California Department of Education

Executive Office

SBE-002 (REV. 11/2017)

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# **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 30, 2018

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

**FROM:** TOM TORLAKSON, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT:** California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress: Additional Analyses of the Smarter Balanced 2016–17 Test Results.

## Summary of Key Issues

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) has conducted additional analyses for the 2016–17 test results in response to concerns over the plateau of student gains. These analyses compared the results of the spring 2016 test to those of the spring 2017 test. The additional analyses were guided by research questions on overall student performance, size of the test question pool, difficulty of new test questions, impact of new test questions, duration of student testing, student testing time of year, and demographic changes.

### Additional Analyses of 2016–17 Test Results

The release of the spring 2017 Smarter Balanced test scores showed that student gains plateaued in comparison to the 2016 results. During the October 2017 Technical Advisory Committee meeting, it was decided that Smarter Balanced would conduct additional analyses to investigate the observation.

The guiding research questions for the additional analyses included:

1. Did students perform better or worse compared to previous years?
2. Were there fewer test questions available?
3. Were the new test questions more difficult?
4. Did the newly added test questions negatively impact test results?
5. Did students spend less time taking the test?
6. Did students take the test earlier in the school year?
7. Did student demographics change?

Overall, the results of the additional analyses found no technical issues with the assessment. The results were affirmed by the Smarter Balanced Technical Advisory Committee.

The analyses conducted by Smarter Balanced were independently reviewed by Joseph A. Martineau, Senior Associate with the Center for Assessment (National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc.). The independent review concurred with the findings of the additional analyses for all seven research questions.

The results of the analyses conducted by Smarter Balanced can be found in three documents: *Answers to Questions about Smarter Balanced 2017 Test Results, Answers to Questions About 2017 Test Results,* and *Independent Review of Analyses Conducted by Smarter Balanced.* Web links to these documents were published on the Smarter Balanced Web site at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/2017-test-score-analysis/>.

## Attachment

None.