

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium: Interim Assessment Guide for Administration

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1.0: Introduction to the Guide	4
1.1. Intended Audience	4
1.2. Purpose of the Guide	4
1.3. Organization of the Guide.....	4
1.4. Training and Practice Tests	5
1.5. Help Desk/Customer Service.....	5
Section 2.0: Overview of the Interim Assessments	6
2.1. Overview of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System	6
2.2. Key Features of the Interim Assessments	7
2.2.1. The Interim Comprehensive Assessments	7
2.2.2. The Interim Assessment Blocks.....	8
2.2.3. Focused Interim Assessment Blocks.....	8
2.3. Interim Assessment Blueprints.....	8
Section 3.0: Tasks to be Completed Prior to the Administration	10
3.1. Checklist of Activities.....	10
3.2. Estimated Testing Time.....	11
3.2.1. The Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs).....	11
Table 2: Estimated Testing Times for Smarter Balanced ICAs	11
3.2.2. The Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs).....	11
Section 4.0: Administering the Interim Assessments Online	12
Section 5.0: Guidelines for Administering the Interim Assessments	21
5.1. Test Security.....	21
5.1.1. Responding to Testing Improprieties, Irregularities, and Breaches.....	22
5.2. Accommodations and Accessibility	23
5.3. Use of Calculators.....	24
5.4. Electronic Devices.....	25
5.5. Scratch Paper	25
5.6. Breaks.....	26
5.7. Verbal Instructions/Script.....	26
Section 6.0: Handscoring of constructed-response items	27
Section 7.0: Viewing Scores and Results	30
7.1. The Reporting System Overview.....	30
7.1.1. Group-Level Results.....	30
7.1.2. Student-Level Results	30
7.1.3. Item-Level Results	30
7.2. Accessing the Reporting System	31

Section 8.0: SMARTER BALANCED TOOLS FOR TEACHERS	32
8.1. Smarter Balanced Tools for Teachers Overview	32
8.2. Accessing the Tools for Teachers	32
Appendix A: Additional resources.....	33

SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE

1.1. Intended Audience

This Interim Assessment Guide for Administration is intended for staff who play a role in the administration of, and review of results for, the Smarter Balanced interim assessments.

1.2. Purpose of the Guide

This document consolidates all the information about interim assessments into one resource. This includes information on the types of interim assessments (Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB), Focused IABs, and Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICA)), guidelines for administering the assessment for both non-standardized and standardized administrations, test security, accommodations and accessibility, hand scoring by educators, and the Smarter Balanced Connections Playlists available in the [Tools for Teachers](#). In most cases the guide is informational and does not mandate administration procedures. Unlike summative assessments, the interim assessments can be administered flexibly by teachers to best meet their instructional needs (e.g., in a non-standardized manner).

1.3. Organization of the Guide

The guide is organized into the following sections.

- **Overview of the Interim Assessments:** an overview of the Smarter Balanced Interim Comprehensive Assessments and Interim Assessment Blocks.
- **Tasks to be Completed Prior to Administration:** the steps that need to happen before administering the interim assessments to students.
- **Administering the Interim Assessments Online:** an overview of the test administration site and the student testing site and how to complete important tasks and functions.
- **Guidelines for Administering the Interim Assessments:** general test rules and policies for the interim assessments.
- **Hand Scoring Constructed-Response Items:** instructions for local hand scoring of constructed-response items, as needed.
- **Viewing Scores and Results:** an overview of the reports available in the Reporting System.
- **Smarter Balanced Tools for Teachers Overview:** an overview of the resources available to educators and how to access the [Smarter Balanced Tools for Teachers](#).
- **Appendices** provide links to additional resources.

1.4. Training and Practice Tests

Training and Practice Tests allow students the opportunity to become familiar with both the testing environment and different kinds of test questions.

- Student Practice and Training Test Site: <https://mtpt.tds.cambiumast.com/student>
- TA Practice and Training Test Site: <https://mtpt.tds.cambiumast.com/testadmin>

1.5. Help Desk/Customer Service

If this user guide does not answer your questions, please contact the Montana Help Desk.

