California Department of Education

Executive Office

SBE-002 (REV. 11/2017)

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# MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 9, 2019

**TO:** MEMBERS, State Board of Education

**FROM:** TONY THURMOND, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT:** Update on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment Blueprints for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics.

## Summary of Key Issues

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) is a multi-state partnership to provide high-quality assessments and resources for improving teaching and learning. California is a governing member of Smarter Balanced. The Smarter Balanced Assessment System utilizes computer-based tests and performance tasks that allow students to show what they know and are able to do. The System is based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics and has three components designed to support the teaching and learning of the CCSS throughout the year: the summative assessments, the interim assessments, and the Digital Library of formative assessment tools.

The Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics summative assessment blueprints detail the number of items by test component and assessment claim. Claims are summary statements about the knowledge and skills students are expected to demonstrate on the assessment related to a particular aspect of the CCSS. Each Smarter Balanced summative assessment includes a component of computer adaptive items and a component of performance task items. Computer adaptive items allow the student to receive a customized assessment that adjusts the difficulty of questions on the basis of the student’s response. Performance tasks measure a student’s ability to demonstrate critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. Performance tasks may include constructed-response items, which require students to provide a response by writing words or numbers.

In 2012, Smarter Balanced members adopted preliminary blueprints that were in use through the 2017–18, administration. In 2018, Smarter Balanced conducted a review of the blueprints and recommended revisions to the test blueprints for the 2018–19 administration to ensure measurement of the full range of the CCSS and the continued use of constructed-response items within the performance task component. A possible reduction in testing time was another aspect of the review, and the CDE will revisit suggested testing times in the future. Smarter Balanced members approved the changes to the Smarter Balanced ELA and mathematics summative assessment blueprints, which were implemented in 2018–19.

The updated ELA blueprint contains the following updates:

* Increase in the number of machine-scorable items in the computer adaptive test (CAT) component related to items assessing the research claim, which assesses whether students can engage in research and inquiry to investigate topics, and to analyze, integrate, and present information
* Reduction in the total number of items assessing the writing claim in all grades
* Removal of constructed-response items from the CAT component assessing reading and writing in grades three through five
* Reduction in items assessing research across all grades in the performance task component

The updated mathematics blueprint removed the constructed-response items from the CAT component.

The updated blueprints can be found on the Smarter Balanced website as follows:

* Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment ELA Blueprint <http://portal.smarterbalanced.org/library/en/elaliteracy-summative-assessment-blueprint.pdf>
* Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment Mathematics Blueprint <http://portal.smarterbalanced.org/library/en/mathematics-summative-assessment-blueprint.pdf>

## Attachment(s)

None.