



Frequently Asked Questions Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments



January 14, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

Introductory information about the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment System is now available. **The Interim Assessments will be released in late January 2015.** We have compiled a two-part, user friendly Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for busy leaders and teachers. The chart below summarizes information about the Interim Assessments. More information about the Interim Assessments, available training materials, and other resources are available on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Web site: and the CSDE Smarter Balanced Assessment Portal: <http://ct.portal.airast.org/>

The FAQ is paired with concise “jargon-free” answers and contains “considerations” and “cautions” for district and school leaders. Brief informational tables below provide leaders with a quick overview of the available Interim Assessments. For more information regarding Interim Assessments, please contact

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Sincerely,

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<p>What is the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment?</p>	<p>The interim assessments are one of the three major components of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System—along with the end-of-year summative assessments in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, and a Digital Library of formative assessment tools and practices that support classroom instruction</p>	<p><u>Considerations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two options for the interim assessments: Interim Comprehensive Assessment and Interim Assessment Blocks
<p>What is the purpose of Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments?</p>	<p>Interim Assessments are designed to support teaching and learning throughout the year. The Interim Assessments can inform instruction by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measuring global progress of early and midyear performance • identifying areas of strength and weakness • assessing skills of incoming students 	<p><u>Considerations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of Interim Assessments is a local decision. The CSDE provides Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments as a resource to all Connecticut public schools and districts • Interim Comprehensive and Block Assessments are not mandated • Educators should weigh the need for measuring progress using the Interim Assessments against the need for time spent on instruction • Interim assessment results can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ inform teachers’ student goals/ objectives if mutually agreed upon by an educator and his or her evaluator ○ help set goals for individual students ○ provide progress updates on the mastery of the CT Core Standards in ELA/literacy and mathematics <p><u>Cautions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim assessments are global measures of progress; they are not necessarily predictive of summative assessment results

What training will the CSDE provide for the administration, scoring, and interpretation of Interim Assessments?

- The CSDE will provide three sets of Interim Assessment workshops across CT in each of the following months: May, June, August, September, and October 2015. Scheduled dates and locations are below. Each workshop will allow a maximum of 150 participants. Workshop registration information will be forthcoming.

Interim Assessment Workshops Dates and Locations

ITBD 185 Main Street New Britain, CT	May 28
	June 5
	August 10
	September 8
	October 5

Trumbull Marriott Merritt Parkway 180 Hawley Lane Trumbull, CT	May 26
	June 1
	August 3
	September 9
	September 30

Norwich Vicinity Venue TBD	May 27
	June 3
	August 4
	September 10
	October 8

- Districts will have full access to all Smarter Balanced online training modules and materials focused on the administration, scoring, and interpretation of Interim Assessments at <http://ct.portal.airast.org/>

Considerations:

- Workshops will accommodate 150 participants and additional registration information will be forthcoming
- If pursuing the use of Interim Assessments prior to CSDE training, districts should be aware that extensive training is required in the administration, rubrics, and hand-scoring of constructed response items using an electronic platform, as well as reporting and data interpretation
 - Extensive online training, resources, and materials are available through the Smarter Balanced Consortium
 - An individual or team should be designated to lead the local effort to develop experience and to provide/facilitate professional learning using the Interim Assessments
- Interim Assessments require both training time for educators and testing time for students. Leaders and educators are strongly encouraged to weigh the need for measuring progress in this manner this year against the need for critical time spent on instruction prior to the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment
- If pursuing Interim Assessment administration in the 2014-15 school year, decisions concerning the use of Interim Assessments should take into account how results will be used and communicated to stakeholders
 - In establishing student learning goals/objectives in teacher evaluation, multiple measures of progress may include Interim Comprehensive or Interim Block Assessment results, if mutually agreed upon by the educator and his or her evaluator