Montana Help Desk
Customer Support Phone: 1-877-365-7915
Customer Support Email: mthelpdesk@cambiumassessment.com

To assist you with your issue or question, please provide the Help Desk with detailed information that may include the following:

The district and school name

The Test Administrator name and contact information

The test name and question number

Any error messages and codes that appeared

Operating system and browser information

DO NOT send student identifiable information such as names, SSIDs, birthdates, etc.

SECTION 2.0: OVERVIEW OF THE INTERIM ASSESSMENTS

2.1. Overview of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System

The Smarter Balanced assessment system is a valid, fair, and reliable approach to student assessment that provides meaningful results with actionable data for educators, students, and parents to help students succeed. The system is aligned to the Montana State Standards for English language arts/literacy and mathematics and consists of three major components—a Tools for Teachers, interim assessments, and summative assessments—all designed to improve teaching and learning.

Figure 1. Overview of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System

<h2>A Balanced Assessment System</h2> <p>With online assessments that measure students' progress toward college and career readiness, Smarter Balanced gives educators information and tools to support teaching and learning.</p> 	<h3>TOOLS FOR TEACHERS</h3> <p>An online collection of educator-created instructional resources and professional development</p> 
	<h3>INTERIM ASSESSMENTS</h3> <p>Optional and flexible tests given throughout the year to help teachers monitor student progress</p> 
	<h3>SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS</h3> <p>Year-end assessments for grades 3–8 and 11 with a computer adaptive test and performance tasks in math and ELA</p> 

The summative assessments are administered by states, to provide aggregate data to schools and districts to help inform school and program improvement goals. Summative assessment results are also used as an accountability measure, at the end of the year to determine students' progress toward college and career readiness in English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. In contrast, interim assessments are administered throughout the year in support of the formative assessment process.

All Smarter Balanced test items for the summative and interim assessments are developed using the ELA and mathematics item and task specifications and the same item writing, review, and field-testing processes. Smarter Balanced assessment items are developed through collaboration with K-12 educators and higher education faculty. Items on the ICAs and IABs are selected from the same pool of items as the summative assessment items.

Educator involvement in the development of summative, interim and formative resources is critical. Since 2011, hundreds of teachers from multiple states have contributed to each step of the development, from writing test questions to creating the resources in its Tools for Teachers.

2.2. Key Features of the Interim Assessments

The Smarter Balanced interim assessments allow teachers to check student progress throughout the year, so educators can use the results to inform instruction and help students meet the challenge of college- and career-ready standards. The interim assessments may be administered at multiple points throughout the school year and are available in ELA and mathematics in grades 3–8 and high school; however, teachers may administer individual assessments at any grade level. Out of grade-level interim administration is a local decision (e.g., administration of a grade 4 interim to students in grade 3, or a grade 3 interim to students in grade 4). The optional and flexible tests can also be used formatively (e.g., classroom discussion, small groups of students working on interim assessment items).

There are three types of Smarter Balanced interim assessments: The Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs), the Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs), and the Focused IABs. All ICAs and IABs draw from a shared bank of items, including performance tasks, meaning there are overlapping items in the IABs and ICAs in each content area and the performance task is the same whether given as an IAB or as part of the ICA.

The interim assessments are designed to be administered as computer-based assessments and are not available in paper-pencil format. All interim assessments offer the same breadth and depth of universal tools, designated supports and accommodations available on the summative assessment. Unlike the Smarter Balanced summative assessments (which are adaptive), the ICAs and IABs are fixed-form tests, which means that each student has access to the same test questions and the tests do not adapt according to student responses. Because each student responds to the same test items, teachers may more easily interpret their students' performance on a common set of items. Further, teachers can better manage hand scoring since all students respond to the same constructed-response questions.

2.2.1. The Interim Comprehensive Assessments

The Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) measure similar content to the summative assessment. Therefore, the ICAs may be helpful for purposes such as determining the knowledge and skills of students who are new to the district or the state and providing interim information after a significant period of instruction.

There is one ICA per grade and content area, which includes a performance task. The ICAs take about the same amount of time to administer as the Smarter Balanced summative assessments when administered under standardized conditions.

