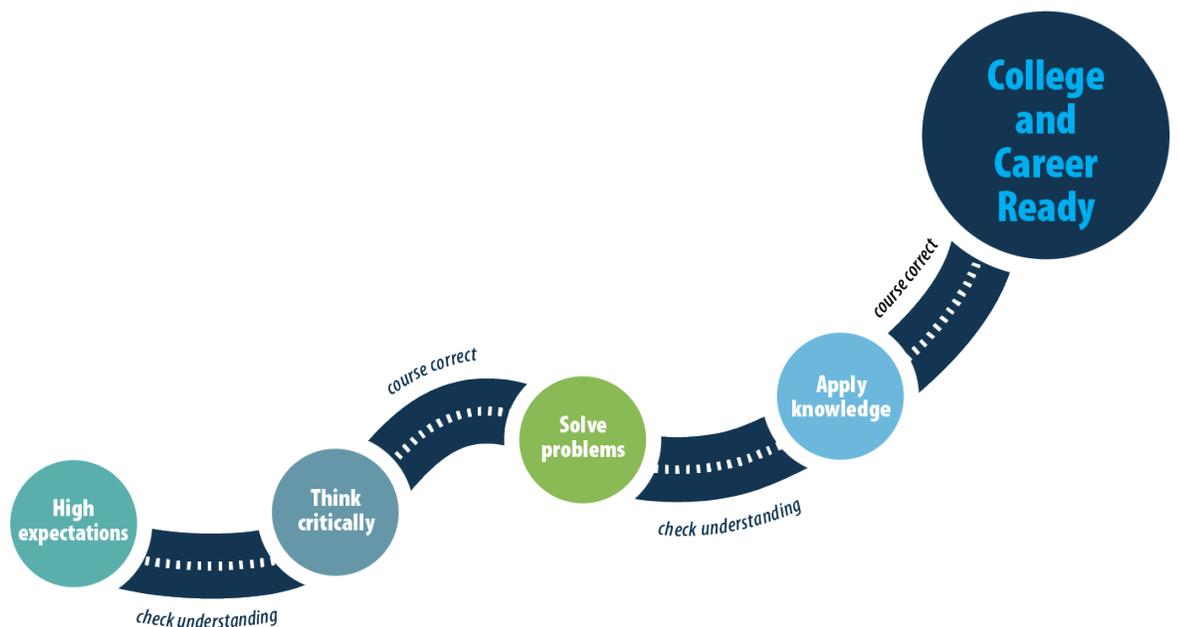


Common Core and Smarter Balanced Testing

Role-Playing Scenarios

The following role-playing scenarios are provided for use during professional development trainings and faculty and grade-level meetings, to help teachers gain confidence for engaging with parents regarding the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the new statewide assessment.

The scenarios on the next pages may be printed double-sided on paper or card-stock, then cut in half. Two sets should be created – one for the Teacher Role, and one for the Parent/ Guardian role.



1

Scenario 1: The grandparent and guardian of a fifth-grade boy is very concerned with the amount of time devoted to standardized tests and test prep. Her grandson complained about the length of the first segment.

LINE OF QUESTIONS

How much time devoted to preparing for the test?

How much actual teaching time is my grandson losing because of the tests?
How long are the tests?

My grandson found the performance task too long. Are students allowed to take breaks?

FACTS

The only specific preparation is the Training Test. It takes about an hour to run through the Training Items, a set of items that covers every problem type on the test and guides students through the use of the computer based tools like dragging and dropping, drawing lines on a graph and creating equations with the equation editor, so that they are familiar with them when they take the exam.

The testing software allows for breaks.

Time for the annual statewide test amounts to only 1% of all of the time students spend in the classroom each year.

2

Scenario 2: The parent of a third-grade girl is concerned about the computer-based nature of the test making it harder for the girl to perform well. The girl does not have access to a computer at home, so she is not used to using one.

LINE OF QUESTIONS

What are you doing to make sure my daughter is able to perform well using the computer?

The computer lab at the school is outdated. I'm sure that will impact how she performs. Will there be paper tests or other ways to help children at this school?

How will she learn to type or use a keyboard?

