

# Contractor Orientation

A presentation and reference guide for Smarter  
Balanced contractors



WestEd  
Project Management Partner (PMP)

Version 1.0



# Orientation Goals

- Meet the team and establish communications
- Describe the Consortium's governance, culture, and organizational structure
- Help contractors understand their roles, responsibilities, processes, and procedures
- Explain the Consortium's approach to contract management

# Table of Contents

- Overview
- Key Roles
- Communications and Review Process
- Contractor Expectations
- Consortium Contract Management
- Appendix

# Overview



# Overview

## Consortium Culture:

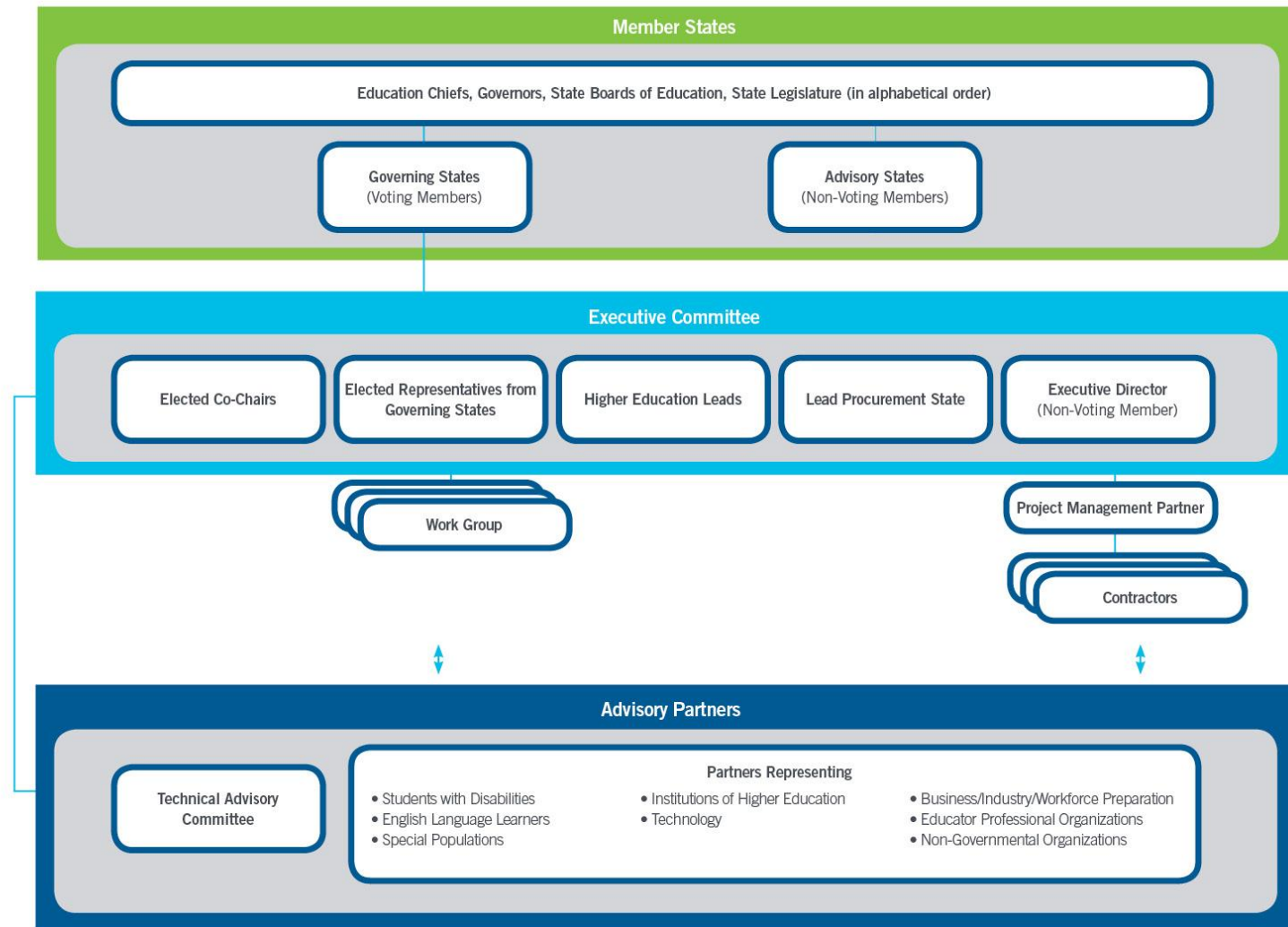
- State-Led
- Consensus-Driven
- Transparent
- Inclusive
- Collaborative



