

## **SMARTER/Balanced Consortium:**

### **What is this consortium?:**

The consortium is a new generation assessment system that is rooted in a concern for the valid, reliable, and fair assessment of the deep disciplinary understanding and higher-order thinking skills that are increasingly demanded by a knowledge-based economy. They are rooted in a belief that assessment must support ongoing improvements in instruction and learning, and must be useful for all members of the educational enterprise: students, parents, teachers, school administrators, members of the public, and policymakers.

### **What is included, what are the key elements and principles for this consortium?:**

1. A Comprehensive Assessment System that will be grounded in a thoughtfully integrated learning system of standards, curriculum, assessment, instruction and teacher development that will inform decision-making by including formative strategies, interim assessments, and summative assessments.
2. The assessment system will measure the full range of the Common Core Standards including those that measure higher-order skills and will inform progress toward and acquisition of readiness for higher education and multiple work domains. The system will emphasize deep knowledge of core concepts within and across the disciplines, problem solving, analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking.
3. Teachers will be involved in the design, development, and scoring of assessment items and tasks. Teachers will participate in the alignment of the Common Core Standards and the identification of the standards in the local curriculum.
4. Technology will be used to enable adaptive technologies to better measure student abilities across the full spectrum of student performance and evaluate growth in learning; to support online simulation tasks that test higher-order abilities; to score the results; and to deliver the responses to trained scorers/teachers to access from an electronic platform. Technology applications will be designed to maximize interoperability across user platforms, and will utilize open-source development to the greatest extent possible.
5. A sophisticated design will yield scores to support evaluations of student growth, as well as school, teacher, and principal effectiveness in an efficient manner.
6. On-demand and curriculum-embedded assessments will be incorporated over time to allow teachers to see where students are on multiple dimensions of learning and to strategically support their progress.

7. All components of the system will incorporate principles of Universal Design that seek to remove construct-irrelevant aspects of tasks that could increase barriers for non-native English speakers and students with other specific learning needs.
8. Optional components will allow States flexibility to meet their individual needs.

**What are the responsibilities of States in the Consortium?:**

- Adopt the Common Core Standards, which are college- and career-ready standards, and to which the Consortium’s assessment system will be aligned, no later than December 31, 2011.

**What must a State that is a member of the Consortium in 2014–2015 agree to?**

- Adopt common achievement standards no later than the 2014–2015 school year,
- Fully implement statewide the Consortium summative assessment in grades 3-8 and high school for both mathematics and English language arts no later than the 2014–2015 school year,
- Adhere to the governance as outlined in this document,
- Agree to support the decisions of the Consortium,
- Agree to follow agreed-upon timelines,
- Be willing to participate in the decision-making process and, if a Governing State, final decision, and
- Identify and implement a plan to address barriers in State law, statute, regulation, or policy to implementing the proposed assessment system and to addressing any such barriers prior to full implementation of the summative assessment components of the system.

**What role will South Dakota play in this Consortium?:**

South Dakota has signed on to be an Advisory State.

**What is expected of a state that is an Advisory State?:**

- Has not fully committed to any Consortium but supports the work of this Consortium,
- Participates in all Consortium activities but does not have a vote unless the Steering Committee deems it beneficial to gather input on decisions or chooses to have the Total Membership vote on an issue,
- May contribute to policy, logistical, and implementation discussions that are necessary to fully operationalize the SMARTER Balanced Assessment System, and
- Is encouraged to participate in the Work Groups.

**What is needed to enter into this Consortium?:**

- The level of membership is declared and signatures are secured on the MOU from the State's Commissioner, State Superintendent, or Chief; Governor; and President/Chair of the State Board of Education (if the State has one);
- The signed MOU is submitted to the Consortium Grant Project Manager (until June 23) and then the Project Management Partner after August 4, 2010;
- The Advisory and Governing States agree to and adhere to the requirements of the governance;
- The State's Chief Procurement Officer has reviewed its applicable procurement rules and provided assurance that it may participate in and make procurements through the Consortium;
- The State is committed to implement a plan to identify any existing barriers in State law, statute, regulation, or policy to implementing the proposed assessment system and to addressing any such barriers prior to full implementation of the summative assessment components of the system; and
- The State agrees to support all decisions made prior to the State joining the Consortium.

**What needs to occur to exit this Consortium?:**

- A State requesting an exit from the Consortium must submit in writing their request and reasons for the exit request,
- The written explanation must include the statutory or policy reasons for the exit,
- The written request must be submitted to the Project Management Partner with the same signatures as required for the MOU,
- The Executive Committee will act upon the request within a week of the request, and
- Upon approval of the request, the Project Management Partner will then submit a change of membership to the USED for approval.

**WHY should South Dakota join this Consortium?:**

- South Dakota would have a great advantages working with Consortium assessments along with multiple states involvement.
- South Dakota will have a good quality assessment by joining the Consortium.
- The Consortium has a computer adaptive test along with a summative and formative assessments
- There is a very strong emphasize on teacher professional development within the Consortium application
- The Consortium will assist South Dakota if there is Peer Review for our state assessment system under ESEA.
- The SDDOE has limit resources of people with expertise in certain areas such as psychometric, research, and test item writers, which the consortium will provide in the future.
- South Dakota may be moving towards the Common Core Standards. The Consortium will align CCS with all new assessments.

- Signing MOU has limited risk if South Dakota chooses to withdraw from the consortium in the future.