

## Smarter Balanced Assessment Summary

Hi All,

This is a compilation of the answers regarding Smarter Balanced Assessment Testing posted to me directly or to this &/or the other 2 list-servs noted below.

Sources:

- *Braille-N-Teach (BNT) is an e-mail service, hosted by the Clearinghouse for Specialized Materials and Translations (CSMT) within the California Dept of Education, for educators working with students who have low vision or who are blind.*
- *Professionals in Blindness Education Division Listserv*
- *Blind Kid Mailing List (for parents of blind children)*

*Responders include VI/blindness professionals, administrators, & parents. In nearly all cases, I removed the identifiers (the name of the individual who posted the response). Most of the text is direct & unaltered; in a few identifiers within the text were removed.*

*My personal editorial:*

*I think you will find the postings interesting & that in toto they provide a clear flavor for depth of the issues surrounding the new testing process that will need to be addressed.*

*While I am hopeful that this year's pilot process will help address the issues that are discovered with respect to the actual test & the local logistical challenges each student will be faced with, it is disheartening in that many students & districts seem to be opting for, or encouraging, an "opt-out" this round, because without input & local logistical practice, not much is likely to change & many of the same issues, concerns & challenges will remain next year.*

*Sincerely,*

*Eric Vasiliasuskas (dad)*

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### **(From BlindKid listserv April 22, 2014) Subject: Testing options for SB**

I saw your post on blind kid listserv. I am more familiar with the PARCC process, but if Smarter Balance is acting similarly you might have the same options. The pilot is designed to test items (content). Later in the fall, there will be a field test which is more geared to functionality and content (testing the bells and whistles of accessibility). The final tests should go into effect in spring of 2015 and should be "operational." True norms may not be developed for 2 years (on the regular population) so the test scores may not be valid for some time. In my state, there is the option to order the braille or low vision test in the "old existing test." So it sounds like you are in a pilot school, but you may be able to get the regular standardized test that the non-pilot schools are taking. In my opinion, these test may be more statistically valid than the new ones. It should be an option for your child.

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### **(From BlindKid listserv May 2, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

I cannot speak to this directly, but we've had similar accessibility issues in the past with other testing instruments.

There were a variety of responses from "we don't test blind students" (this regarding certain standardized tests to qualify for the gifted program), to "we're working on it", generally followed

by a lengthy silence. (I assume they are working too hard to take time to send any updates. They would never assume that ignoring the problem will solve it, right?)

That said, I was surprised to notice how anxious they recently were when other standardized tests came up recently, to have our daughter take them.

The translated version would seem to be that if the tests (or a reasonable substitution) are complicated to come up with, they are anxious to excuse our kids from testing, so long as the only potential beneficiary of the test is the student. (Rather different than when the school wants to showcase the high marks of their highest achieving students.) And if we demand they come up with the tests, they don't really care if there is a delay such that our kids sit idle during the testing for sighted kids, and then have more pull-out time once the tests arrive for our kids.

As to being anxious to include our daughter? Well, the really big problem we had a few years back was to demonstrate our daughter was qualified for the gifted program. They didn't want to have to bother with her being in that program, so they tried for about a year to explain why she wasn't qualified before they had to concede she was actually **\*\*highly\*\*** qualified. 4 years later, she remains an honor roll student in the gifted program, generally a straight-A student, a Beta Club member, and so forth.

As to them becoming anxious for testing now? It seems a recent batch of tests were intended to demonstrate how well the school is doing in an area where the tests had no impact whatsoever on the students directly. We got the friendliest phone call ever from an assistant principal. Would we mind if Kendra stayed after school to complete a certain test, and she would be more than happy to personally drive Kendra home when they are through.

Isn't it interesting how school prioritizes for self-interest effect what they are willing to do?...

