

Common Core State Standards Assessment Consortia

Introduction

At this meeting, representatives of the PARCC and SBAC Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Assessment Consortia will discuss several topics on which they are working that are of interest to the Governing Board. This discussion will be in a moderated question and answer format. After brief introductory remarks, the questions provided below will be responded to by Joe Willhoft, representing the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), and Jeff Nellhaus, representing the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Once Mr. Nellhaus and Mr. Willhoft have provided initial responses to the questions for each topic area, Board members may ask follow-up questions before going on to the next topic area.

DISCUSSION TOPICS/QUESTIONS

1. **Inclusion/Accommodation Policies:** What are the current decisions about the inclusion of students with disabilities in the consortia assessments and the accommodations that would be permitted for students, especially in reading? How have you determined which accommodations provide the most valid assessment of the CCSS constructs?
2. **Technology-Based Assessments:** How is the planning progressing for the use of computers and other devices to administer the CCSS assessments (lessons learned)? How ready will your member states/districts/schools be for technology-based testing in 2013-14? 2014-15? Since the assessments being developed are utilizing technology-enhanced items, how will you be addressing the construct differences that may occur when paper-based tests are used?
3. **Survey Questions:** What kind of consideration, if any, has been given to asking students and others “non-cognitive” questions? For example, questions that might provide insight about background experiences or characteristics, affective skills, education-related experiences in and out of the classroom, and/or the implementation of the CCSS?

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A provides background information on the establishment of the two Common Core State Standards Assessment Consortia as well as the two consortia addressing alternate assessments for students with disabilities. It also includes information on the work being done on English language learner assessments via the ASSETS consortium, but does not include summary information on the ELDA21 consortium, both of which were addressed at our May Board meeting in L.A.

Attachment B includes a brief summary about PARCC and the bio for the presenter, Jeff Nellhaus.

Attachment C includes a brief summary about SBAC and the bio for the presenter, Joe Willhoft.

Background

The Race to the Top Assessment Program, authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), provided funding to consortia of States to develop assessments that are valid, support and inform instruction, provide accurate information about what students know and can do, and measure student achievement against standards designed to ensure that all students gain the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and the workplace. These assessments are intended to play a critical role in educational systems; provide administrators, educators, parents, and students with the data and information needed to continuously improve teaching and learning; and help meet the President's goal of restoring, by 2020, the nation's position as the world leader in college graduates.

In September of 2010, the U.S. Department of Education awarded two Comprehensive Assessment Systems grants to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortia (SBAC). The consortia are to develop and implement assessment systems by the 2014-2015 school year. In addition, PARCC and SBAC were each provided a supplemental grant award to support the work in their approved application and to successfully transition to the new standards and assessments. Each received a supplemental grant award to include activities that focused on:

- Developing gap analyses between current and new standards, curriculum analysis tools, professional development related to the new standards and assessments including support for educators to better understand the content of the new standards, state and local assessment audits to determine what assessments will no longer be needed.
- Enhancing technology to be used in the assessments systems, including assessment delivery.
- Supporting educator understanding and use of assessment results, and other steps needed to build the professional capacity to implement more rigorous common standards.

On January 7, 2011, PARCC and SBAC each entered into a Cooperative Agreement with the Department regarding these grants. The agreement is intended to provide for substantial communication, coordination, and involvement between the Department and the grantee to ensure the success of the grant.

Also in 2010 the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education offered competitive grants to spur the development of a new generation of alternate assessments for students with disabilities to be jointly developed and used by groups of states. Grants were awarded to two consortia — the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment Consortium (DLM) and the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC). These new alternate assessments will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and are expected to fit cohesively within the comprehensive assessment systems under development PARCC and SBAC. Both DLM and NCSC are to be ready for use by the 2014-15 school year, the same year in which the comprehensive assessment systems will be operational.

- The Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment Consortium (DLM) received a \$22 million award. Thirteen (13) member states include Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin serving approximately 60,000 students who require an alternate assessment. The University of Kansas Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation (CETE) serves as the host, fiscal agent, and project management lead in partnership with member states and three additional partner organizations: the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on professional development and support materials;

Edvantia, Inc., on alternate standards definitions and project evaluation; and The Arc on the reporting system and dissemination.