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional resources can be found in the Smarter Balanced Digital Library: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://sso.smarterbalanced.org/auth/UI/Login ○ Understanding the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments ○ Using Interim Assessment Blocks to Support Teaching and Learning ○ Understanding the Smarter Balanced Assessment System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Careful planning is required for the data use and reporting of individual or aggregated results ○ Online professional learning includes training modules, resources, and materials, and are available through the Smarter Balanced Consortium
<p>What other assessment training and support does the CSDE provide for districts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CSDE is also providing regional workshops titled “Connecting the Claims to Classroom Instruction,” focusing on the how the Smarter Balanced “Claims” are derived from the Common Core State Standards and represent reporting categories for the summative and interim assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Claims are broad statements of the assessment system’s learning outcomes, each of which requires evidence that articulates the types of data/observations that will support interpretations of competence ○ Each claim is accompanied by a set of assessment targets that provide more detail about the range of content and Depth of Knowledge levels • Participants in these trainings will have the opportunity to engage in activities to better understand what students need to know and be able to do to demonstrate mastery of the standards 	<p><u>Considerations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSDE recommends sending educators to one of the “Connecting the Claims to Classroom Instruction” workshops to build a more in-depth understanding of the CT Core Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessment prior to using the Interim Assessments <p><u>Cautions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarizing students and teachers with the Smarter Balanced summative assessment can be achieved through the Practice Tests and Training Tests available on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Web site

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Watch for upcoming announcements on workshops at our PD Page http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=1955 	
<p>For the 2014-15 school year, how are the Interim Assessments structured?</p>	<p>There are <u>two types</u> of Interim Assessments:</p> <p>1. <u>Interim Comprehensive Assessments</u> (“Comprehensives”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are fully accessible to students ● Are in fixed form (not computer adaptive) ● Are designed using the same ELA and mathematics claims and assessment targets as the summative assessment ● Are available for students in Grades 3 through high school ● Any grade can be used, depending on purpose 	<p><u>Considerations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decisions about Interim Comprehensive Assessment choice and frequency are determined locally by districts, schools, and educators ● The content of the Interim Comprehensive Assessment is based on “claims” and “targets” that are drawn from, and align to, the CT Core Standards in Grades 3-8 and high school ● Educators should have clarity regarding the purpose of the assessment and the uses of the assessment data before committing to the use of Interim Assessments ● Based on the purpose of the assessment for instructional planning, any grade level Interim Comprehensive Assessment may be used (e.g., a Grade 7 Interim Comprehensive Assessment can be administered above or below Grade 7) ● Districts or schools should consider the time needed for classroom instruction in the standards vs. the time needed for test administration of the Interim Comprehensives <p><u>Cautions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interim Comprehensive Assessments mirror the full summative assessment ● Interim Comprehensive Assessments are untimed tests, however average administration times are similar to the summative grade level administration
	<p>2. <u>Interim Assessment Blocks</u> (“Blocks”)</p>	<p><u>Considerations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decisions about Interim Block Assessment choice and frequency

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are in fixed form (not computer adaptive) • Are shorter assessments focusing on fewer assessment targets • Address more specific areas of the content • Are available for students in Grades 3-8 and high school • Any grade may be used, depending on purpose 	<p>are determined by local districts, schools, and educators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators should have clarity regarding the purpose of the assessment and the uses of the assessment data before committing to the use of Interim Block Assessments • Content of the Interim Block Assessment is based on “claims” and “targets” that are drawn from and align to the CT Core Standards in Grades 3-8 and high school • Based on the purpose of the assessment for instructional planning, any grade level Interim Block Assessment may be used (e.g., a Grade 7 Interim Comprehensive Assessment can be administered above or below Grade 7) • Interim Block Assessments may be very useful when aligned with curriculum units that address the same content <p>Cautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim Blocks are untimed tests, however average administration time ranges from 30-60 minutes per block
<p>Are the Interim Assessment test items the same as the Summative Assessment test items?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Interim Assessment test items are the <u>same</u> as the summative test items, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ all items were developed together ○ all items assess the claims and targets aligned to the CT Core Standards ○ all items designed and developed using Universal Design principles ○ all items have the same accessibility resources ○ all items provide evidence to support claims in mathematics and English language arts/ literacy 	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim Comprehensives and Interim Blocks can be administered multiple times during the school year • Both Interim Comprehensives and Interim Blocks draw from the same pool of items, therefore students may see some of the same items more than once <p>Cautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim assessment items could become over-exposed through repeated use • Repeated use may negatively impact the validity in measuring true progress