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### **(From Braille-n-Teach) Article: Implementing Common Core for students with disabilities**

By Meris Stansbury 10-22-2013

A new website for students—and in particular, those with disabilities—is offering free “anytime, anyplace” resources, materials, and information to help schools ensure that their students meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Created by the Center for Technology Implementation (CTI), the website for students with disabilities, Power Up What Works, links evidence-based practices, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and technology to guide teachers, school leaders, professional development (PD) facilitators, and teacher educators in their professional learning. The goal, according to CTI, is to enhance teaching and learning in English language arts (ELA) and math through the effective implementation of technology tools and strategies...while also focusing on how effective implementation directly affects students with disabilities.

To read the entire article, go to <http://www.eschoolnews.com/2013/10/22/common-core-disabilities-185/?ps=350905-001a000001PNtnM-003a000001rlCkG>.

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### **(From Braille-n-Teach December 1, 2013) Article: Common Core's Promise Collides With IEP Realities**

By Christina A. Samuels

One of the most promising elements of common academic standards for students with disabilities, say experts in special education, is that they offer explicit connections from one set of skills to another. The standards-based IEP began in the 1997 reauthorization of the

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Access to the general curriculum was a mandated goal for students with disabilities, though the law did not say that access had to be at the student's enrolled grade level.

The No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law in 2002, and the 2004 reauthorization of the idea provided reinforcement that children with disabilities should be exposed to the general education curriculum on their grade level to the greatest extent possible.

Fusing Skills and Goals: The California Department of Education has developed steps to help teachers. Here are excerpts from a hypothetical IEP written for a 4th grader who has trouble with reading-comprehension and written-language skills, showing how the steps can be applied.

- Use Present Level of Performance
- Choose the Standard
- 'Unpack' the Standard
- Analyze the Subskills and Develop the Goal
- Write the Short-Term Objectives and Benchmarks
- Monitor the Goal

To read the complete article, go to <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/10/30/10cc-iep.h33.html?tkn=UTCCi5VEnrHluCY%2FbxkNARcBrUMIYnWOLxVD&cmp=clp-sb-ascd>.

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### **(From Braille-n-Teach December 1, 2013) Article: Tech Assistance in Testing Poses Practical Issues:**

By Christina A. Samuels

The concept of universal design supports customizable, flexible approaches to teaching and testing that can be adjusted based on an individual student's needs. But for students with disabilities, many of whom use multiple types of technology in school, tools built into the test are not enough, disability advocates say.

Students must be able to use the equipment they're accustomed to using every day in the classroom and in their lives outside of school. In response, the federally financed test consortia creating the general assessments that will be used by most students, including most students with disabilities—the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium—are in the midst of developing a certification process for technology.

No one has firm figures on how many students use assistive technology to access classroom instruction. In 2011, according to the latest numbers available, about 69,200 students ages 6-21 were classified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as having hearing impairments, and about 26,000 were classified as blind or visually impaired.

Students with disabilities can use many different devices to gain access to curricular material. Lesson Presentation includes: Refreshable Braille displays, Text magnifiers, Tactile graphics, and Scanners with optical character recognition. Student-Response Assistance includes; Talking calculators, Alternative keyboards, Alternative mouse devices, and Touchscreen tablets

To read the complete article, go to <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/10/30/10cc-tech.h33.html?tkn=YMCCA6FeJ2thNRnFiuBZSjVnGdZD07HVpZKV&cmp=clp-sb-ascd>.

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**(From Braille-n-Teach December 1, 2013) Article: How Digital Learning Is Becoming the Fourth Literacy**

By [Katie Lepi](#) on October 26, 2013

Reading, writing, and math are the big ones, right? Up until recently, a lot of people would have probably said that was correct. But since it is 2013 and so much of our lives happen online, digital literacy is being added to the list. Not that this should come as any sort of surprise to most of us, since most teachers spend vast amounts of time in classrooms surrounded by technology. Technology is an area that both teachers and students need to be literate in.

To read the complete article and view the infographic, go to <http://www.edudemic.com/digital-learning-literacy/>.