Why do we need a new test anyway?

FACTS

Describe school practice for time in the computer lab or on computers in a classroom. Describe efforts to teach keyboarding.

Minimum requirements for online testing were established and our equipment meets those requirements. The age of our lab will not be a problem.

Paper tests are only available for schools without the computers or internet connection to support an online test. They are not an available option based on student preference.

Scenario 1: The grandparent and guardian of a fifth-grade boy is very concerned with the amount of time devoted to standardized tests and test prep. Her grandson complained about the length of the first segment.

1

Talking Points

Since the test measures progress on skills we want students to have, we do not need to specifically prepare for the test. The work we do all year is centered on building those skills.

The only real loss of classroom time is during the actual testing window.

A district in Idaho where the pledge of allegiance is recited each day, determined that students spend more time each school year doing this than they do taking the statewide annual test.

Like time for reciting the pledge, time for testing is well spent. The results provide valuable information to you about how your grandson is progressing year to year and valuable information for us about where we might need to change our teaching practices to better support student learning.

Scenario 2: The parent of a third-grade girl is concerned about the computer-based nature of the test making it harder for the girl to perform well. The girl does not have access to a computer at home, so she is not used to using one.

2

Talking Points

Because the test has no time limit, students who might be less adept at using a computer will have the time they need to finish their work.

A new test is needed to measure whether students are gaining the new skills. Our old test measured a different set of skills. We have defined new skills that we believe students should master and we have been teaching those skills in the classroom.

Since the test measures whether students are on a path to be ready for college and career, it provides more useful information than our old tests.

3

Scenario 3: The father of an eleventh-grade boy has received his son's score report and wants to know why his son's scores are so much lower than on the previous tests. The boy tested proficient last year and now has just "nearly met" the standard.

LINE OF QUESTIONS

Why isn't he doing as well this year, as he did last year?

In what ways could he have been more prepared?

What will these test scores mean for him as he applies to colleges in the fall?

Will performance on the test affect his grades?

Will he be able to take the test again?

FACTS

The expectations as defined by the new standards are both higher and broader than expectations measured by our old test.

As students spend more time in classrooms working to teach the new standards, the scores are expected to improve. (most relevant for younger students)

Smarter Balanced does not recommend scores be used to impact grades.

Students who score in level 3 or 4 are on track to be college and career ready.

4

Scenario 4: A mother of a third-grade girl is not pleased that the girl's score results will be maintained in a database as a part of her student record through the years. Mom wants to opt her daughter out of data reporting.

LINE OF QUESTIONS

Who has access to my child's data?

The Common Core and the test are all about "big data" sharing and comparing on a national level. What information about my child is available and accessible?

I'm concerned that this may be an invasion of privacy. Is it true that with the assessments and online learning tools, the state and the federal government can track and store what my child does every day, and can even take and store photos of her? (Note: the latter question is intended to provide practice through the role play with a hostile parent.)

How are students' privacy rights protected under this assessment system?

Can I opt out of having my child's scores stored?

FACTS

States, not testing companies or the federal government, control all of their student data. States cannot and do not sell student data. No personally identifiable information is shared with the federal government.

Access to data is role-based. Only teachers and other designated local personnel have access to individual student data. Others may have access to aggregated or combined data, with no personally identifiable information, for district accountability reporting and research.

As with past tests, the state and districts must adhere to all federal and state privacy laws to make sure that students' personally identifiable information is not unlawfully stored or shared.

Scenario 3: The father of an 11th-grade boy has received his son's score report and wants to know why his son's scores are so much lower than on the previous tests. The boy tested proficient last year and now has just "nearly met" the standard.

3

Talking Points

Expectations are higher- this is a good thing. We want the best education possible for our students and this sets a higher mark for us as educators. Ultimately they will benefit.

We will work with your son to help him make as much progress as possible next year so that he can be ready.

This does not mean your son should not go to college. It does mean he may need to take non-credit courses to catch up on particular knowledge or skills.

The test is only one of multiple measures that should be used to assess how your son is doing. You should also review feedback on classroom assignments, consider progress reports and review grades to get a complete picture of your son's achievement.