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Interim Assessment items are <i>different</i> from the summative assessment items, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ interim assessment items are kept in a separate, non-secure pool ○ teachers may review the interim items and their students' responses to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the interim items are non-secure; items are not intended for public disclosure (e.g. posting on a public web-site)
<p>What else should I know about the Interim Assessment test items?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Interim assessment items are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ fully accessible for all students ○ presented only in fixed form online tests in 2014-15, but will become adaptive as the item bank grows (earliest expected in Fall 2015, but dependent on item availability) • Interim Comprehensive Assessments for both ELA/literacy and mathematics are available in the 2014-15 school year • Interim Assessment Blocks are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ available for use, but dependent on item availability in the interim pool 	<p><u>Considerations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of Interim Assessments is a local decision. The CSDE provides Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments as a resource to all Connecticut public schools and districts • The Interim Assessments are not mandated by state or federal law • Educators should weigh the need for measuring progress using the Interim Assessments against the need for time spent on instruction <p><u>Cautions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If assessment reduction is a priority in the district, clarity regarding the purpose and use of Interim Assessments (either as an addition or as a replacement) is critical • Interim Assessment results should not be used as a sole measure of student progress, but may be one of multiple measures of student progress • Not all assessment items are available in the Interim Comprehensive or Interim Block Assessments in 2014-15 (see tables 1 – 4 for more information). • Districts, schools and educators may choose to use the remainder of 2014-15 for professional learning/ informed decision-making about the use of Interim Assessment and

		careful planning for district-wide professional learning for all educators, prior to the use of Interim Assessments
How are the Interim Assessments administered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim Comprehensive and Interim Block Assessments use the same delivery software (browser) as the summative assessment • Interim Comprehensive and Interim Block Assessments are fixed-form online tests and will become adaptive as item bank grows (anticipated in fall 2015) 	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local decision-making is required regarding the control/release of Interim Assessments at the district, school, or classroom level
How are the Interim Assessments scored?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most items are machine-scored • Both Interim Comprehensive and Interim Block Assessments have some items that are not machine-scored • Scoring of non-machine scored items is a district’s responsibility • A Teacher Hand Scoring System will be provided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the same scoring rules are used as in the summative assessment ○ all training materials to score test items will be provided 	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and decision-making is required regarding how training in scoring, as well as scoring calibration and fidelity, will be conducted and maintained locally • Finding time for training and the calibration of scoring must be considered as part of the learning process • Item availability for the Interim Block Assessments is found in Tables 1-4 beginning on page 10 • Scoring information for the Interim Comprehensive Assessments is found in Table 5 on page 12 • Scoring information for the Interim Block Assessments is found in Table 6-7 on page 13 <p>Cautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While hand scoring, using a rubric, is not new to CT educators, and was a standard component of CMT and CAPT assessment, districts should expect a learning curve for the Smarter Balanced hand scored items

<p>How are the Interim Assessments results reported?</p>	<p>Interim Comprehensive Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results are reported as overall scale scores, performance level designation, and claim score information • Reports come from the CSDE Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) • See figures 1-2 on page 15 for sample reports <p>Interim Block Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results are reported as “Below Standard, “At/Near Standard,” and “Above Standard” • Reports come from the CSDE Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) 	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of the assessment should be clear to involved stakeholders • Determinations should be made prior to the use of the Interim Comprehensive or Interim Block Assessments, concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ access to the reports available and whether educators will be trained in interpreting assessment results ○ the use of reports for evaluating programs or schools ○ the use of reports in the educator evaluation and support system established in the district ✓ Multiple measures of progress may include Interim Assessment results if mutually agreed upon by the educator and his or her evaluator ○ parent notification and reports, as well as parent guide for interpreting reports • Planning and decision making is required at the local level prior to using reports <p>Cautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful planning is required for the data use and reporting of individual or aggregated results
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AVAILABLE INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Table 1. 2014-15 AVAILABLE INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENTS - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