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**(From Braille-n-Teach Mar 16, 2014) Subject: question about smarter balance - technology instruction**

Does anyone have an idea of what the "learning curve" may be for our students taking the SBA? I am wondering, for students who have not been introduced to refreshable braille and JAWS, how long/or much instruction will we need to provide to get them ready to take the online test? SDC students who are braille readers may not have been introduced to technology yet and only familiar with paper braille.

And for those of you who have taught JAWS and refreshable braille, do you have any lesson plans you could share with the list?

I'm assuming the students need to participate in the testing independently, without additional instruction by the VI teacher, right?

I was just curious about providing instruction for our students, 1 hour? 3 hours? I have no idea.

Thanks so much!

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**(From Braille-n-Teach Mar 31, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balance Test for braille reader:**

Hi, Below is what I've been able to ascertain as to those students requiring the embedded accommodation of braille, but NOT yet ready to use JAWS with a braille display.

First, I write this with reservation, as I believe, we are hearing all kinds of information so, with that stated, this is what I have been told by one of my district's testing coordinators. She called Smarter

Balance with questions I posed: How can we have access to the test prior to the test date in order to get it embossed GIVEN there is an area in the TIDE that states we can "print stimuli?"

What we were told is the accommodation for braille is in place and our students can use a braille display with JAWS. Also, we can use the text to speech option. It is not possible to get the test in advance without getting an "ok" from CDE that the test should be provided in another format other than what they have established, i.e. braille display and JAWS, text to speech.

I have attached the form we were given. This form is to be filled out and presented to the CDE. IF they give their ok to ETS then they can release the test for embossing. We are going to fill this out and send it in as we feel it is important for them to realize there are students out there that require something else other than what they are offering.

NOW, with that said, we are running out of time (well we are) and so we may not get the form back in time, but we are going to try. I think it's important for them to realize there are many students who do not yet have the skills necessary to negotiate JAWS with a braille display. I did speak with Jerry Kuhns, and he is frantically trying to get this all figured out. He will be at CTEBVI (for those of us going) and hopefully, there will be news for us.

At this point, based on what I've been told, I don't feel the test is accessible for my totally blind, braille readers unless they can provide us access to the test so we can get it embossed.

If anyone has anything else different, and willing to share, please do!

Thanks!

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**(From Jerry Kuns on Braille-n-Teach Apr 7, 2014) Subject: NFB's Common Core Assessment Survey**

Hello everyone,

There are many, many concerns regarding the policy and accessibility of the Common Core Assessment, not to mention the assistive technology that is supported. Below is a section from the NFB April Newsletter that includes their recent involvement and a survey. Please share the survey with your colleagues as any feedback that we can provide is critical and will only help to improve the concerns for everyone.

## **Advocacy**

### **Help the NFB Ensure that Common Core Assessments Are Accessible: Complete the NFB's [Common Core Assessment Survey](#)**

This spring, over one million students nationwide will participate in field tests, practice tests, and training tests aligned to the new Common Core State Standards. As the consortia selected by the United States Department of Education to design and administer these new assessments, Smarter Balanced and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) are required to provide accessible tests that measure students' mastery of curricula, rather than reflect their disabilities. Appropriate and individualized accommodations must be available.

Since 2010, the NFB has advocated to both PARCC and Smarter Balanced regarding accommodations and accessible testing platforms. In January 2014, after PARCC confirmed that key accommodations would not be available with its field tests, including Braille, tactile graphics, and commercially available screen-reading software such as JAWS, effectively excluding blind students from participating in its field test, the NFB filed suit against the consortium, raising claims under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

On February 24, 2014, PARCC and the NFB reached a settlement agreement in which PARCC committed to working with the NFB to ensure that blind students are not left behind in the assessment process. Under the terms of the settlement, PARCC will make its practice tests accessible to blind students in spring 2014, and will consult with the NFB to ensure that all subsequent practice tests and assessments will be available at the time of deployment in accessible formats used by blind test-takers, including Braille files for embossing in hard-copy Braille, or via electronic access methods such as refreshable Braille displays and text-to-speech screen-reader software.