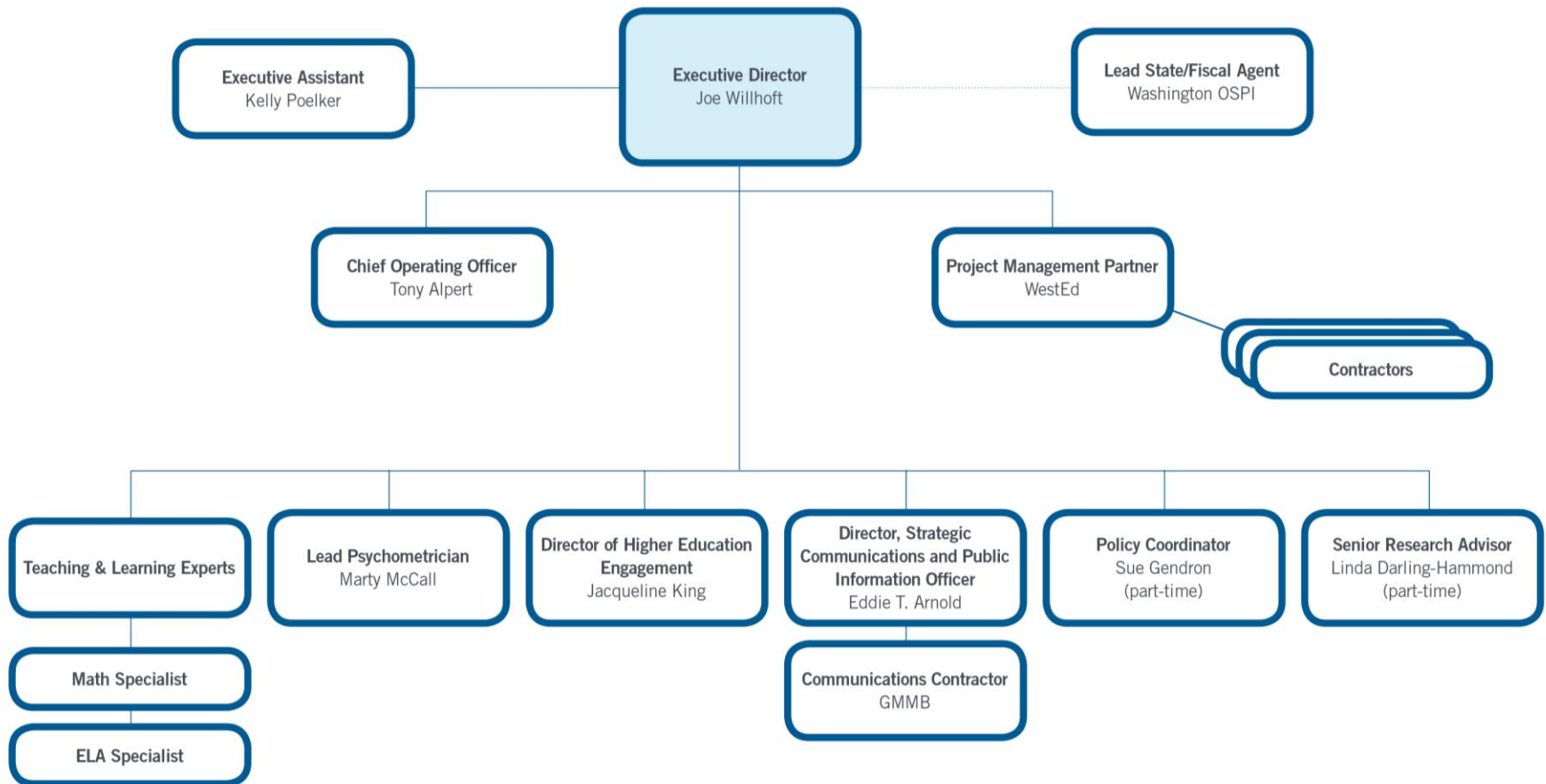
## Results in:

- Constant engagement of member states
- Consensus-based decision making
- Multi-level review processes
- Frequent, clear, and concise communications
- Standard processes and protocols

