

SBAC Implementation Talking Points

- Transition to SBAC provides the Agency with an opportunity to improve the statewide assessment program, with an eye toward providing assessments that are more precise and more engaging for students than the current generation of tests. More importantly, it provides us with the opportunity to revise the statewide accountability system, moving away from a model that is driven by a single test, to one that provides a more comprehensive profile of a school's strengths and challenges, and that relies on a multiple measures approach.

- What we like about SBAC –
 - It's designed to provide information on how well schools are preparing students for college and careers.
 - It's a "balanced" testing system rather than a single summative test, including an optional interim assessment for use by local schools and teachers, as well as a digital professional development library designed to help teachers learn how to integrate formative assessment practices into classroom instruction.
 - The SBAC summative score will combine results from short, "on-demand" assessment items with longer performance tasks.
 - The summative and interim assessments are administered by computer. The new digital format allows for a variety of improvements over current pencil and paper tests, including Computer Adaptive item delivery, technologically enhanced items, and embedded accessibility tools for students with special assessment needs, including Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners.
 - SBAC will provide a suite of highly reliable systems-level measures based on a common set of academic achievement standards. It will be a very useful tool for identifying gaps between student groups, monitoring the success of strategies and interventions over time, and identifying successful schools that may have developed programs that can be disseminated to less successful schools.
 - Membership in a multi-state consortium creates the opportunity to provide higher quality assessments at a lower cost than any of the states could provide on their own.

- Major Cautions and Concerns –
 - Despite the many improvements, the SBAC summative assessments will be susceptible to the misuse and misinterpretation that have raised concerns with the current system of assessments.
 - SBAC only focuses on two academic factors related to school quality, English Language Arts and Mathematics. It does not provide a comprehensive view of



- what it takes to be an effective school. Results should always be considered in the context of multiple measures.
- Labeling a school as failing based solely on SBAC results would constitute an unfair, inaccurate and statistically indefensible use of the test scores. It will be important to avoid the “inferential leaps” that have plagued our current assessments and accountability system, and to explore ways to address this problem if USED continues to require states to embed those inappropriate uses of data into accountability policies and practices.
 - SBAC results are most reliable at the systems level. Scores should be used with great caution for evaluating individual students or as part of teacher quality evaluation. For those purposes SBAC scores are most appropriate as “conversation starters” that would initiate a review of other qualitative and quantitative measures.
 - SBAC, by design, is “a mile wide and an inch deep,” meaning that it covers a broad array of academic achievement standards but none in any great depth or detail. Again, this makes the test most appropriate for broad view analysis but needs to be supplemented by more focused measures for making critical and potentially high stakes decisions.
 - Although SBAC has been designed to address the academic skills necessary for career and college readiness, with a considerable amount of input from higher education, it will not be possible to fully evaluate the predictive validity of the program until the first students who take the test enter college or careers a few years later. Until that happens, and validity studies are completed, scores should be interpreted with a fair measure of caution.
 - Neither SBAC nor the Common Core State Standards are intended for use as a statewide curriculum. Instead, they should be considered as components of a uniform and periodic audit system that can be used within a broader system that will help identify successful schools and drive systematic improvement of instruction and student outcomes.
- Additional Points –
 - By current estimates, about 67% of Vermont schools have the technology infrastructure required to administer the SBAC assessments. However, the other 30% is represented primarily by schools that did not complete the readiness survey rather than schools that have been determined to lack tech readiness.
 - Large scale field testing this spring will provide additional information on readiness levels and will also address questions about how well 3rd and 4th grade students are prepared to take tests on computers.
 - Current cost estimates for SBAC indicate a savings for Vermont of about \$2.00 per student per test. However, given that two states recently left the consortium to develop their own assessments, we need to closely monitor how the reduced number of members might impact the cost estimates. SBAC has indicated that it will be able to absorb the fiscal impact of decreased membership through programmatic reductions. This also needs to be closely



monitored to ensure the correct balance between program quality and fiscal constraint.