2.2.2. *The Interim Assessment Blocks*

The Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) are short, item-sets that include 6–18 items. Throughout the school year, teachers can use these sets of related concepts in ELA and mathematics to check students' understanding. Since the IABs are more granular than the ICAs, teachers can administer these assessments throughout the school according to the sequence of their curricula. Some of the IABs assess as many as 4 to 8 targets and other more focused IABs assess only 1 to 3 targets. Each IAB has a corresponding Connections Playlist available in the Tools for Teachers, which provides aligned resources teachers can use for instructional next steps to support student learning.

2.2.3. *Focused Interim Assessment Blocks*

Focused IABs that assess no more than 3 assessment targets and their associated instructional resources provide educators with a deeper understanding of student knowledge and skills and next steps for instruction.

2.3. Interim Assessment Blueprints

The interim assessment blueprints provide additional information about the content measured by each assessment, including which claim(s), assessment target(s), and depth of knowledge level(s) are addressed by the items, as well as the number of items by target or target group.

The ICA blueprint describes the assessed content for the comprehensive assessments, which is the same content assessed on the summative assessment. The IAB blueprints can be used by educators to plan how to integrate the IABs effectively within classroom instruction or to better understand results that are reported. The IAB blueprints can be used to determine which assessment targets are addressed in a specific IAB and the emphasis of each target relative to the other targets in the IAB. A fifth-grade teacher, for example, may wish to collect more information regarding her students' knowledge about geometry. The teacher could use the Grade 5 Geometry blueprint to see that this IAB is composed of 13 machined-scored items

across the four claims: concepts and procedures, problem solving, communicating reasoning, and modeling and data analysis.

The 2020-2021 interim assessment blueprints are available for download from the [Test Development page of the Smarter Content Explorer](#).

- [ELA/Literacy ICA Blueprint](#)
- [Mathematics ICA Blueprint](#)
- [ELA/Literacy IAB Blueprint](#)
- [Mathematics IAB Blueprint](#)
- [ELA Literacy Focused IAB Blueprint](#)
- [Mathematics Focused IAB Blueprint](#)

There is one ICA per grade and content area. There are over 100 IABs and Focused IABs across grades and content areas. The Interim Assessments Overview document lists the available ICAs and IABs. This document is updated annually and posted on the Development and Design page of the Smarter Balanced website (<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/>).

SECTION 3.0: TASKS TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO THE ADMINISTRATION

3.1. Checklist of Activities

Role*	Task	Related Resources
System Test Coordinators (DA, DC, SC)	Ensure all teachers (TE) and designated test administrators (TA) have active TIDE accounts and login information for the TA interface.	<u>TIDE User Guide</u>
System Test Coordinators (DA, DC, SC)	Ensure all TEs and TAs understand Smarter Balanced protocols and are familiar with administering a test in the Online Testing System.	<u>TA User Guide, TA Certification Course, Smarter Balanced Training Modules, Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines</u>
TE, TA	Complete the TA Certification Course to be able to administer a test in the Online Testing System.	<u>TA Certification Course</u> <i>(Found on the bottom left icon)</i>
SC, TE	Review all student information in TIDE is accurate, including demographic information and test settings. Update student information as needed.	<u>TIDE User Guide, Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines</u>
System Test Coordinators (DA, DC, SC), TE, TA	Ensure the secure browser has been downloaded onto all machines and all necessary equipment is updated and ready for testing.	<u>Quick Guide for Setting Up Your Online Testing Technology, Secure Browsers page</u>
TE, TA	Provide students the opportunity to review tools and the Online Testing System with the Practice and Training Tests.	<u>About the Training Tests</u>

* DA–District Administrator, DC–District Coordinator, SC–School Coordinator, TE–Teacher, TA–Test Administrator

3.2. Estimated Testing Time

3.2.1. The Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs)

The ICAs, which mirror the summative assessment, are best scheduled over multiple class periods, depending on grade level and content area. The following table contains rough estimates of the time it will take most students to complete the ICAs under standardized administration. Actual times will vary depending on how the assessments are administered and may not be reasonable estimates for ICAs administered in a non-standardized administration. This information is for scheduling purposes, as the interim assessments are not timed. These estimates do not account for any time needed to start computers, log in students, or for breaks.