# Consortium Structure



# Consortium Structure – Office of the Executive Director



# Work Group Structure

Work Group Name	Description
<b>Accessibility and Accommodations (A&amp;A)</b>	Address accessibility and accommodations for summative, interim, and formative instruments; provide definitions and background information on target populations; create supporting documents and guidelines for implementation.
<b>Formative Assessment Practices and Professional Learning (Formative)</b>	Support states in planning and implementing professional development initiatives, creating formative tools and processes, and constructing practice guidelines and assessment frameworks.
<b>Item Development (ID)</b>	Address system design and development for summative and interim assessments.
<b>Performance Tasks (PT)</b>	Monitor and review the drafting and pilot/field testing of performance task specifications and development processes.
<b>Reporting (RPT)</b>	Address all areas involved with designing reports and interpreting data produced from the interim and summative assessments.
<b>Technology Approach (Tech)</b>	Review technology plans, serve as a requirements resource and deliverable review group for all technology development/procurement, and provide technology implementation guidance to member states.
<b>Test Administration (TA)</b>	Support states in the planning and development of procedures and ancillary materials necessary for test administration.
<b>Test Design (TD)</b>	Monitor and review the development of the summative and interim assessment test designs and related test design documents.
<b>Transition to Common Core State Standards (TCC)</b>	Support states in implementation of CCSS in ELA/literacy and mathematics for grades K–12 and transition to CCSS-based instruction and assessment.
<b>Validation and Psychometrics (V&amp;P)</b>	Address all areas involved with scoring, field test design, standard setting, psychometrics, and evaluation.

# Key Roles



# Governing Entities

Executive Committee–Voting Members	
Position	Incumbent(s)
<b>Executive Committee Co-Chairs</b>	Judy Park (UT) Carissa Miller (ID)
<b>Executive Committee (EC)</b>	Michael Hock (VT); Dan Hupp (ME); Joseph Martineau (MI); Lynette Russell (WI); Mike Middleton (WA); Charlie Lenth (SHEEO); vacancy (2-year higher education institutions)

Ex-Officio Members of Executive Committee	
Position	Incumbent(s)
<b>Senior Research Advisor</b>	Linda Darling-Hammond (Stanford University)
<b>Policy Coordinator</b>	Sue Gendron (former education commissioner of Maine)

Executive Staff	
Position	Staff
<b>Executive Director</b>	Joe Willhoft
<b>Chief Operating Officer</b>	Tony Alpert
<b>Lead Psychometrician</b>	Marty McCall
<b>Director of Higher Education Collaboration</b>	Jacqueline King
<b>Director of Strategic Communications and Public Information Officer</b>	Eddie Arnold
<b>English Language Arts Content Specialist</b>	To be hired
<b>Math Content Specialist</b>	To be hired

# Operational Management

State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)	
Position	Staff
Fiscal Agent	Mike Middleton
Project Manager	Debra Crawford
Program Level Vendors	
Position	Staff
Project Management Partner (PMP)	<b>WestEd</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stanley Rabinowitz (Sr. Project Director)</li> <li>• Christyan Mitchell (Sr. Project Manager)</li> <li>• Cindi Nicolas (Sr. Project Manager)</li> <li>• Ann Appert (Work Group Project Manager)</li> </ul>
	<b>GMMB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nathan James (Sr. Project Director)</li> </ul>
Communications Service Provider	

# Work Groups

## Work Group Members

Role	Description	Responsibilities
<b>Co-chairs</b> (2 per work group)	Organize and lead work group to accomplish the responsibilities of the work group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set the agenda and meeting schedule for work group and lead the work group meetings</li> <li>• Assign tasks within the work group</li> <li>• Represent work group at Consortium meetings, either in-person or virtually</li> </ul>
<b>Executive Committee Liaison</b> (1 per work group)	Brief EC on work group progress, risks, and issues to support achievement of the responsibilities of the work group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief EC on progress, issues, and risks</li> <li>• Bring recommendations to EC regarding the Consortium's core system components (i.e., adaptive summative assessment; adaptive interim assessment; formative tools, processes, and practices; and professional capacity building)</li> <li>• Serve as the work group's liaison to other work groups</li> </ul>
<b>Members</b> (4-6 per work group)	Accomplish the responsibilities of the work group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in all meetings</li> <li>• Complete assigned work</li> <li>• Contribute to overall goals of the work group</li> </ul>
<b>Project Management Partner (PMP)</b> (1 PMP Liaison and 1 PMP Coordinator per work group)	Provide project management support and coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and coordinate meetings</li> <li>• Monitor and track work plan status</li> <li>• Capture and support issue resolution and risk management</li> <li>• Track dependencies between work groups</li> <li>• Monitor contractor work               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Work plan review</li> <li>– Status tracking</li> <li>– Issue escalation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support RFP development and vendor contracting</li> </ul>

