



SAUSD's

Volume 1 Number 12

Getting to the **CORE**

Superior Standards - Positive School Climate - Successful Students

a newsletter for SAUSD educators

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We Caught you...



Upcoming Meetings

December 2012 - Quality Teaching for English Learners with Dr. Walqui informs SAUSD units of study.

CCSS Spotlight on Success

As part of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), SAUSD teachers are implementing "close reading" in all subject areas. The technique of close reading, or the thorough and careful analysis of text, is not new, but has now been highlighted with the CCSS focus on interdisciplinary literacy skills. The value of this approach to literacy is demonstrated by students' understanding of the importance of audience, purpose, and evidence when reading texts of all genres, from poetry to scientific journals.

CLAS Update

SAUSD's Certificated Learning & Achievement Specialists (CLAS) have embraced their leadership role in the implementation of the CCSS across the district. The dedicated teacher leaders are inspiring colleagues to accept the challenge to transform teaching & learning in order to prepare all students for college, career and community. The impact of the CLAS effort is palpable as students tackle complex text, academic language, and assessments with enthusiastic confidence.

Principal's Corner

The **high school** writing teams are scheduled to work with Quality Teaching with English Learners (QTEL) on December 18, 2012 and 19, 2012 and February 6, 2013 in the following content courses: Biology, US History, World History, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, 9th/10th English, 11th/12th English to develop their CCSS units of study.

News!

Congratulations to the 560 K-3 teachers who have implemented their first Common Core unit of study! The 4th and 5th grade teachers are next to finish!

K-12 Connection

Academic Vocabulary

As part of SAUSD's implementation of CCSS, K-12 teachers will use the "**vocabulary quadrant**" in their CC lesson plans. The quadrant follows research which reflects the best current thinking about how students learn words and networks of words.

The common core stresses that vocabulary instruction is taught **in context** as much as possible:

- Choose words well:** Determine words essential to understanding the text (Tier 2-3). Other words, not essential to understanding the specific text, may be important for students to know for future reading and writing (Tier 2).
- Teach in context:** Most words are taught **within context**, using simple step aside explanations if needed. When possible, students use strategies to figure out words independently.
- Further Vocabulary Instruction:** Rarely will a word be pre-taught. But after reading, students should be actively engaged with words using different contexts – through questioning, word chats, and writer's craft. Instruction must also integrate morphology, phonology, and orthography, and syntax as well as meanings.

Remember the goal... in order for students to become college and career ready, they must become independent readers, using multiple strategies to understand words and comprehend the text. (To learn more, read Appendix A from the CCSS, pp. 32-35)



Smarter Balanced Assessment

The introduction of the new Smarter Balanced Assessments in the spring of 2015 will require our students to demonstrate their understanding in more complex and varied ways. Santa Ana is taking a proactive stance to ensure that our students will transition successfully to the new assessments by changing instruction and the way that we assess learning starting this school year.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortia (SBAC) has sample items and performance tasks online to help teachers, administrators, and policymakers implementing the [Common Core State Standards](#) (CCSS) and preparing for next-generation assessments. They provide an early look into the depth of understanding of the CCSS that will be measured by the Smarter Balanced assessment system. Educators can use them to begin planning the shifts in instruction that will be required to help students meet the demands of the new assessments.

The sample items and tasks can be viewed by grade band (grades 3-5, 6-8, and high school) or content focus. They showcase the variety of item types—including technology-enhanced items and performance tasks—that will be included in the Smarter Balanced assessment system. In addition, items illustrating the connections across grades within the CCSS—as well as the range of student achievement within a [computer adaptive test](#)—are also available.

In Santa Ana, teachers and students will have two opportunities to experience the SBAC assessments prior to implementation in the 2014-15 school year. Beginning in late February 2013, Santa Ana will be part of the Smarter Balanced pilot test. The second opportunity will be at the start of the 2014-15 school year; the item bank will be fully accessible to schools and teachers to develop interim assessments.

Each month, we will provide sample items and updated information on the Smarter Balanced Assessments to keep you informed throughout our implementation of CCSS.

--Information obtained from www.smarterbalanced.org

The Smarter Balanced assessment system will cover the full range of college- and career-ready knowledge and skills in the [Common Core State Standards](#).



Educational Services Department

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For numbers 1a-1d, state whether or not each figure has $\frac{2}{5}$ of its whole shaded.

1a.  Y Yes N No

1b.  Y Yes N No

1c.  Y Yes N No

1d.  Y Yes N No

This item is more complex in that a student now has to look at each part separately and decide whether $\frac{2}{5}$ can take different forms. By assigning two points to this problem, we can also provide feedback at the item level as to the depth of understanding a student has about simple fractions. The total number of ways to respond to this item is 16. “Guessing” the correct combination of responses is much less likely than a traditional 4-option selected-response item. The correct response for this item will receive 2 points, and the points will be earned based on the level of understanding the student has demonstrated. A suggested scoring rubric for this item follows in Figure 3.