Table 2: Estimated Testing Times for Smarter Balanced ICAs

Content Area	Grades	Non-Performance Task Items hours:mins	Performance Task (PT) hours:mins	Total hours:mins	Total hours:mins
ELA/Literacy	3–5	1:30	2:00	3:30	3:30
ELA/Literacy	6–8	1:30	2:00	3:30	3:30
ELA/Literacy	HS	2:00	2:00	4:00	4:00
Mathematics	3–5	1:30	1:00	2:30	2:30
Mathematics	6–8	2:00	1:00	3:00	3:00
Mathematics	HS	2:00	1:30	3:30	3:30
Both	3–5	3:00	3:00	6:00	6:00
Both	6–8	3:30	3:00	6:30	6:30
Both	HS	4:00	3:30	7:30	7:30

3.2.2. The Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs)

The IABs are designed to be completed within a single class period. For scheduling purposes, each IAB includes 6–18 items as reflected in the IAB blueprint. Some IABs, (e.g., the ELA PT IABs) may require more than one class period for some students to complete.

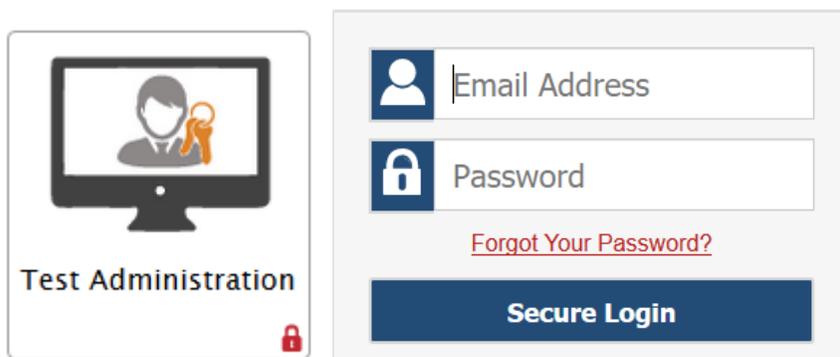
SECTION 4.0: ADMINISTERING THE INTERIM ASSESSMENTS ONLINE

The following information provides an overview of the steps needed to log in to the Online Testing System and administer the Interim Assessments. Refer to the [TA User Guide](#) for more detailed information on navigating the system.

The script included in the following section is optional for the interim assessments. The purpose of the Smarter Balanced interim assessments is to provide educators with student- and class-level results that can be used to inform instruction. TAs may want to consider using it in order to familiarize students with the testing experience in preparation for summative assessments.

1. Log in to the TA Interface

Access the TA interface via the Test Administration card at <https://mt.portal.cambiumast.com/users/smarter-balanced.stml>. The TA enters his or her username and password and clicks [**Secure Login**] to log in to the TA Interface.

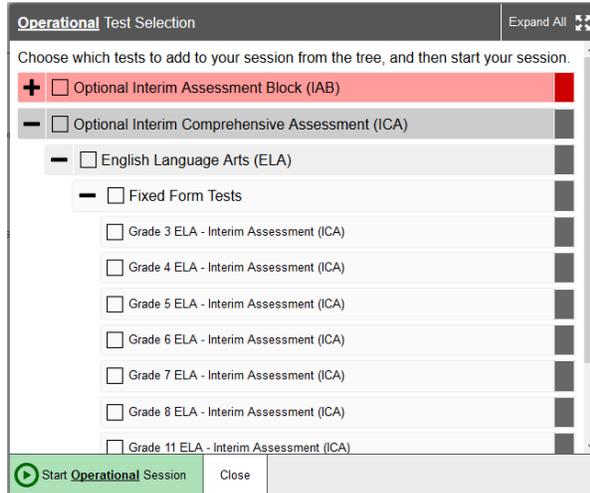
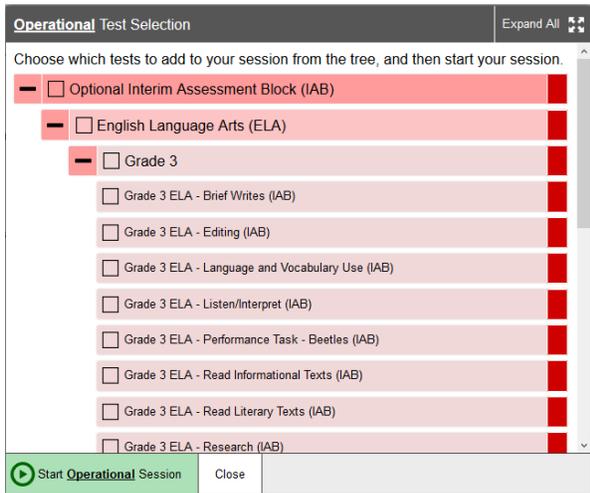


