



Wyoming Department of Education

PRESS RELEASE

For Release:
March 7, 2013

For more information:
Tom Lacock
Phone: 307-777-5399
Cell: 307-996-6337
Email: tom.lacock@wyo.gov
edu.wyoming.gov

Wyoming students to participate in pilot tests

CHEYENNE - A number of Wyoming school districts have volunteered to be part of a national pilot for the assessment of common core standards in Language Arts and Math. Nearly 7,000 students in 15 Wyoming school districts will take “Smarter Balanced Assessments” in the coming weeks. Nationwide, more than one million students in grades 3-11 are slated to take part in the pilot.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment is a collaborative effort of 24 member states of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), which has developed its tests to measure performance on the Common Core State Standards, specifically addressing college and career readiness. Wyoming adopted the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics in July of 2012. Currently, Wyoming’s state assessment, the Proficiency Assessment for Wyoming Students (PAWS) has some alignment to the Common Core but is not fully aligned.

“This is an opportunity to move to a new and improved assessment, which is aligned to the Common Core,” said Wyoming Department of Education’s assessment director, Deb Lindsey. “We are looking forward to receiving feedback from the districts on how they view the SBAC tool.”

WDE is encouraging schools to volunteer for the pilot as a reflection of its renewed interest in SBAC activities. The collaborative effort of K-12 and higher education leaders is one of the important benefits of SBAC.

Among the districts which have signed up to participate in the pilot test are Weston County 7; Uinta County 1; Sheridan County 2; Park County 1; Natrona County 1; Lincoln County 2; Johnson County 1; Fremont County 6 and 1; Crook County Schools; Big Horn County 3 and 2, as well as Albany County 1.

Participation in the pilot test is voluntary. Schools will have access to support and resources, including a training test to become familiar with the format of the online assessment. Since the pilot test is designed to be a test of the items and performance tasks—not an opportunity to

report on student learning—schools will not receive student scores and the test will not replace other statewide assessments.

“This test is under development, and in order to make sure the test is both valid and reliable, we have to essentially test the test. That's what this year's pilot and next year's field tests are about,” said Lindsey. “The teachers and students get to see what the next generation assessment systems look like and how content is assessed on the Common Core State Standards, especially in an on-line environment.”

Wyoming is currently an Advisory state, rather than a Governing state, of the Consortium. This means that schools in Wyoming can volunteer to participate in the pilot but they have not been selected to participate in the scientific sample component of the pilot. Wyoming schools may still volunteer to participate through March 27, 2013 by completing an online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SmarterBalancedPilot>.

The pilot test will allow SBAC to evaluate the performance of assessment items and the online test delivery system under real-world conditions. This information will be used to develop additional items and performance tasks, conduct initial scaling, and refine the test engine during the next 18 months.

Smarter Balanced is developing a balanced system of assessments—with formative, interim, and summative components—that measure achievement and growth toward college and career readiness. The work of Smarter Balanced is guided by the belief that a high-quality assessment system can provide information and tools for teachers and schools to improve instruction and help students succeed—regardless of disability, language, or background.