- The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) received a \$45 million award. Nineteen (19) member states/jurisdictions include Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Pacific Assessment Consortium (PAC-6), Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wyoming serving approximately 90,000 students who participate in an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. The National Center for Educational Outcomes at the University of Minnesota is the host fiscal agent and leads the Project Management Team. Four additional organizations also provide leadership: UKY on professional development; NCIEA on assessment design; UNCC on curriculum and instruction; and edCount, LLC, on evaluation.

To support the development of English proficiency assessments, the U.S. Department of Education's 2011 competitive Enhanced Assessment Grant provided funding for the development of new assessments by a state consortium. In September 2011 the sole award of \$10.5 million was given to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in collaboration with the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. The assessment system under development, called Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems (ASSETS) is to be ready for use by the 2015-16 school year. Twenty-nine (29) member states/jurisdictions include Alabama, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. WIDA at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research serves as the project management partner. Other organizations have major responsibilities. They include: the Center for Applied Linguistics for item and test development; WestEd for accommodations, validation, and interoperability; the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) for language learning progressions development and validation research; Data Recognition Corporation for field testing; and MetriTech for scoring.

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)

<http://www.PARCConline.org>

Jeff Nellhaus

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a consortium of 21 states and the District of Columbia working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. These new K-12 assessments will build a pathway to college and career readiness by the end of high school, mark students' progress toward this goal from 3rd grade up, and provide teachers with timely information to inform instruction and provide student support. The PARCC assessments will be ready for states to administer during the 2014-15 school year. PARCC received a \$186 million grant through the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top assessment competition to support the development and design of the next-generation assessment system.

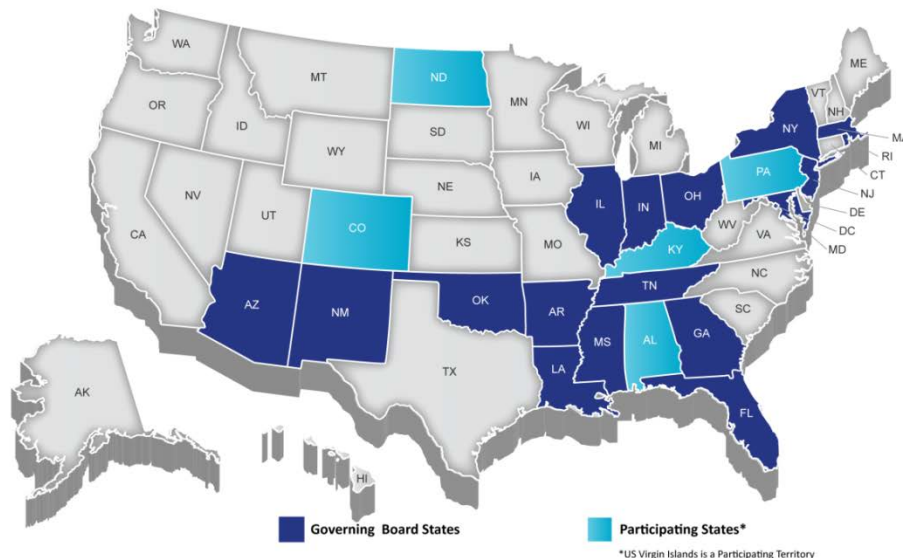
The PARCC Vision

PARCC states have committed to building a K-12 assessment system that:

- Builds a pathway to college and career readiness for all students,
- Creates high-quality assessments that measure the full range of the Common Core State Standards,
- Supports educators in the classroom,
- Makes better use of technology in assessments, and
- Advances accountability at all levels.

PARCC States

Collectively the 21 states and District of Columbia in PARCC educate about 24 million students and include 16 of the 22 Race to the Top winners. The PARCC states include: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Tennessee.



