



COMMON GROUND

No. 3

A Communication Toolkit for Connecting
San Mateo County to Common Core and SBAC

SHARE FEEDBACK

This week's essential question: **"What should parents know about Smarter Balanced assessments?"**

The Smarter Balanced assessments are designed around the Common Core State Standards, which were adopted by California in 2010. These new tests are intended to measure real-world skills, such as problem solving and critical thinking, along with readiness for college and career. They are also computer based, replacing the multiple-choice, paper-based tests students have seen before.

The most important thing for parents to realize is that Smarter Balanced and Common Core are raising the bar for student achievement. For this reason, it's impossible to compare scores between this year's Smarter Balanced tests and STAR tests from previous years. The 2014-15 assessment results will set the baseline for future years, and we fully expect to see increases in scores as students more fully develop their skills.

Sample Post: Consider posting this essential question and answer to the parent resources section of your website or an FAQ page, along with a link to the practice tests: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/practice-test/>

FOR STUDENTS

Is preparing for a computer-adaptive test different than preparing for a paper-and-pencil test? How do I practice? What should I do the morning of the assessment? Find answers to all these questions and more with our test-taking tips.



ENGLISH

SPANISH

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 100 higher education institutions in California have committed to using Smarter Balanced scores to determine course placement.

FOR PARENTS

You've heard the term "Smarter Balanced," but what does it mean? The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium aims to answer your questions with this handy fact sheet, designed specifically for parents as their kids get ready for the 2014-15 exams.

Click on your language to learn more!

ENGLISH

SPANISH

FOR PARENTS

of students in special education

We get it. Accessibility guidelines aren't always the most gripping reading material, and the language can be a bit hard to understand.

We've condensed important info into this parent guide about accommodations for the Smarter Balanced assessments. Learn all about the tools available to your student at the links below.

ENGLISH

SPANISH



Sample Post: Do you have questions about testing tools, supports, and accommodations that are available to your student for the new state assessments? Check out this handout [*include link: <http://bit.ly/1GGnHlJ>*], created using the Smarter Balanced accessibility guidelines.

FUN FACTS

You asked, and we answered. Click the links below for four fast facts about the new Smarter Balanced assessments. They'll give everyone a great sense of how the new tests will help students succeed and teachers teach.

ENGLISH

SPANISH

POINTERS FOR PARENTS
Facts about Smarter Balanced Testing

- The new assessments are part of a comprehensive plan for student success.
- To help prepare students for the challenges of the future, California has developed a comprehensive plan for **HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING** for every public school in the state.
- The new testing system is built to help teachers teach.
- The tests are an academic check-up, designed to give teachers the feedback and the tools they need to **IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING**.
- The new assessments are a complete reset from the old system; they can't be compared.
- The new tests are not fundamentally different from the old exams to make any reliable comparisons between old scores and now. This year's test results will **ESTABLISH A NEW BASELINE FOR STUDENT PROGRESS**.
- We should expect adjustments along the way.

Adjustments will always be needed to **MAKE LASTING PROGRESS**. Patience and persistence will be required to help our schools continue to succeed during this time of transition.



Sample Tweet: #CommonCore and @SmarterBalanced help students succeed and teachers teach. Find out more: <http://bit.ly/1bfscYW>

Note: Consider including a screenshot of the handout in your tweet so people know what they'll be reading.



You can also find many of these resources on the San Mateo County Office of Education website. Just visit <http://bit.ly/1EpMdXx>, and click on Common Ground!