

PREPARING IDAHO STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Idaho is committed to making sure every student is prepared to succeed in college and the workplace. That's why public schools are implementing the Idaho Core Standards, which are consistent guidelines for what every child should know and be able to do at each grade level. New assessments aligned with the Idaho Core Standards will measure real world skills like critical thinking and problem solving.

Administered online, these assessments will adapt to each student's ability, providing parents and teachers with more accurate and meaningful information about what students are learning. While the previous ISAT was a stagnant, multiple-choice-only test, the new Smarter Balanced

Assessment will use different types of questions to measure a student's true ability in each subject area. To date, more than 100 Idaho teachers have been involved in developing the new Smarter Balanced Assessment for Idaho.

SMARTER BALANCED IS A BETTER TEST:

The Smarter Balanced Assessment will be different from Idaho's previous ISAT in several ways:

1. The questions will challenge students. Because this test is aligned to the new Idaho Core Standards, students now are learning at a higher level in mathematics and English language arts, such as critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. Students will be measured against these higher expectations on the year-end test.
2. The new test will have different types of questions. Instead of a multiple-choice-only test, students now will be asked to explain their answers, write essays, and more.
3. The new test is more than a year-end test. The state also will provide assessment tools for Idaho's teachers to use in the classroom throughout the school year to monitor each student's progress and make sure every child is on track to reach academic goals.

QUICK QUESTIONS

What will happen to the current ISAT?

The Smarter Balanced Assessment will replace the ISAT in mathematics and English language arts. Idaho will still use the ISAT to measure students' performance in science.

What is the timeline for phasing in the new test?

Idaho is phasing in the new test over three years. In Spring 2013, 124 Idaho schools piloted the test. This year, all public schools will participate in the Field Test. Next year, the new Smarter Balanced Assessment will be fully implemented and scores will be given.

What is a Field Test?

A Field Test is a "dress rehearsal" of the test to make sure it is valid, reliable, and fair for all students and to give schools the opportunity to test their technology and logistics.

TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- Visit www.smarterbalanced.org and take a practice test with your child.
- Because the new standards emphasize critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, you should ask your child more open-ended or "why" questions. Encourage your child to think critically in everyday life. Let them know it is okay if they don't answer right away. Problem-solving takes time.
- Encourage your child to take the Field Test seriously. While this is essentially a practice round, we want every child to try their best. Make sure your child eats a healthy breakfast, gets a lot of rest and comes to school prepared and comfortable to take this test.

