Winter/Spring 2013—Pilot testing of assessment items and performance tasks
- ▶ Spring 2014—Field testing of summative and interim assessments
- ▶ 2014-15 School Year—Implementation of assessment system

### LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED

Visit [SmarterBalanced.org](http://SmarterBalanced.org) to learn more about the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and sign up to receive our monthly eNewsletter. For more information, please contact [Info@SmarterBalanced.org](mailto:Info@SmarterBalanced.org).

# The Common Core State Standards and Parents and Guardians

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) provide a practical way to prepare children for the challenges of a constantly changing world – by learning step-by-step the real-world skills they need for career and college.

California is putting these standards to work, using them as the foundation for remodeling our education system. The standards keep the best of what we have, but replace outdated ways of learning with a clear focus on the key knowledge and skills students need, and provide teachers the time to teach them well.

Like an orchestra learning a challenging new symphony, bringing these standards to life in our schools will take time and energy, and the costs must be managed over time. These standards provide every part of our education system the same sheet music – with the clear goals of career and college readiness for all. And we all have a part to play.

## Preparing Students for Career and College

**Goal** – all students graduating from our public school system as life- long learners will have the skills and knowledge necessary to assume their positions in the 21st century global economy.

- The new standards are designed to be relevant in the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills students need for success in both higher education and career.
- Our communities will be stronger if students graduate with the skills and knowledge needed in today's job market.

## Will There Be New Tests for the New Standards?

Yes, California is a governing member of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). The consortium is developing new tests that will measure student progress toward career and college readiness. You may learn more about the new tests and California's participation in the SBAC at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smarterbalanced.asp>.

## California's CCSS Implementation Plan

The *Common Core State Standards Systems Implementation Plan for California* is a living document approved by the State Board of Education in March 2012. The plan, available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/>, identifies the major phases and activities involved in implementing the CCSS and serves as the blueprint for remodeling the education system to support student success in career and college.