# Communications and Review Process



# Meetings and Communications

*Regular, consistent, and advance communications are a fundamental principle of the Consortium's operations. Contractors are expected to integrate contract-specific communications into the existing communication structures.*

## Meetings:

- Executive Committee (1st and 3rd Tuesdays)
- All States (2nd and 4th Tuesdays)
- Work Groups (weekly or bi-weekly)
- Work Group Leadership (last Friday of the month)
- Multi-Contractor Collaboration Conferences (bi-annually)

## Communications:

- Weekly updates (email)

# Review Process

*The review process used to discuss deliverables, issues, and decisions typically involves multiple levels of Consortium members.*

## Highlights

- Reviews of deliverables and issues often begin within the work groups and are then expanded to include other work groups as appropriate.
- State leads are given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on most deliverables.
- Review by external stakeholders may be requested for key deliverables (e.g., Content Specifications).

## Considerations

- Plan adequate time for review and feedback cycles within the work group and the state leads.
- Webinars are good vehicles for sharing information with the state leads.
- Adequate advance notice must be given prior to webinars, conference calls, or in-person meetings.
- Work with the work group co-chairs and PMP liaison to develop a comprehensive communication plan and schedule to support the review process.

# Information Access: Laws and Regulations

*It is the Consortium's intent to provide transparency and direct access to information; thus, all documents should be made available for external consumption throughout the development process. This includes access to approved drafts and final deliverables.*

## Information Requests

Washington law requires state and local agencies to make public records available to the public upon request. This law, the Washington State Public Records Act [RCW 42.56](#), supports the public's right to be informed about what their government is doing.

Special procedures shall be taken to ensure accurate receipt of and response to requests. Therefore, **all requests for public information shall be immediately routed to the Project Management Partner** via the PMP mailbox ([sbac@wested.org](mailto:sbac@wested.org)) with copies to the fiscal agent, State of Washington Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI).

Remember: All Smarter Balanced email communications, calendars, and website postings are subject to public requests.

## FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

All Consortium contractors and employees shall use best practices when handling, storing, and transmitting any student records created or obtained during the contract period.

# Contractor Expectations



# Contractor Expectations

*In the course of completing all components of the agreed-upon scope of work, it is expected that contractors perform the following standard project management activities.*

- **Provide required documentation**
  - List of all deliverables to be created
  - Draft and final versions of all contracted deliverables
- **Plan, manage, and monitor the progress of the work**
  - Work plan and schedule management
  - Status reporting and milestone tracking
  - Issues tracking and management
  - Communication scheduling and management
- **Leverage common tools and templates**
  - Smarter Balanced Google Docs Collaboration Site
  - Standard document templates (see appendix for list of available templates)
  - Smartsheet project management platform (managed by the Project Management Partner)

# Project Launch Activities

*After contract award, the contractor is responsible for initiating the following steps. Starting these key tasks immediately will ensure that stakeholders and contractors have the documents and tools in place to perform the contracted work.*

**Schedule kick-off meeting with work group leadership and the Project Management Partner to:**

- Review deliverable matrix
- Review work plan and schedule
- Discuss review, feedback, and approval processes for key deliverables
- Discuss any open operational questions the contractor may have

# Consortium Contract Management



# Consortium Contract Management

*The Consortium actively monitors contractor progress and activities in multiple capacities. These activities are performed through involvement of the fiscal agent, work group co-chairs, contract lead, and Project Management Partner.*

Areas of Activity	Example Activities
<b>Master Work Plan Management and Milestone Tracking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manage Master Work Plan</li><li>• Monitor contractor progress against milestones</li></ul>
<b>Status Reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create weekly program level status reports summarizing deliverable, phase, and milestone status against work plan, listing key accomplishments, upcoming activities, and issues</li><li>• Create monthly updates for the U.S. Department of Education</li><li>• Create Consortium-level quarterly reports</li></ul>
<b>Issue Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Log Consortium-level issues presented by contractors, work group, and executive staff</li><li>• Escalate and/or route issues/action items as appropriate</li><li>• Manage resolution process for program level issues and action items</li></ul>
<b>Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confirm cross-Consortium and cross-work group communication and event schedules</li><li>• Monitor events and communication methods; escalate scheduling issues as necessary</li><li>• Manage email distribution lists</li></ul>
<b>Project Management Protocols and Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish common tools, templates, and protocols for project management processes</li><li>• Manage access to internal Google Docs Collaboration Site</li></ul>
<b>Fiscal Contract Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review contractor invoices and confirm that associated activities and deliverables have been completed</li></ul>

