

How Will Students Be Assessed Under the Common Core State Standards?

Our state legislators have approved the Michigan Department of Education's adoption of the English Language Arts and Math Common Core State Standards while putting on hold the adoption of how these new standards will be assessed. The state school chiefs and governors supported the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to develop a means for assessing these standards. Since the initial effort to develop the assessments, other companies such as ACT Aspire (found at <http://www.discoveractaspire.org/pages/home>) are currently lobbying for the legislators to win this contract.

What to expect as we prepare for future Smarter Balanced Assessments if Michigan adopts this assessment program?

- During the summer of 2014, updated sample items will be released for teacher use.
- To prepare students for the assessments teachers will be:
 - Engaging students in text-based evidence collection
 - Highlighting academic vocabulary
 - Engaging students in close reading
 - Modeling how to problem-solve when put into the middle of a problem (Common Core Math Practices apply). The key question is “can students raise the right questions to solve the problem?”
- What will the structure of the Performance Tasks look like?
 - 20-minute period for teacher and students to engage in discussion about the task to be performed (example: solving a real world math problem).
 - 35-minute period for students to review text or search websites for needed information (graphic organizers and note paper will be provided).
 - 70 minutes, or what the student needs, to complete the performance task.
- Smarter Balanced assessments will be adaptive in nature. This means that depending on how a student answers one question, the next will be easier or harder. This is designed to ensure that educators clearly understand where students are in their learning.
- Interim assessments will be available so that teachers can manipulate them to assess only standards being taught at the time of assessment (formative assessment in nature).

- A tool set will be provided that encourages discourse between student/teacher and student/student. The hope is that by facilitating discourse, student engagement increases.
- Accommodation guidelines are being developed and will be released so that comment can be gathered prior to the adoption of the common accommodations allowable for all states participating (ELL, Special Needs, etc.). Webinars are also being produced to address accommodations.
- Smarter Balanced assessments will contain items from the PISA, TIMSS, and NAEP (see below) assessments, which are currently used to compare U.S. student progress with students from around the world.

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)

<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/>

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

<http://nces.ed.gov/timss/educators.asp>

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/naeptools.aspx>

If you are interested in learning more about the future of assessment using Smarter Balanced Assessments, the following pod cast is very informative:

http://www.collegecareer.org/CommonCore_Updates.aspx

Note: Currently there is debate on how to assess early childhood (K-2) and how to handle the potential adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). We will have to see where this debate ends up.

If you would like clarification or additional information on the information shared above please contact Chuck Hughes at chuckhughes@hartlandschools.us or 810-626-2114.