



# Assessment News

January 2, 2015

## Top News This Week

### [Achievement Levels for Smarter Balanced ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Assessments](#)

#### About Achievement Level Setting

Achievement level setting, also known as standard setting, is the process for establishing one or more threshold scores on an assessment, making it possible to create categories of performance. In April 2014, Smarter Balanced Governing States approved a three-phase design for achievement level setting.

1. An Online Panel (scheduled for October 6–17, 2014) allowed thousands of K-12 educators, higher education faculty, parents, and other interested parties to participate virtually in recommending achievement levels.
2. An In-Person Panel (October 13–19, 2014) with educators and other stakeholders working in grade-level teams deliberated and made recommendations for the threshold scores of the four achievement levels.
3. The Cross-Grade Review Committee, a subset of the In-Person Panel, examined recommendations across all grades to consider the reasonableness of the system of cut scores.

States nominated participants for the In-Person Panel during spring 2014. K-12 educators, higher education faculty, and other interested stakeholders signed up to participate in the Online Panel during an open registration period from April 22 to September 26, 2014.

On November 14, 2014, in a meeting with the consortium's state chief education officials (and/or their delegates) states voted to endorse an approved set of achievement level scores for Smarter Balanced. The states also approved a [statement](#) on the interpretation and use of scores and achievement levels.

Over the coming weeks, Smarter Balanced member states will work toward formally adopting the achievement levels. Once adopted by each state, the achievement levels will appear on score reports for assessments administered in the 2014-2015 school year. For more information, read the complete [press release](#) announcing state approval of the achievement levels.

- [Approval of Achievement Level Recommendations Press Release](#)
- [Achievement Level Setting Statements of Support](#) (PDF)
- [Interpretation and Use of Scores and Achievement Levels](#) (PDF)
- [Achievement Level Setting Auditors' Report](#) (PDF)

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- Disaggregated Field Test Data ([DOCX](#)) ([PDF](#))  
*\*Please note, this document has been made available in Microsoft Word format to facilitate use with screen readers and other assistive technologies. Please do not modify this document. The [Portable Document Format \(PDF\)](#) version that is also posted displays fonts and images in a consistent manner across devices and is the recommended version for most purposes.*
- [Achievement Level Setting Q&A](#) (PDF)
- [Achievement Level Setting Overview](#) (PDF)

## Achievement Level Descriptors and College Content-Readiness

Achievement level descriptors (ALDs) articulate the knowledge, skills, and processes expected of students at different levels of performance on the Smarter Balanced assessments. Smarter Balanced is developing an integrated suite of ALDs aligned with the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced assessment claims in [English language arts/literacy](#) and [mathematics](#). The ALDs were developed by K-12 teachers and administrators and higher education faculty from two- and four-year colleges and universities representing Smarter Balanced Governing States. The ALDs are linked to an operational definition of college content-readiness, as well as a policy framework to guide score interpretation for high schools and colleges.

- [ELA/literacy ALDs and College Content-Readiness Policy](#) (PDF)
- [Mathematics ALDs and College Content-Readiness Policy](#) (PDF)
- [Achievement Level Descriptors Glossary of Terms](#) (PDF)

## Announcement

[Achievement Level Setting Video posted to the Smarter Balanced website \(Repeat\)](#) – A video explaining the process that Smarter Balanced used to develop the achievement levels and scores approved by member states is now available on the [Smarter Balanced website](#). This video features educators and other key stakeholders from across the Consortium.

## In the News

Politico, 12/30/14

Article: Testing under fire

[http://www.politico.com/story/2014/12/testing-under-fire-113807.html?hp=t4\\_r](http://www.politico.com/story/2014/12/testing-under-fire-113807.html?hp=t4_r)

Hartford Sentinel, 12/29/14

Article: “Year in Review: Common Core standards”

[http://hantfordsentinel.com/news/local/year-in-review-common-core-standards/article\\_4ff63763-e21b-57bf-9347-b9a8a345a13f.html](http://hantfordsentinel.com/news/local/year-in-review-common-core-standards/article_4ff63763-e21b-57bf-9347-b9a8a345a13f.html)

Corvallis Gazette-Times, 12/29/14

Article: “New year, new test”

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[http://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/education/new-year-new-test/article\\_238ee7d5-29bf-535d-92c1-5695d97a8ff4.html](http://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/education/new-year-new-test/article_238ee7d5-29bf-535d-92c1-5695d97a8ff4.html)

*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 12/28/14

Op-ed: "New Smarter Balanced tests mark critical, positive step"

<http://www.reviewjournal.com/opinion/new-smarter-balanced-tests-mark-critical-positive-step>

Brandon.Info, 12/23/14

Op-ed: "New Smarter Balanced test expected to challenge students"

<http://www.brandoninfo.com/article/20141223/NEWS/141222018/1001/UPDATES>

*Napa Valley Register*, 12/22/14

Article: "Education Matters: The new Common Core standards"

[http://napavalleyregister.com/news/local/nvusd\\_update/education-matters-the-new-common-core-standards/article\\_c25e0012-f2d4-5097-9dee-2cde48d05ec5.html](http://napavalleyregister.com/news/local/nvusd_update/education-matters-the-new-common-core-standards/article_c25e0012-f2d4-5097-9dee-2cde48d05ec5.html)