# Appendix



# Appendix

- Working examples – contractor expectations
- Work plan development guidelines
- Available resources
- Abbreviations and acronyms

# Working Examples: Contractor Expectations

*The list below is intended as a working example of the expectations that may be required of a contractor. It is not an inclusive list and does not replace the deliverables and expectations set forth in the contract.*

Contractor Expectations	Requested Deliverables	Requested Frequency
<b>Provide Required Documentation</b>		
Provide products and/or services as specified in the contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deliverable List</b> of each contracted deliverable, its completion dates, review and approval process, and supporting communications</li> <li>• <b>Draft versions</b> of all documents presented in a timely manner for review and feedback</li> <li>• <b>Final versions</b> of fully reviewed and approved documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliverable Matrix is due within one week of contract start</li> <li>• Draft and final versions are due per Deliverable Matrix</li> </ul>
<b>Plan, manage, and monitor on the progress of the work</b>		
Create and maintain project materials that support planning and organizing a successful project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Work plan</b> of key activities, milestones, deliverables, responsible individuals, and durations/key dates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantive changes are not expected after contract execution</li> <li>• Any substantive updates to milestones or tasks within the work plan must be provided within 7 days of identification</li> </ul>
Document, review, escalate, and manage issues related to the work being performed or future phases of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Issue/Action Item Log</b> containing a list of all open and closed issues that pertain to the work being performed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues and Action Items are updated weekly</li> </ul>
Summarize deliverable, phase, and milestone status against work plan, listing key accomplishments, upcoming activities, and issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Status Report</b> summarizing accomplishments, upcoming activities, issues, and action items</li> <li>• <b>Milestone Updates</b> reporting the status of deliverables and milestones as listed in the work plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly for contracts that are less than or equal to 90 days in duration</li> <li>• Biweekly for contracts of greater than 90 days in duration</li> </ul>
Identify specific communication events, methods, audiences, dates, and approving entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communications Plan</b> listing and schedule of meetings, emails, and webinars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 10 days of contract start and updated either weekly or biweekly depending upon duration of the contract</li> </ul>

# Work Plan Development Guidelines



## Guidelines for developing work plans

- Work plans should be organized by phase and activity and include the associated deliverables, responsible parties, and duration.
- Stakeholder reviews should be clearly identified, including the vehicle (survey, email) used to capture feedback, and any associated communications.
- Contractors should account for multiple rounds of review and feedback stages. The review and approval processes will vary based upon the scope and complexity.
- Contractors should include time for edits or redrafting between review stages.
- Work plans must align with the Master Work Plan (MWP) outcomes and schedules. If MWP timelines cannot be met, or changes are recommended, the contractor must recommend alternate timelines and review them with OSPI and the Chief Operating Officer.

# Available Resources

*The following resources will be provided by the PMP to the contractor under separate email.*

- Communication Style Guide
- Templates are available for
  - Agendas
  - Meeting recaps
  - Status reports
  - Communication plans
  - Issues log
  - Deliverables matrix
  - Powerpoint Presentations

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation / Acronym	Description
<b>A&amp;A</b>	Accessibility and Accommodations Work Group
<b>COO</b>	Chief Operating Officer
<b>EC</b>	Executive Committee
<b>ED</b>	Executive Director
<b>FAPPL</b>	Formative Assessment Practices and Professional Learning Work Group
<b>GS</b>	Governing States
<b>ID</b>	Item Development Work Group
<b>PMP</b>	Project Management Partner
<b>PT</b>	Performance Tasks Work Group
<b>RPT</b>	Reporting Work Group
<b>TA</b>	Test Administration Work Group
<b>TCC</b>	Transition to Common Core State Standards Work Group
<b>TD</b>	Test Design Work Group
<b>Tech</b>	Technology Approach Work Group
<b>V&amp;P</b>	Validation and Psychometrics Work Group