



CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

**TOM TORLAKSON**

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

November 20, 2013

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

**SAMPLING PLAN  
FOR THE SPRING 2014 SMARTER BALANCED FIELD TEST**

This is certainly an exciting time, as California continues its transition to a new student assessment system. The recent passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 484 provides California with a unique opportunity to focus more fully on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) during this transition year. In large part, it does this by replacing the requirement for local educational agencies (LEAs) to administer the California Standards Tests and California Modified Assessments for English–language arts (ELA) and mathematics with the requirement to participate in the spring 2014 Smarter Balanced Consortium Field Test.

To allow for maximum participation in the field test and address LEAs' expressed interest in having their students participate in **both** ELA and mathematics, a sampling plan that meets the sample size and representative requirements of the consortium, but will also allow for fuller testing in California is being implemented. Ninety-five percent of students will take a sampling or both ELA and mathematics items plus one performance task for subject. The remaining five percent of students will take either ELA or mathematics items plus one performance task for either subject. The testing time will remain the same for both groups at approximately 3.5 hours. The field test will take place between March 18 and June 6, 2014; schools will test within six week windows during this timeframe. Note that field test data is not valid for the purposes of assessment progress and would not be a fair or valid way to judge student or school performance quality. Therefore, no student scores will be generated. Additional information about the sampling plan including test window assignments will be made available this week.

I anticipate that LEAs will benefit greatly from their participation in the field test in both subjects. Students will get hands-on experience with the functionality of a computer-based assessment; teachers will learn about items and performance tasks aligned to the CCSS and administrators will gain valuable exposure to administration logistics and identify any gaps in technology.

As a reminder, the field test is to be administered in accordance with the following student participation expectations:

- For **grades three through eight**, all students will participate.

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- For **grades nine and ten**, only a small number of students in schools selected for a scientific sample will participate.
- For **grade eleven**, only students selected for the scientific sample are expected to participate, but all students beyond the scientific sample are encouraged to participate. In addition, AB 484 requires that all grade eleven students have the option to participate in the Early Assessment Program.

The only students exempt from participating in the spring 2014 field test are:

- (1) students who will participate in the California Alternate Performance Assessment; and
- (2) for the ELA field test only, English learners who have been attending school in the U.S. for less than 12 months.

The CDE, in conjunction with its field test contractor, Educational Testing Service, is helping LEAs prepare for their participation in the Field Test by providing assistance and outreach in a number of ways, including Help Desk phone and e-mail support, Web- and video-based trainings, and regional in-person training.

I encourage you and your LEA team to make the most of this year in order to prepare for the Smarter Balanced operational assessments, which will begin in the 2014-15 school year.

More information regarding the Smarter Balanced Field Test may be found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smarterfieldtest.asp>. Questions about this letter should be directed to the CDE Statewide Assessment Transition Office by phone at 916-445-8517 or by e-mail at [sbac@cde.ca.gov](mailto:sbac@cde.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson

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cc: District Assessment Coordinators