The image shows a login interface for the Test Administration system. On the left is a card with a computer monitor icon displaying a person and a key, labeled "Test Administration" with a small red lock icon in the bottom right corner. To the right is a login form with two input fields: "Email Address" (with a person icon) and "Password" (with a lock icon). Below the password field is a red link that says "Forgot Your Password?". At the bottom of the form is a dark blue button labeled "Secure Login".

2. Create the Test Session

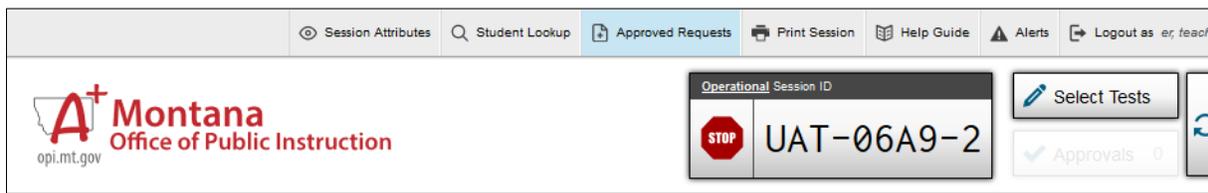
When you log in to the TA Site, the Test Selection window opens automatically. To create a test session, select the particular test(s) to be administered in the test session. Only the tests that you select will be available to students who join your session.

Afer clicking the assessment(s) to be administered during the test session, the TA clicks on the [**Start Operational Session**] button to begin the test session and generate the session ID that students use to join that test session.



3. Provide the session ID

The system-generated session ID appears in the Operational Session ID box at the top of the TA interface screen.



SAY: Today, you will take the Smarter Balanced [NAME OF TEST (i.e., ELA Grade 4 CAT)] test. You will be given a test session ID that is required to start the test. Before logging in, let's go over some test rules.

You must answer each question on the screen before clicking NEXT. If you are unsure about an answer, provide what you think is the best answer. If you would like to review that answer at a later time, mark the question for review before going on to the next question. You may go back and change the answer during this test session.

You may pause at any point in the test by clicking PAUSE rather than NEXT after answering a question. Please raise your hand if you need a break and ask permission before clicking PAUSE.

[The following should be read for the ELA ICA CAT portion only]

SAY: If you pause your test for more than 20 minutes, you will not be able to go back and change your answers to any question, even the ones you marked for review. You may check your answers to any questions before you pause your test.

[The following should be read for the Math ICA CAT in grades 6 – 11 and ELA ICA PT only]

SAY: Please keep in mind that this test is divided into segments. When you get to the end of a segment, you will be told to review your answers before moving on. Once you submit your answers and move on to the next segment, you will not be able to return to any of the questions in the previous segment.

SAY: Your answers need to be your own work. Please keep your eyes on your own test and remember, there should be no talking. If you have a cell phone, smartwatch, or other non-approved electronic devices, please raise your hand and I will collect it before the test begins.

If you finish your test early, please raise your hand and sit quietly.

4. Students log in to the Online Testing System

Give students the test session ID and other log-in information. The test session ID, the statewide student identifier (SSID), and the student's first name may be provided to students ahead of time on a card or piece of paper to help them type it in the computer accurately. Student information is confidential; therefore, the cards/papers with this information must be collected after each test session and securely destroyed after testing is complete. **The TA should write down the session ID for his or her own records, in case he or she gets involuntarily logged out of the system.** TAs may also write the test session ID on a classroom dry-erase or chalk board or another place where students can see it.

SAY: Now we are ready to log in. Once you have logged in, you will have to wait for me to approve the test before you start. I'll be checking that you have correctly entered the test session ID and other information.

Enter your legal first name, not your nickname, followed by your SSID number. Then enter the test session ID. Raise your hand if you need help typing this information on your keyboard.

