

Top 10 FAQs on K-12 Implementation of Common Core

1) Q. At the secondary level, who is training the teachers on the units of study?

A. In many cases, the writers of the units, who are classroom teachers, are providing the training on the units of study. This has proven to be a very effective model because of their expertise in the content area and their in-depth understanding of how the unit was developed. We are fortunate in Santa Ana that over 300 teachers have volunteered over the last year to write units of study in support of Common Core implementation.

2) Q. Why are the units of study so scripted?

A. The intent of the units of study was to provide the teachers with an exemplar of what effective Common Core instruction looks like. The high level of detail allows teachers to sense the authors' intentions and provide a vivid picture of what the lessons may look like. Depending on the experience, past training and comfort level of the teacher, the need for examples, teaching points and guidance will vary. Remaining true to the structure and essence of the units of study allows teachers to see the instructional shifts noted in the units of study. However, we also know that teachers will need to make modifications that are responsive to their students' needs and learning outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to add or remove scaffolds and activities as long as the high expectations remain.

3) Q. How do the CLAS teachers support this effort?

A. Santa Ana has the unique opportunity to have CLAS teachers available to support the implementation of Common Core. This year, the District has made a conscious effort to ensure that the CLAS teachers are available to the school sites Monday-Thursday so they can be a consistent support to teachers. Not only do the CLAS teachers take an active role in providing the professional development but they also provide in-classroom support for teachers. Teachers, both elementary and secondary, are encouraged to use CLAS teachers as a resource to answer questions, provide additional demonstration lessons, and co-plan to support the implementation of the units of study and modifications to future lessons.

4) Q. Will the elementary report cards change?

A. The Elementary Curriculum Committee consisting of one primary (K-2) and one intermediate (3-5) grade teacher from each school will be assisting with the revision of the report cards for the 2014-2015 school year. The Elementary Curriculum Committee will work on the new report cards at the meetings on February 20, March 20 and April 21. Teachers will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft report cards prior to finalizing and submitting them to Aeries.

5) Q. When will we get our benchmark scores since the benchmarks now have an extended response item?

A. Scores for the multiple-choice portion of the benchmarks within a week after returning the assessment to Research and Evaluation. The scantrons will be scanned and the scores will be uploaded into Illuminate as done in previous years. The data from the extended response items will be obtained as soon as the calibration and scoring is completed. Extended response items may be given to the students once the scores have been uploaded in Illuminate. On Illuminate, teachers will find three different reports. The first report provides the results of just the multiple choice items, the second report that includes the results of just the extended response items and a third report that shows both results side by side.

6) Q. How are we preparing for technology readiness for the online SBAC pilot assessments?

A. Current planning for Common Core SBAC pilot assessment readiness is well underway. District staff from Ed Tech and Informational Technology visited each school during the months of October or November to review computer labs, existing laptop and tablet carts, and review current and future testing locations. The outcome of these visits provided the district with information on technology, infrastructure, and additional resources needed for SBAC assessment. Testing schedule planning sessions were held from November 11-15 in which district staff worked with teams of administrators and test coordinators from each school. The outcome of these planning sessions was to create a working draft of the testing schedule needed for each school for SBAC testing. Students had an opportunity to provide feedback on a survey on their experience using mobile devices for testing to complete questions from the SBAC practice test. A random sampling of student surveys took place at Heninger Elementary, Carr Intermediate, and Century High School within the last two weeks. The outcome of this feedback will help determine selection of mobile devices for schools that can be used for instructional practices and the SBAC assessment.

7) Q. What affect will the CST Science scores for grades 5, 8 and 10 results have on accountability for the 2013-2014 school year?

A. According to the Academic Accountability Unit at CDE, the CST Science results are only included in the state accountability system, API, and are not part of AYP. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson, will most likely recommend to the State Board not to produce an API for elementary schools for 2014. However, there is still a possibility that an API will still be produced for high schools. If so, the CST Life Science results would be included in the high school API.

8) Q. Will all California districts be administering SBAC in both ELA and Math this spring?

A. Yes, statewide 95% of all students will take approximately 25 items from ELA, and another 25 items from math. The remaining 5% of students will take a single subject version in either ELA or math. In Santa Ana, all students will take both ELA and math. Both groups will complete one performance task. The estimated field test administration time will remain approximately 3.5 hours for all participants. On November 21, Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, issued a news release which stated, "After hearing from LEAs of their interest to field test both content areas, California worked with its contractor Educational Test Services (ETS) as well as the Smarter Balanced contractor, American Institute for Research, to develop a California solution to include both content areas."

9) Q. How can my students practice taking SBAC aligned assessments?

A. To prepare students we need to support both their learning of high-level content knowledge and the demonstration of that knowledge through a computer adaptive assessment. To support the building of content knowledge, we have the implementation of the units of study and the professional learning modules. For supporting the use of the new assessment tool with various test question formats, we have several opportunities for students to practice. Within the units of study, students are required to complete a performance-based task/assessment similar to the performance-based task on SBAC. The benchmarks include an extended response item, which will require students to respond to a passage. We have realigned the district-wide writing assessment with the Common Core State Standards. In addition, we have resources and information on strategies to implement keyboarding posted on the Education Technology web page, on the staff portal under Educational Services. To further support the effort, teachers, parents and students can access the SBAC practice tests to use the embedded tools and see the required level of thinking. The link can be found on our Common Core website.

10) Q. How do I get to the SBAC practice tests?

- A. You can find the link on our Common Core website or you can follow the directions below.

How to Access the Smarter Balanced Assessment Practice Tests

1. To access the practice tests, your browser must be updated. It is recommended that you use Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome; Internet Explorer will not work.
2. Click on the link below to get to the sign-in page:
<https://sbacpt.tds.airast.org/student/>
3. Do not try to fill in any information on this page. Instead, click **“sign-in.”**
4. Under “Grade,” select the grade level that you would like to view from the pull down menu and click **“Yes.”**
5. Next, In order to view the multiple choice items, click on the selection such as **“Start G11 ELA.”**
6. Choose the settings that you would like to use from the pull down menus. Leave the defaults as shown. Click **“Select.”**
7. If the test is correct, then click **“Yes, Start My Test.”**
8. Click **“Begin Test Now.”**
9. Progress through the test at your own pace and take notes on implications for instruction.
10. If you would like to see the Performance Assessment Test, complete steps 1-3 again and then choose the performance assessment from your selected grade level.
11. Then follow instructions for steps 5-8.