Understanding Smarter Balanced Scores and Reports
September 13, 2018 Q&A

Q: Are we ever going to get more information [from the state] to drive instruction other than claim data per student or target data as a class?
A: Yes, Digital Library resources and interim assessments are available from the state. Digital Library resources use a formative assessment process to gather information on student learning and move learning forward. Interim assessments provide information on specific skills in the standards. Teachers can see interim questions students get correct and incorrect, including student answers. For more information about how these resources are used in your district, please contact your District Assessment Coordinator.

Claim data is also available at the classroom, school, and district levels in the Online Reporting System (ORS). Target data is also available at the school and district levels in ORS. Claim and target data at these levels and over time can inform a system of instruction that can benefit all students.

Local instruction and assessment materials remain the best tools to drive instruction. Digital Library resources, interim assessments, and summative assessment data can supplement these local materials.

Q: We would love to see data drilled down to the standard. This is the only way this will be truly useful.
A: As a sampling of a year’s worth of instruction, the summative assessment cannot provide standard-level data. A student may only see 1 or maybe 2 questions aligned to a specific standard, and many questions are aligned to multiple standards. Standard-level data is best gathered using local materials, Digital Library resources, and interim assessments.

Target reports for the summative test can supplement local materials as the targets are aligned to the standards. More information about the standards assessed in each target is available in the online Summative Blueprints for English language arts/literacy and math.

Q: The interim scores give more information for instruction than the summative.
A: Yes, the purpose of the interims assessments is to inform instruction. We encourage the use of interim assessments and Digital Library resources to gather information on student learning. As stated on the Smarter Balanced Assessment webpage:

Optional interim assessments allow teachers to check student progress throughout the year, giving them information they can use to improve their instruction and help students meet the challenge of college- and career-ready standards. These tools are used at the discretion of schools and districts, and teachers can employ them to check students’ progress at mastering
specific concepts at strategic points during the school year. The interim assessments consist of the following features:

- **Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs)** that test the same content and report scores on the same scale as the summative assessments.
- **Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs)** that focus on smaller sets of related concepts and provide more detailed information for instructional purposes.
- **High-quality test questions** that are developed in the same way as those used for the summative assessments.
- **Questions that can be machine scored by the Smarter Balanced Test Delivery Engine** (some questions such as constructed-response questions and performance tasks need to be scored by teachers locally).

**Q:** I am not seeing the writing broken down in conventions and elaboration scores in the Washington Assessment Management System (WAMS) this year. Why is that?

**A:** The District Assessment Coordinators (DAC) can work with OSPI assessment analysts to explore what data is available in WAMS. If you are not seeing data you are expecting or seeing issues with the data in WAMS, please contact your DAC.

Educators can also directly access assessment data in the Online Reporting System (ORS). In the Retrieve Student Results section of ORS, writing scores for purpose/organization, elaboration/evidence, and conventions are included in the Student Data report. This data can be exported for groups, such as classes or grades. If you have questions about the data in ORS, please contact your DAC or email the OSPI assessment content staff.

**Q:** Why include the standard error (+/-) score for parents? This is very difficult to explain where they understand it.

**A:** The standard error (+/-) is included for transparency of the assessment system. It shows that with all measurement, there is variability.

The most common misconception about the +/- is that the student’s “actual” score is the scale score plus the value shown with the +/- . The +/- represents likely scores if the student were to test multiple times. There is text on the ISR about the +/- score to help inform parents.

When communicating with parents about a student’s test result, direct them to the scale score as the actual score. On the Individual Student Report (ISR), this scale score is printed in large font on the left side of the report. This is the student’s score.

Explaining the +/- part of the score report was one purpose of the webinar. We hope the text on the ISR and this webinar can support an explanation to parents.

**Q:** Can families opt their students out [of summative testing]?

**A:** No, there is no “opt out” for summative testing. Parents can refuse to have their student participate in testing as they can do for any educational activity.
Test refusals penalize schools and districts. Students who don't test are counted among the number of students who don't meet standard. This is reflected in the Accountability Index. Schools and districts that fall below a 95 percent participation rate on state tests are not eligible for any state or federal awards or recognitions.

Here are some thoughts on encouraging parents to have their child participate in state testing:

- Test results help families know if their child's learning is on track or if extra help is needed.
- Some school districts use state test results to determine a student's eligibility for special programs, such as accelerated learning opportunities.
- High school students must pass certain state assessments, or their approved alternatives, to be eligible to graduate.
- High school students who demonstrate proficiency by earning a level 3 or 4 on Smarter Balanced may avoid further placement testing and costly remedial courses upon acceptance into college, university, or community and technical college.

Q: Does the state plan to offer Individual Student Reports (ISRs) in additional languages other than English and Spanish in the near future?
A: There is no plan for ISRs in additional languages for the 2018–19 school year. Additional languages is being considering for future school years.