Now click SIGN IN. Once you have successfully logged in, you will see a screen with your first name and other information about you. If all of the information on your screen is correct, select YES to continue. If any of the information is incorrect, please raise your hand and show me what is incorrect.

Ensure that all students have successfully entered their information. The TA should ensure that the students use their legal first names, as they appear in TIDE, not nicknames. If a student is unable to log in, he or she will be prompted to try again and provided with a message describing the reason (an invalid SSID, for example). If the student is still having difficulty, the TA can look up the correct information using the Student Lookup function on the TA Interface or in TIDE. TAs may assist students with logging in if necessary.

5. Inform students of the test session in which they are participating

SAY: On the next screen, select the [INSERT NAME OF TEST (i.e., ELA Grade 4 ICA)], and then click START TEST. After you have selected your test, you will see a screen with a moving bar and message saying that you are waiting for Test Administrator approval. Please wait quietly while I check and approve each of your tests.

Students may be able to select from more than one test, for example, an IAB in both English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. TAs should direct students to select the appropriate test name based on what the TA is planning to administer at that time. Students may only select from assessments included in the test session for which they are eligible.

6. The TA views and approves students who are waiting for test session approval

After students have selected a test, the TA verifies that each student selected the appropriate test before approving that student for testing. **It is very important that the TA pays close attention to the test name prior to approving to be sure it is the correct test to be administered at that time.** To do this:

- a. Select the [**Approvals (#)**] button.



- b. A new window opens that shows a list of students, organized by test name. The TA should review the list to ensure that students are taking the correct test.
- c. The TA should also review the test settings assigned to each student to ensure that they are correct.
 - i. If a student's settings are incorrect, do *not* approve that student to begin testing. The TA will need to work directly with a SC or System (District) Test Coordinator (DC) to correct the test settings in TIDE before approving the student to begin testing. *(Reminder: It may take up to 24 hours for changes to appear in the TA interface.)* **Ensuring the test settings are correct before the student begins testing is critical to avoid the need for a test reset that may result in additional testing for the student later.**
- d. When the correct test is selected and test settings are verified, the TA clicks [**Approve**] or [**Approve All Students**].

Approvals and Student Test Settings
✓ Approve All Students
↻ Refresh
✕ Done

3 students awaiting approval ● = Interim Comprehensive (ICA) ● = Interim Blocks (IAB)

Grade 5 ELA Interim IAB-Research

Student Name	EDUID	Opp #	See Details	Action
Garcia, Juan	99996703	1	Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Grade 3 ELA ICA

Student Name	EDUID	Opp #	See Details	Action
Jackson, Cynthia	99996701	1	Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Smith, John	999577947	1	Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SAY: You will now see a screen asking you to check your test content area and settings. If all the information is correct, you may select YES, START MY TEST. If any of it is incorrect, please raise your hand.

Each student will be logging in at a different time. The TA should monitor the sessions and log in all students who are currently ready before assisting any students who are having problems. If students will be taking an ELA assessment during the test session, read the directions in the next SAY box so the students will know how to verify that their headsets are working properly

[The following should be read for the for ELA test only]

SAY: Next you should see a screen that prompts you to check that the sound on your computer is working. Put your headsets on and click the icon of the speaker in the circle to hear the sound. If you hear the chime, click **“I could play the video and sound.”** If not, raise your hand.

Operational Test Session

0 students awaiting approval 1 print requests 2 active tests Mathematics ELA

Tests with potential issues

Student Information	Opp #	Test	Progress	Test Status	Test Settings	Actions
DemoA, StudentA SSID: 999999001	1	Grade 5 Mathematics	<div style="width: 23%;"><div style="width: 23%;"></div></div> 23%	Started more info	Custom	

Tests without issue

Student Information	Opp #	Test	Progress	Test Status	Test Settings	Actions
DemoB, StudentB SSID: 999999002	1	Grade 5 ELA	<div style="width: 100%;"><div style="width: 100%;"></div></div> 100%	Completed	Standard	
DemoC, StudentC SSID: 999999003	1	Grade 5 Mathematics	<div style="width: 24%;"><div style="width: 24%;"></div></div> 24%	Paused, 2 min more info	Standard	

If TDS detects that a student may be having technical issues or requires assistance, a “Tests with potential issues” table will appear above the “Tests without issue” table. A “more info” icon will appear in the Test Status column. Hovering over this icon will display more information about the issue. If students request a printout, a printer icon will appear in the Actions column.