Though the NFB and PARCC have entered into a settlement agreement, our work is far from finished. We are continuing to gather information regarding both PARCC's and Smarter Balanced's field, practice, and training test availability and accessibility. Your feedback in this area is critical. As parents, students, and teachers, you can provide the NFB with valuable data reflective of the assessments' use within your local school districts. Please complete the following survey and encourage other parents, students, and teachers to do the same: [Common Core Assessment Survey](#).

For more information, contact Valerie Yingling, paralegal, at [vyingling@nfb.org](mailto:vyingling@nfb.org), or [410-659-9314, extension 2440](tel:410-659-9314).

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(From Braille-n-Teach April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium  
(Update from California Dept of Ed)



## **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

### **Update from the California Department of Education**

Issue 77—Week of Monday, April 21, 2014

*The California Department of Education (CDE) Smarter Balanced Update is a bimonthly e-mail that reports on current and upcoming Smarter Balanced development activities. To join the CDE Smarter Balanced e-mail list, send a blank e-mail to [subscribe-caaspp@mlist.cde.ca.gov](mailto:subscribe-caaspp@mlist.cde.ca.gov). If you would like to unsubscribe from the CDE Smarter Balanced listserv, send a blank message to [unsubscribe-caaspp@mlist.cde.ca.gov](mailto:unsubscribe-caaspp@mlist.cde.ca.gov).*

#### **In this issue:**

- **Accessibility Reference Documents for Smarter Balanced Assessments**
  - ***Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines***
  - ***Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations for California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress for 2013–14, also called Matrix One: CAASPP***
  - ***CAASPP Accessibility Support Request Form***
  - ***Accessibility Guide for Classroom Activities***
  - ***Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader***
  - ***Scribing Protocol for Smarter Balanced Assessments***
  - ***Embedded Accommodation—American Sign Language (ASL)***
  - ***Technology Requirements for Text-To-Braille***

#### **Accessibility Reference Documents for Smarter Balanced Assessments**

Although some of these accessibility documents may have been announced in the earlier updates, listing them all in this issue aims at providing a quick reference for test coordinators and administrators as California enters the fourth week of the Smarter Balanced Field Test. All

documents listed are available on the [California Smarter Balanced Field Test Resources and Documentation Web page](#).

- The Smarter Balanced *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines*, a guide for local educational agencies (LEAs) to help them provide equal access for all students participating in the Smarter Balanced Field Test, is available on the [CDE Smarter Balanced Accessibility and Accommodations Web page](#).
- *Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations for California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress for 2013–14*, also called Matrix One: CAASPP, which identifies and describes the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available for all California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) assessments, including the Smarter Balanced Field Test, is available on the [CDE Assessment Information Web page](#).
- The Accessibility Support Request Form is for use by LEA CAASPP coordinators to submit to the CDE when they determine that a student needs to use a support that he or she regularly uses in the classroom, but that is not listed on the matrix. The form is available on the [California Technical Assistance Center Forms Web page](#).
- [Accessibility Guide for Classroom Activities](#) Web document provides teachers with accessibility options that can be implemented during the classroom activity for students with disabilities and English learners in order to give appropriate access to the information included in the classroom activity.
- [Guidelines for Read Aloud, Test Reader](#) Web document will assist state staff, test administrators, educators, and scribes in ensuring that read aloud is standardized and contributes to valid measures of students' college and career readiness. This resource should be used when a student cannot access text-to-speech, an embedded resource available on the Smarter Balanced assessment.
- [Scribing Protocol for Smarter Balanced Assessments](#) Web document will assist state staff, test administrators, educators, and scribes in ensuring that scribing is standardized and contributes to valid measures of students' college and career readiness.
- [Embedded Accommodation–American Sign Language \(ASL\)](#) is a Web document that provides instructions on how to access and use the ASL embedded accommodation.
- [Technology Requirements for Text-To-Braille](#) is a Web document that provides information about the technology requirements for administering the Field Test to students with the Braille accommodation.