GRADE 3 - 5	GRADE 6 - 8	HIGH SCHOOL
Read Literary Texts	Read Literary Texts	Read Literary Texts
Read Informational Texts	Read Informational Texts	Read Informational Texts
Edit/Revise	Edit/Revise	Edit/Revise
Brief Writes	Brief Writes	Brief Writes
Listen/Interpret	Listen/Interpret	Listen/Interpret
Research	Research	Research
Narrative Performance Task <i>* Grade 4-5 only in 2014-15</i>	Narrative Performance Task <i>*Not available in 2014-15</i>	---
Informational Performance Task <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Explanatory Performance Task <i>*Not available in 2014-15</i>	Explanatory Performance Task <i>*Not available in 2014-15</i>
Opinion Performance Task <i>* Grade 3 only in 2014-15</i>	Argument Performance Task	Argument Performance Task

Table 2. 2014-15 AVAILABLE INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENTS - MATHEMATICS

GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5
Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Operations and Algebraic Thinking
Numbers and Operations in Base 10 <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Numbers and Operations in Base 10	Numbers and Operations in Base 10
Fractions	Fractions	Fractions
---	Geometry <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Geometry <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>
Measurement and Data	Measurement and Data <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Measurement and Data <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>
Mathematics Performance Task	Mathematics Performance Task	Mathematics Performance Task

Table 3. 2014-15 AVAILABLE INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENTS - MATHEMATICS

GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
Ratio and Proportional Relationships	Ratio and Proportional Relationships	Expressions & Equations I (and Proportionality) **
Number System	Number System	Expressions & Equations II **
Expressions and Equations	Expressions and Equations	Functions
Geometry	Geometry <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Geometry
Statistics and Probability <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Statistics and Probability <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Mathematics Performance Task
Mathematics Performance Task	Mathematics Performance Task	---

**** Available as a single Expressions & Equations Block in Grade 8 in 2014-2015**

Table 4. 2014-15 AVAILABLE INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENTS - MATHEMATICS

HIGH SCHOOL		
Algebra and Functions - Linear Functions	Geometry - Transformations in Geometry <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Interpreting Categorical and Quantitative Data <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>
Algebra and Functions - Quadratic Functions	Geometry - Right Triangle Ratios in Geometry	Probability <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>
Algebra and Functions - Exponential Functions	Geometry - Three - Dimensional Geometry <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Making Inferences and Justifying Conclusions <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>
Algebra and Functions - Polynomials Functions <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Geometry – Proofs <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Mathematics Performance Task
Algebra and Functions - Radicals Functions <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Geometry – Circles <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	
Algebra and Functions - Rational Functions <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	Geometry – Applications <i>* Not available in 2014-15</i>	

INTERIM ASSESSMENT SCORING INFORMATION

**Table 5. INTERIM COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT - HAND SCORED VS. MACHINE SCORED ITEMS
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS**

Grade	Subject	Test Name	CAT Short Answer	Performance Task Short Answer	Performance Task Essay	Total Items
3	ELA	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	3	2	1	47
	Mathematics	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	0	4	0	37
4	ELA	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	3	2	1	48
	Mathematics	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	0	3	0	36
5	ELA	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	3	2	1	47
	Mathematics	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	0	2	0	37
6	ELA	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	3	2	1	49
	Mathematics	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	0	2	0	36
7	ELA	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	3	2	1	49
	Mathematics	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	0	2	0	37
8	ELA	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	3	2	1	49
	Mathematics	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	0	2	0	37
11	ELA	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	3	2	1	46
	Mathematics	Interim Comprehensive Assessment	1	4	0	39