Student Directions During Testing

If you notice that a student is off task, you may read the statement below **verbatim**.

SAY: It is important that you do your best. Do you need to pause the test and take a break?

If a student is concerned about an item, you may direct the student to review a tutorial by reading the script below **verbatim**.

SAY: Try your best and choose the answer that makes the most sense to you. If you are unsure about how a question works, you can review a tutorial by clicking on the “i” button from the question context menu.

Allowing the students to practice on the Training Test and Practice Test prior to testing is strongly encouraged to ensure that students are able to manipulate each item type and use the various tools and supports during testing.

IMPORTANT:

- If the TA is using the TA Interface and navigates to TIDE or the TA Practice or Training Site, the session will stop, and all students in the session will be logged out. The session cannot be resumed. A new session will have to be created, and the students will have to log in to the new session to resume testing. When starting a new session, give the new session ID to the students so they can log in and resume testing.
- If the TA Interface or TA training site browser is accidentally closed while students are still testing, the session will remain open until it times out after 30 minutes. The TA can open the browser and navigate back to the TA Interface. The TA will be prompted to enter the active session ID.

- As a security measure, TAs are automatically logged out of the TA Interface after 30 minutes of TA user inactivity and student inactivity in the test session, which will result in closing the test session. If this occurs, the TA will have to create a new session and the students will have to log in to the new session to resume testing. When starting a new session, the TA should give the students the new session ID so that they can log in and resume testing. Please note that students will not be able to return to CAT items from previous sessions, even if the responses were marked for review.

8. The TA ends the test session and logs out of the Test Administrator Site.

When there are approximately ten minutes left in the test session, the TA should give students a brief warning.

SAY: We are nearing the end of this test session. Please review your answers, including any questions you marked for review now. Do not submit your test unless you have answered all of the questions.

[The following should be read for the ELA ICA CAT portion only]

SAY: If you are working on a set of questions for a reading passage, please finish all of the questions in that set.

[The following should be read for all tests]

SAY: If you need additional time let me know.

After answering the last item in each segment, each student is presented with a screen prompting him or her to review answers (marked and unmarked) for all items available to the student prior to submitting the test. A test cannot be paused after the last item has been presented to the student.

After answering the last question, students must submit their tests. If students would like to review their answers before submitting their test, they should click [**REVIEW MY ANSWERS**] and then [**SUBMIT TEST**] after they finish reviewing. Once a student clicks [**SUBMIT TEST**], the student will not be able to review answers.

SAY: This test session is now over. If you have not finished, click PAUSE, and you will be able to finish at another time.

SAY: If you have answered all the questions on your test and have finished reviewing your answers, click SUBMIT TEST. I will now collect any scratch paper or other materials.

TAs should click [**Stop Session**] to end the test session and pause any student test in the session that is still in progress. When finished, TAs can log out of the TA Interface by clicking the [**Logout**] button at the top right. TAs should also collect any scratch paper (and graph paper for math grades 6 and up) or material with student information used to assist with logging into the test.

Guidelines for Administering Interim Assessments in Remote Instructional Environments

Smarter Balanced provides a [Remote Teaching and Learning website](#) that describes how teachers can use Smarter Balanced assessment resources during remote instruction.

Consortium members have the flexibility to allow teachers to administer, and students to take interim assessments remotely under the following conditions:

- An authorized employee (e.g., teacher, test administrator) in a school administers the test consistent with the district or school policies for in-person interim assessment administration.
- The test administrator monitors the test activity such that tests are open only for the minimum amount of time necessary for students to complete and submit their responses.
- The test administrator uses established test administration practices to support students accessing the interim assessments; this may be a phone call or chat with a parent/guardian in advance of starting the test.
- The test administrator maintains student data privacy with student State-wide Student Identifiers (SSID) and other personally identifiable information (PII), which are required to take an interim. (E.g., Do not send PII over email, chat or text or other non-secure transmission methods. Please refer to local policies regarding communicating PII.)

The test administrator follows state and local policies regarding test security and immediately escalates to the test coordinator any suspected item security issue (e.g. posting on social media).