### **Additional Information**

Additional information about Smarter Balanced is available on the [CDE Smarter Balanced Web page](#). General questions about the Smarter Balanced assessments should be directed to the CDE California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) Office by phone at [916-445-8765](tel:916-445-8765) or by e-mail at [caaspp@cde.ca.gov](mailto:caaspp@cde.ca.gov).

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**(From Braille-n-Teach April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

Hi Dr. V,

I'm sure you've heard from many teachers today regarding your question about Smarter Balanced testing. I'm forwarding an email that I got today with the latest on the status of SB testing. There are many links to documents regarding accommodations for students with special needs. I hope some of them will help in your research on this confusing topic.

What we've decided to do in our program is have the student with low vision attempt to take the test alongside their classmates. Some schools are using iPads, some desktops, and some laptops. Many of our low vision students, because of the Universal tools available to ALL students, are taking the test without additional magnification. Some students are using a computer with Zoomtext or other screen magnification programs. Our VI teachers have been working with the TIDE coordinator (essentially the testing coordinator at each school), and making sure that they input the necessary accommodations for

our students (additional magnification, having a scribe, use of an abacus, etc.).

For our braille students, we are choosing students to represent elementary, middle and high schoolers to try to take the test using a computer with JAWS and a braille display. Initially, we tried accessing the practice test with the above accommodations, and found the test to be totally inaccessible (interestingly, although SB doesn't indicate anything about using an iPad with a braille display, we were actually able to access some of the language arts portion of the test). When I attended the workshop at CTEBVI given by staff from the California School for the Blind, the staff said that they had been in contact with Smarter Balanced testing services, and that SB stated that the field test IS accessible. As of next week, we'll have a Tiger Max Embosser to see how we might be able to access and emboss the files for the test at one of our schools.

There are many questions and concerns being expressed by VI teachers and vendors alike: how can SB decree that we have to have a Tiger Max embosser to emboss the graphics of the test, and that no other embosser will suffice? Why does it have to be a Windows 7 computer with JAWS and a 40-cell braille display? Where is the troubleshooting guide to help set up and use the embosser? How do most of our braille readers access the test when they haven't had much experience using a braille display with a computer (most of our students have been using an Apex as their main computing device, with separate access to a computer via a keyboard)?

I'll stop at this point. The most important point I got from the CTEBVI workshop was that we need to document and provide lots of feedback to Smarter Balanced this year, so they can address issues related to our students' accessing the test.

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**(From Braille-n-Teach April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

Hi Eric

This doesn't address your question to the list serve exactly re SB directly but thought I would share.

..... - no one at the district or school level even begins to understand what the testing looks like for a blind student.

This is a huge discussion! I am particularly interested in how it applies to young students. We have remarked that the tech knowledge and problem solving required is far beyond the skills and concepts the student is being tested on. Regular teachers and administrators don't realize that non-visual computer access is very different visually interfacing with computer. Kids with vision have been using and observing computer screens since they were very young. I feel the leap for a kid who is blind is enormous as the task is not object based (click, drag and drop etc.), it requires much higher level concepts, skills, memorization, and problem solving.

The way this has rolled out and the lack of guidance from "up the chain" has been frustrating. We have some tenacious teachers and we've been digging and trying to figure out what we can..... In the end, the test was not accessible using a PC, JAWS and his Apex as he was not able to read or make sense of the incomplete text (not to mention there was no way for them to emboss graphics).

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**(From Braille-n-Teach April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

There are so many problems in the testing process and with accessibility, I cannot give you any encouragement at this time. Many of us have taken an active role in providing feedback and suggesting solutions to no avail. SBAC thinks they have all the right information but they really have no idea as to what they are expecting of the test taker or administrator when braille is required especially for the math portion.