Table 6. INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENTS - HAND SCORE COUNT VS. TOTAL ITEMS				
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS				
Grade	Assessment Block	Short Answer	Essay	Total Items
3	Reading Literary Text	1		15
	Reading Informational Text	1		16
	Edit and Revise	0		15
	Brief Writes	6		6
	Listen and Interpret	0		15
	Research	0		17
	Opinion Performance Task	2	1	4
4	Reading Literary Text	1		15
	Reading Informational Text	1		14
	Edit and Revise	0		16
	Brief Writes	6		6
	Listen and Interpret	0		15
	Research	0		18
	Narrative Performance Task	2	1	4
5	Reading Literary Text	1		15
	Reading Informational Text	1		15
	Edit and Revise	0		13
	Brief Writes	6		6
	Listen and Interpret	0		14
	Research	0		17
	Narrative Performance Task	2	1	4
6	Reading Literary Text	1		15
	Reading Informational Text	1		16
	Edit and Revise	0		18
	Brief Writes	6		6
	Listen and Interpret	0		15
	Research	0		18
	Argument Performance Task	2	1	4
7	Reading Literary Text	1		16
	Reading Informational Text	1		16
	Edit and Revise	0		17
	Brief Writes	6		6
	Listen and Interpret	0		15
	Research	0		15
	Argument Performance Task	2	1	4
8	Reading Literary Text	1		16
	Reading Informational Text	1		16
	Edit and Revise	0		14
	Brief Writes	6		6

	Listen and Interpret	0		15
	Research	0		17
	Argument Performance Task	2	1	4
11	Reading Literary Text	1		16
	Reading Informational Text	1		15
	Edit and Revise	0		18
	Brief Writes	6		6
	Listen and Interpret	0		15
	Research	0		17
	Explanatory Performance Task	2	1	

TABLE 7. INTERIM BLOCK ASSESSMENTS - HAND SCORE COUNT VS. TOTAL ITEMS MATHEMATICS			
Grade	Assessment Block	Hand-scored Items	Total Items
3	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	0	15
	Fractions	0	13
	Measurement and Data	0	15
	Mathematics Performance Task	4	
4	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	0	15
	Numbers and Operations in Base 10	0	15
	Fractions	0	16
	Mathematics Performance Task	3	
5	Measurement and Data	0	14
	Numbers and Operations in Base 10	0	16
	Fractions	0	15
	Mathematics Performance Task	2	
6	Ratio and Proportional Relationships	0	14
	Expressions and Equations	0	15
	Geometry	0	13
	Mathematics Performance Task	2	
7	Ratio and Proportional Relationships	0	
	Number System	0	14
	Expressions and Equations	0	15
	Mathematics Performance Task	2	14
8	Expressions & Equations II Block	0	14
	Functions Block	0	15
	Geometry Block	0	14
	Mathematics Performance Task	2	
11	Algebra and Functions - Linear Functions	0	15
	Algebra and Functions - Quadratic Functions	0	12
	Geometry - Right Triangle Ratios in Geometry	0	13
	Mathematics Performance Task	4	

SAMPLE INTERIM COMPREHENSIVE REPORTS

Figure 1. Sample Class Report – Interim Comprehensive Assessment - Overview

Students	Mathematics Overall	ELA/Literacy Overall
Student A	1300	1405
Student B	1457	1541
Student C	1465	2016
Student D	1577	1960
Student E	1723	1656
Student F	1741	1805
Student G	1783	1778
Student H	1826	1850
Student I	1829	1398

Figure 2. Sample Individual Report – Interim Comprehensive Assessment - Mathematics

Mathematics
Interim Comprehensive
2014 - 2015
Effective Date: 12/13/2014

The scale, units, and cut-scores are illustrative and are expected to change. Score summaries will be revised in Summer 2014, and tailored by grade and subject in terms of the knowledge, skills, and processes that you have demonstrated you can do.

Colleges and universities may use Smarter Balanced scores as evidence of student readiness for entry-level, credit-bearing courses. For more information, visit <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/higher->

Overall Score
1741 **Partial Understanding**

Draft score summary: A student at Level 2 demonstrates **Partial Understanding of and ability to apply** the mathematics knowledge and skills needed for success in college and careers, as specified in the Common Core State Standards.

1200 1400 1800 2100 2400
Error Band

π Concepts & Procedures
At/Near Standard
Students can explain and apply mathematical concepts and carry out mathematical procedures with precision and fluency.

Problem Solving and Modeling & Data Analysis
At/Near Standard
Students can solve a range of complex, well-posed problems in pure and applied mathematics, making productive use of knowledge and problem-solving strategies. Students can analyze complex, real-world scenarios and can construct and use mathematical models to interpret and solve problems.

Communicating Reasoning
Below Standard
Students can clearly and precisely construct viable arguments to support their own reasoning and to critique the reasoning of others.