PARCC 2013-2013 Progress

In the past year, PARCC has made significant progress to build its assessment system by contracting with vendors for the following:

- Creating the architecture to build PARCC assessment technology infrastructure
- Development of assessment items and tasks
- Facilitation and management of Educator Leader Cadres
- Item tryouts, field test & operational forms construction
- Project Management

Biography of Jeffrey Nellhaus

Jeffrey Nellhaus joined Achieve as Director of PARCC Assessment. PARCC (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) is one of two state consortia that received Race to the Top Assessment Grants to design and develop next generation student assessment systems based on the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts & Literacy and Mathematics.

Before joining Achieve, Mr. Nellhaus spent nearly 25 years with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education where he held the positions of Deputy Commissioner, Acting Commissioner, and Associate Commissioner for Curriculum and Assessment. While at the MA DESE, Mr. Nellhaus directed the design, development and implementation of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), and the development of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, which include the Common Core State Standards. For his work on MCAS he was awarded the Manuel Carballo Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service.

Mr. Nellhaus has served on the National Validity Studies Panel to National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) and on Technical Advisory Committees for the states of Maine, Kentucky and Rhode Island. He has also served on the Technical Advisory Committee on Standard Setting for NAEP and on the Growth Model Peer Review Panel for the U.S. Department of Education.

Prior to joining the Massachusetts Department of Education, Mr. Nellhaus was a Peace Corps Volunteer in India, taught chemistry and mathematics in a public high school in Vermont, and directed a federally-funded educational program in Thailand for Cambodian and Laotian refugees preparing to resettle in the U.S.

Mr. Nellhaus holds a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Massachusetts, a M.S. in Science Teaching from Antioch Graduate School of Education, and an Ed.M. in Administration, Policy and Planning from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)

Joe Willhoft

The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) is a national consortium of states that have been working collaboratively since December 2009 to develop a student assessment system aligned to a common core of academic content standards to apply for a Race-to-the-Top Assessment grant. On Sept. 2, 2010, the SBAC was awarded a four-year \$176 million Race to the Top assessment grant by the US Department of Education (USED) to develop a student assessment system aligned to a common core of academic standards.

SBAC will create state-of-the-art adaptive online exams, using “open source” technology. The online system will provide accurate assessment information to teachers and others on the progress of all students, including those with disabilities, English language learners and low- and high-performing students. The system will include:

1. the required summative exams (offered twice each school year);
2. optional formative, or benchmark, exams; and
3. a variety of tools, processes and practices that teachers may use in planning and implementing informal, ongoing assessment. This will assist teachers in understanding what students are and are not learning on a daily basis so they can adjust instruction accordingly.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium now includes 20 Governing States and four Advisory States. The member states include Alaska, California*, Connecticut*, Delaware*, Hawaii*, Idaho*, Iowa*, Kansas*, Maine*, Michigan*, Missouri*, Montana*, Nevada*, New Hampshire*, North Carolina*, North Dakota, Oregon*, Pennsylvania, South Carolina*, South Dakota*, Vermont*, Washington*, West Virginia*, Wisconsin*, and Wyoming (*Denotes Governing State). The U.S. Virgin Islands is an affiliate member of SBAC. A full list of member states is available online:

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/about/member-states/>.

Smarter Balanced member states educate more than 19 million of the nation’s public K to 12 students. These states share a commitment to developing a next-generation assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards that provide educators with meaningful feedback and actionable data.

Biography of Joe Willhoft

Mr. Willhoft is the Executive Director of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, one of two federally-funded consortia that are developing a new generation of state assessment systems aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Prior to this appointment he was the assistant superintendent for assessment and student information for the state of Washington. His responsibilities included design and implementation of Washington’s assessment program and collection and reporting of student information for the state’s longitudinal data system. Before working at the state level, Joe directed assessment and evaluation activities at the district level for more than twenty years, primarily in Tacoma Public Schools in Washington and in Maryland.

Joe earned his doctorate in educational measurement and statistics from the University of Maryland. He is past president of the Maryland Assessment Group, the Washington Educational Research Association, and the American Educational Research Association Classroom Assessment Special Interest Group. He

has been involved in multiple collaborative data and assessment efforts, including having served on technical advisory committees in several states and the Technical Work Group for the most-recent congressionally-mandated evaluation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). He currently co-chairs the NAEP Policy Advisory Task Force, a collaborative effort of the National Assessment Governing Board and the Council of Chief State School Officers.