Scenario 4: A mother of a third-grade girl is not pleased that the girl's score results will be maintained in a database as a part of her student record through the years. Mom wants to opt her daughter out of data reporting.

4

Talking Points

Test results provide valuable information for you as a parent.

Individual results: Think of it like your child's annual visit to the pediatrician – checking-in once a year lets you know if your daughter is growing as expected and is achieving expected milestones. If results show she is not, you have the information you need to take action.

School results: The school's aggregated results provide you a measure that is comparable year to year, to see how we are doing helping students achieve. Just as importantly, we can see how we are doing, and identify areas where we might need to improve our practice.

5

Scenario 5: Several parent leaders have come to you frustrated and confused. They have attended every information meeting, and have tried to learn as much as they can about the CCSS and the assessments, but they still want more information.

LINE OF QUESTIONS

I believe in the direction the district is going in, but I am having a very hard time providing information to naysayers as well as to people who genuinely want to be supportive. Where can I find reliable, easy-to-read information about the Common Core and the new tests?

Are there newsletters, e-blasts, PowerPoints, FAQs, anything to help us share accurate information?

FACTS

There are a number of good sites—the Council of the Great City Schools (www.cgs.org), the Common Core State Standards website (www.corestandards.org), the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (www.smarterbalanced.org), the West Virginia Assessment Portal (<http://wv.portal.airast.org/>), and the PTA (www.pta.org), to name a few.

Share the new customizable resources!

6

Scenario 6: The father of a sixth-grade girl is concerned about how to help his daughter with the new standards and teaching styles. He is not a native English speaker and the primary language in the home is Spanish. He is having trouble understanding some of the CCSS information and sample student assignments that he has found online. He is frustrated and would like assistance in supporting his daughter in her learning.

LINE OF QUESTIONS

Will the new test be provided in other languages?

Will the new test provide support for non-native English speakers?

Where can I find resources in other languages about the Common Core and the new tests?

FACTS

For students who need it, mathematics questions are available on the new test with several types of language supports:

- Side by side translation of test questions to Spanish
- Pop up glossaries for challenging words unrelated to the math concept being assessed. Glossaries present the translations in both writing and audio form, and are available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Filipino, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.

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6

Talking Points

Parents can see these features in action on the Practice Tests available on the West Virginia Assessment Portal. After selecting the grade level, and test (mathematics), you will be asked to Choose Settings – for the side by side translations, select Spanish from the Language drop down menu. To see the pop up glossaries, choose a language from the Translations (Glossaries) drop down menu. Click on any word in the problem that is highlighted with a shadow box and the glossary translation will appear.

□ [Practice Test](#)

The New York City Department of Education has published grade-level Activity Guides for parents to use at home with students in English, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Urdu. Since they also have adopted the Common Core Standards, these resources are useful for you as well. The guides are available for free at the following links:

- K – 8 Resources [Activity Guides for Learning at Home](#)
- High School Resources [Resources for Families of High School Students](#)

7

Scenario 7: An 11th-grade girl with strong test scores on the previous state test, four AP courses, and active involvement in leadership, sports, and other extracurricular activities has set her sights on admission to a highly competitive college. Her mother is very concerned about the impact that test results might have on college admissions.

LINE OF QUESTIONS

This is a new test, new standards, and new curriculum. How can you convince me that my daughter and her peers aren't being used as "guinea pigs" to see how well or poorly this test works, when her entire future is resting on how she performs?

Even the experts say that there is going to be a drop in scores—a "cliff," they are calling it. What impact will it have on my daughter's college applications?

FACTS

- The past two years the test was first pilot tested with more than half million students, and then field tested with more than 4 million students. Only questions proved to measure what was expected remain on the test. Many were tested and discarded. We are not testing the test anymore.
- The test is a readiness test, not an admissions test. When colleges are using it, it is to help determine whether admitted students can proceed directly into credit-bearing courses or whether they will need non-credit catch-up courses.
- Public community colleges and universities in several states have agreed to accept the scores in lieu of other placement tests, allowing students to proceed directly to entry-level credit-bearing courses. Colleges will continue to review traditional application data in making their admissions decisions.