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**(From Braille-n-Teach April 22, 2014) Subject: CSB Form**

Hi Eric

Perhaps you saw this, I referenced it in my document so I am attaching. It is a matrix that CSB sent out for TVIs to assist them in navigating SB testing with school sites and gathering feedback.

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**(From Pibe-division April 22, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

I know that Wisconsin is in the Smarter Balance group as well. We are still working out some of the accessibility issues. I do not have a solution for you, save that the fact that the materials were not available at the time of testing is a problem they are going to need to work out. Remember the purpose of a pilot is to find such issues. Now that they have been found, the question is what the district, the state, and the company do about them.

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**(From Pibe-division April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

My state (nh) is going to be doing this testing. My daughter's class/school is isn't in the pilot group so I am waiting to see how it goes for others. It doesn't seem right.

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**(From Pibe-division April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

While making sales calls for American Thermoform corporation, I came across the information that the tactile graphics files for SBAC need to be produced on a Tiger embosser. The state of Oregon bought 40 Tiger embossers and have deployed them around the state. There are also .brf files that can be embossed on a regular embosser. Hope this is useful.

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**(From braille-n-teach April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

I am a TVI in Nevada County, CA. I've been quite frustrated with the lack of accessibility for braille users on the Smarter Balance Test. A couple of weeks ago Jerry Kuns, AT for CSB, was here to work with some of our kids. He said that their CSB team is finally involved with the test. I would contact Jerry at [jkuns@csb-cde.ca.gov](mailto:jkuns@csb-cde.ca.gov) with your questions.

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**(From braille-n-teach April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

We, teacher and brailist, went to the Smarter Balanced website and downloaded the list of equipment needed for our students to access the test in braille. We ordered it and the district purchased what SB said it would take to be accessible. We have yet to receive all the equipment, but our braille student is not taking the test until May, so hopefully it will go well.

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**(From braille-n-teach April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

This year the Smarter Balanced test is actually testing the test; no student or school scores. Therefore there is no way to order a hard-copy braille test with embossed tactiles. Next year, and for two years beyond that hard-copy braille will be available. The current test is accessible using text-to-speech, a refreshable braille display, and print-on-demand (if you have a Tiger Max embosser). I encourage you to have the boys tested anyway to give as much feedback as possible so that the next test cycle includes the suggestions from the view of a student who is blind taking the test. The California School for the Blind did a review of accessibility and found it lacking in many ways, but the more input from actual tested students the better. Even if you cannot take the math portion due to not having the embosser that reads the right PRN files the English Language Arts might have most of the test accessible and this would be good information for the testing contractor.

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**(From braille-n-teach April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

Definitely follow up with Jonn Paris-Salb, he's got the contacts for follow up on this. We need some sort of grassroots movement to effect any change here.....

[JParisSalb@cde.ca.gov](mailto:JParisSalb@cde.ca.gov)

Please let me know how I can be involved, or if you figure out who's supposedly working on the accessibility/tech issue under the hood.

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**(From braille-n-teach April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

The CA School for the Blind had a forum at the recent CTEBVI. They were working frantically to get the accommodations to work, but concluded that it is not fixable for this year. What they did recommend is that the test be read to the students, that where there are graphics, that they be described verbally and drawn on something like a Draftsman board so the student can have a tactile graphic. In addition, they recommended that districts report what went right and what went wrong with the testing to the NFB, and to the CDE and to the Smarter Balance.

You may have received an email from Jerry Kuns a week or so ago with the contact information for reporting to the NFB.

One of my 3rd grade students has taken the test in braille: an aide read to him; some of the questions had no words in the answer choices, so he did not have the opportunity to answer. They had him say any letter just to get to the next question and that's how they finished the test. To me this was a waste of the student's time, but it did generate information to report.

