



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

November 14, 2013

Dear County and District Superintendents, Special Education Local Plan Area Directors, Special Education Administrators of County Offices of Education, Charter School Administrators, Principals, and Nonpublic School Directors:

IMPACT OF ASSEMBLY BILL 484 ON INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN 2013–14

The purpose of this letter is to provide information regarding the development and implementation of individualized education programs (IEPs) in 2013–14 due to the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 484 (Chapter 489, Statutes of 2013), which brings significant changes to California's statewide student assessment system. The provisions of AB 484 will take effect January 1, 2014. AB 484 eliminates the existing Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program and establishes the California Measurement of Academic Performance and Progress system. The foundation of the new statewide student assessment system is the Smarter Balanced computer-based assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards in reading/language arts and mathematics (math). The new system also includes tests that were previously under the STAR program until successor tests are developed. For more information, see the Assembly Bill 484 Questions and Answers page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/ab484qa.asp>.

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) need to be aware of the changes to the statewide student assessment system in the 2013–14 school year, in order to ensure that parents of students with disabilities are aware of how those changes impact the participation of students with disabilities in those assessments. LEAs should also assist parents in understanding that there will be no score reporting for the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts (ELA) and math field tests in 2013–2014.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities participate in all general state and districtwide assessments with appropriate accommodations or alternate assessments, if necessary, as indicated in their respective IEP (34 *Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)* 300.320). IEP teams should ensure that students' IEPs include the accommodations necessary for participation in the appropriate assessments for this year. For students participating in the science California Standards Test (CST), California Modified Assessment (CMA), and California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA), no changes are necessary unless the students' needs have changed. Similarly, for students participating in the CAPA in ELA and math, no changes are necessary unless the students' needs have changed.

However, for students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 who previously participated in the CST or CMA for ELA or math, changes may be necessary because of the change in

November 14, 2013
Page 2

tests. Smarter Balanced has introduced new terms—universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations—for the alterations to the Smarter Balanced assessments that can be used by students for the 2013–14 field test administration. LEAs should confirm that what is currently listed as an accommodation or modification in a student’s IEP aligns with the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available for the Smarter Balanced field test. Information on the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available for the 2013–14 Smarter Balanced field test may be found in the *Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines* at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/Ta/tg/sa/access.asp>.

The California Department of Education (CDE) will provide test administration training prior to the administration of the 2013–14 Smarter Balanced field test to ensure that LEAs are familiar with the process to activate and monitor the use of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations prior to and during the field test administration. LEAs that wish to facilitate students’ familiarity with some of the available universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations may be interested in accessing the Smarter Balanced Practice Test. Information about the Practice Test, including Practice Test manuals and scoring guides, are available on the CDE Practice Tests Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/practicetest.asp>

LEAs may need to further amend IEPs for the 2014–2015 operational test based on what is learned during the 2013–2014 field test and in response to the regulations that will be adopted by the State Board of Education during the rulemaking process expected to commence in January 2014.

If you have any questions regarding the development of IEPs in 2013–14, please contact the Policy and Program Services unit of the Special Education Division by phone at 916-323-2409. If you have any questions regarding the statewide student assessment system or the Smarter Balanced field test, please contact the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Office by e-mail at caaspp@cde.ca.gov or by phone at 916-445-8765.

Sincerely,

Fred Balcom, Director
Special Education Division

FB:sw