8

Scenario 8: A guardian of a girl who is currently struggling in the majority of her classes, who is not a good test taker, and who receives special education services is very concerned about what the school will be doing to help her catch up or do well on the test.

LINE OF QUESTIONS

She is already struggling to keep up with the shift in standards and teaching that is happening under the Common Core. What resources will you provide?

Is there a different version of the test for her?

Will there be accommodations for the test?

Can I opt her out of the test?

FACTS

The test includes resources to address visual, auditory, and physical access barriers, allowing virtually all students to demonstrate what they know and can do.

There is one test for everyone but there are many supports built in and available to those who need them.

The test has no time limit. It gives students the time necessary to finish their work.

There is no opt-out provision in West Virginia.

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Talking Points

The test has been tested extensively over the past two years. Students did not receive scores from these pilot and field tests because the test was not yet finalized. Now that all of the test development work is complete, the tests are ready and students will receive scores this summer.

We are not testing the test anymore. Questions that remain have been proven to measure the intended skills or knowledge.

These scores will provide useful information about where your daughter is in terms of mastering the skills to be ready for college coursework. Based on her academic record, it sounds like she has a solid foundation for success in college. However, if the tests do identify any areas where she needs further development, she can use her senior year to address those areas. This should allow her to avoid the time and expense of taking non-credit developmental courses when she gets to college.

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Talking Points

The test includes resources to address visual, auditory, and physical access barriers, allowing virtually all students to demonstrate what they know and can do.

There is one test for everyone but there are many supports built in and available to those who need them. For more information on the full range of supports, go to:

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/parents-students/support-for-under-represented-students/>

The test has no time limit. It gives students the time necessary to finish their work.

There is no opt-out provision in West Virginia.

9

Scenario 9: The mother of a third-grade girl has just attended a Smarter Balanced assessment information night. The mother is concerned that her third-grader will be tested to see how she is doing at mastering the knowledge and skills that she needs in order to be college and career ready.

LINE OF QUESTIONS

She is 8 years old, so why does she need to take a test to determine if she is college ready? She won't be going to college for a decade!

Is the test really a good use of time when kids should be learning and playing?

FACTS

The Common Core standards are built as a coherent progression of expectations for skill and knowledge development through the years from third grade through high school.

Your daughter's score will show whether she is on the path to be college and career ready. In other words, it will show whether she learning what we expect a third grader to learn such that if she continues on that path she will be college or career ready upon graduation.

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Scenario 10: The father of a seventh-grade boy feels that the district and the school are placing too much emphasis on one annual test to determine how his son is doing.

LINE OF QUESTIONS

How can one annual test determine how my student is doing or whether he is learning?

What happened to the teacher assessing students and their learning and performance?

FACTS

The test is only one measure of your student's progress.

Classroom assignments and projects will also be reviewed to provide us with evidence of his mastery of the skills and knowledge necessary to progress.

The test provides you and us a basis to compare progress year to year.

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Talking Points

Test results provide valuable information for you as a parent.

Individual results: Think of it like your child's annual visit to the pediatrician – checking-in once a year lets you know if your daughter is growing as expected and is achieving expected milestones. If results show she is not, you have the information you need to take action.

School results: The school's aggregated results provide you a measure that is comparable year to year, to see how we are doing helping students achieve. Just as importantly, we can see how we are doing, and identify areas where we might need to improve our practice.

Scenario 10: The father of a seventh-grade boy feels that the district and the school are placing too much emphasis on one annual test to determine how his son is doing.

10

Talking Points

The test is only one measure of your student's progress. Classroom assignments and projects will also be reviewed to provide us with evidence of his mastery of the skills and knowledge necessary to progress. And of course classroom teachers still design and administer their own tests to check understanding. You too should review a variety of your son's work to see all that he has accomplished this year.

The test provides you and us a basis to compare progress year to year.

11

Scenario 11: Build your Own!

LINE OF QUESTIONS

FACTS

12

Scenario 12:

LINE OF QUESTIONS

FACTS

Scenario 11:

12

Talking Points

Scenario 12:

12

Talking Points