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**(From braille-n-teach April 21, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

This is a nightmare for everyone right now. It is not an accessible assessment as you are finding out. Students are expected to use a refreshable braille display with a PC. There was talk of embossing on the fly the questions, but that is not going to happen. Since it is a pilot year, I will be sitting next to my student making the accommodations along the way. It is important for us to take the test and document the issues to make sure it is accessible when it counts next year. Yes, this is unexceptable. If you are interested in talking with someone in charge at the Department of Ed., I put contact info below. All the best of luck.

Shobhana Rishi

Ed.D.

Statewide Assessment Transition Office

[\(916\) 319-0201](tel:(916)319-0201)

[srishi@cde.ca.gov](mailto:srishi@cde.ca.gov)

Hope this helps.

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**(From Pibe-division April 22, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

Let me know what kind of answers you get! Because ... there is NO brailled version of the text ... it is all computer based and from what I have heard, it is not good. There has been a great deal of active discussion about it on Braille-N-Teach J

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**(From Pibe-division April 22, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

These issues will continue to be raised as we enter the era in which an increasing number of entities

implement online testing. Here in Louisiana, we are part of the PARCC Consortium as opposed to Smarter Balanced. The tests which have been given online are provided in hardcopy Braille for our blind students. Simply put, tactile graphics cannot be rendered using refreshable Braille displays—nor can textual materials which may need to be formatted spatially to convey effect (e.g., lines of poetry spaced well apart to convey theme or meaning).

I don't have any answers for the California quandary except to say that a complaint should certainly be lodged about the lack of timely accessibility. Sadly, as fewer and fewer students are given comprehensive Braille instruction and thus become Braille readers, the fight for accessibility for those few who still use Braille as a primary literacy medium may be waged by a dwindling base of support. But that is why it is so important that we remain active in the Federation and that we be ever vigilant and supportive of each other.

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**(From braille-n-teach April 22, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

One of the students in our youth program had similar issues at the elementary school level.

He also needed a braille version of the test, but I was told by the test administrators at Smarter Balanced that they would not release the digital file early so it could be brailled. They said that the student would have to be in a room with a braille embosser and the test could be printed out the day of the exam, as he was taking it. Of course, this would be a lot slower of a process for the V.I. student.

There was also some issue with reading the test file with a refreshable braille display or utilizing a screen reader as special software had to be downloaded from the test sight, and it apparently did not work well with all operating systems.

As this was a "pilot test", I hope that Smarter Balanced will address these issues. Sorry I didn't really have an answer for you, but I just wanted to share what this one student and school had experienced.

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**(From Pibe-division April 22, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

We are facing the same issues here in Washington State. We have several teachers who have taken the issue to our state agency.

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**(From Pibe-division April 22, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

Per Eric (Guillory)'s email, you should note that the NFB filed lawsuit against PARCC due to the lack of accessibility. I don't think I am at liberty to discuss how that settlement is working out, but NFB certainly has PARCC's attention right now, and maybe we need to get their legal team in on this issue with Smarter.

I do know that some at the NFB were under the assumption that Smarter Balance already had accessibility worked out.

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**(From Pibe-division April 23, 2014) Subject: Smarter Balanced testing (SBAC)**

A friend sent me this .PDF dealing with Smarter Balanced pilot testing and braille [http://sbac.portal.airast.org/pilot\\_test/resources/Smarter-Balanced-19\\_PilotTestBrailleBrochure.pdf](http://sbac.portal.airast.org/pilot_test/resources/Smarter-Balanced-19_PilotTestBrailleBrochure.pdf)

I haven't found the directions for testing when its a braille student.

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**(From Braille-n-Teach May 13, 2014) Subject:** Smarter Balanced Technology Requirments

Hi all,

How are you all purchasing the necessary technology required for Smarter Balanced Testing (ex refreshable braille displays, JAWS software, Tiger Embosser for tactile graphics)? Are you all using Low Incidence Funds or are there state testing technology funds available?