SECTION 5.0: GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTERING THE INTERIM ASSESSMENTS

The following factors should be considered when administering the interim assessments

- **Interim assessment types:** Districts/schools may elect to administer only ICAs or IABs or both types of interim assessments during the school year.
- **Multiple administrations:** Educators have the flexibility to re-administer interim assessments any number of times. These decisions should be made as part of larger assessment context that includes the purpose of the interim assessment, how the interim assessment will be scored, and how the data from the interim assessment will be used to improve teaching and learning.
- **Fixed forms:** There is only one form of each ICA per grade and content area and one form of each of the IABs. All interims are fixed-form tests so students who take an interim for a second time see the same questions in the same order. In addition, within a grade there are overlapping items in the IABs and ICAs in each content area and the performance task is the same whether given as an IAB or as part of the ICA. Exposure to and familiarity with test questions may affect student performance and the accuracy of interim results.
- **Grade levels:** The ICAs and IABs are comprised of items aligned to the CCSS in grades 3–8 and high school. However, administering the interim assessments is not constrained by grade level. Students may take an off-grade-level interim assessment to help inform educators on skills and knowledge a student has from previous grades, or from an advanced-level course.
- **Untimed:** Both ICAs and IABs are untimed tests. The time it might take students to complete an ICA under a standardized administration is provided in this document only as a guide. Many IABs administered under a standardized administration can be completed in about one class period but some may take more than one period.
- **Hand scoring:** Performance tasks and constructed-response items that require handscoring, will now be machine scored with CAI's automated scoring engines. These scoring engines have been trained and validated at the highest standard and are widely used across several states' assessments. This application should remove some of the administration burden from teachers and allow them to continue to utilize the interim assessments as a learning and instructional tool. If a machine score is identified by the engine as having a lower confidence score assignment, educators can re-evaluate the student response and score within the Reporting System. Review of handscore items continues to be a local responsibility. See [Section 6.0: Handscoring of constructed-response items](#).

5.1. Test Security

Interim assessments can serve a variety of educator needs. To better support the range of possible uses consistent with member education agency policies, educators may establish the timeframe, administration policies, and local scoring practices for interim assessments. The

interim assessments are designated as student and teacher facing. The student- and teacher-facing designation means that educators have the flexibility to access the test questions and their students' responses to the test questions. This allows educators to use the interim assessments for the formative assessment process to improve teaching and learning. Because of this flexibility, the interim assessments are not intended to be used for accountability purposes.

The student- and teacher-facing designation also means that interim assessments are not for public use, display, or distribution. For this reason, any use, display, or distribution of the interim assessments that results in access to individuals beyond authorized local education agency staff and students is prohibited. Finally, interim assessment items must not be copied into third party systems without the permission of Smarter Balanced.

5.1.1. Responding to Testing Improprieties, Irregularities, and Breaches

Since interim assessments are not intended to be used for accountability purposes, most testing improprieties, irregularities, and breaches described in the Online Summative Assessment Test Administration Manual are not reported during an interim assessment administration. Unlike the summative assessments, teachers may discuss interim test items with students or other educators in the school and may use interim test items for instructional purposes.

There are two exceptions to this general policy:

- Testing Irregularity: A Test Administrator accidentally administers a summative assessment instead of an interim assessment.
- Breach: An adult or student shares interim items publicly

Incidents that are considered breaches for interim assessments include the following:

- Adult or student posting interim test items or stimuli on social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.).
- Adult allowing students to take home copied or printed test items, stimuli, or scratch paper that was used during the test. This includes the use of photocopiers or digital, electronic, or manual devices to record or communicate a test item.
- Adult or student posting interim test items in a third-party system (e.g., a student information system or local database).
- Adult displaying or distributing interim assessment items that results in access to individuals beyond authorized local education agency staff and students (e.g., posting on a classroom webpage or putting them into a homework packet).

These inappropriate uses of interim items may prevent a teacher from a different school or district from using an interim assessment for their planned purpose. A breach incident must be reported to the School Test Coordinator and System (District) Test Coordinator immediately. The System (District) Test Coordinator is responsible for notifying the Montana Office of Public Instruction, who will notify Smarter Balanced staff of a potential security breach.

5.2. Accommodations and Accessibility

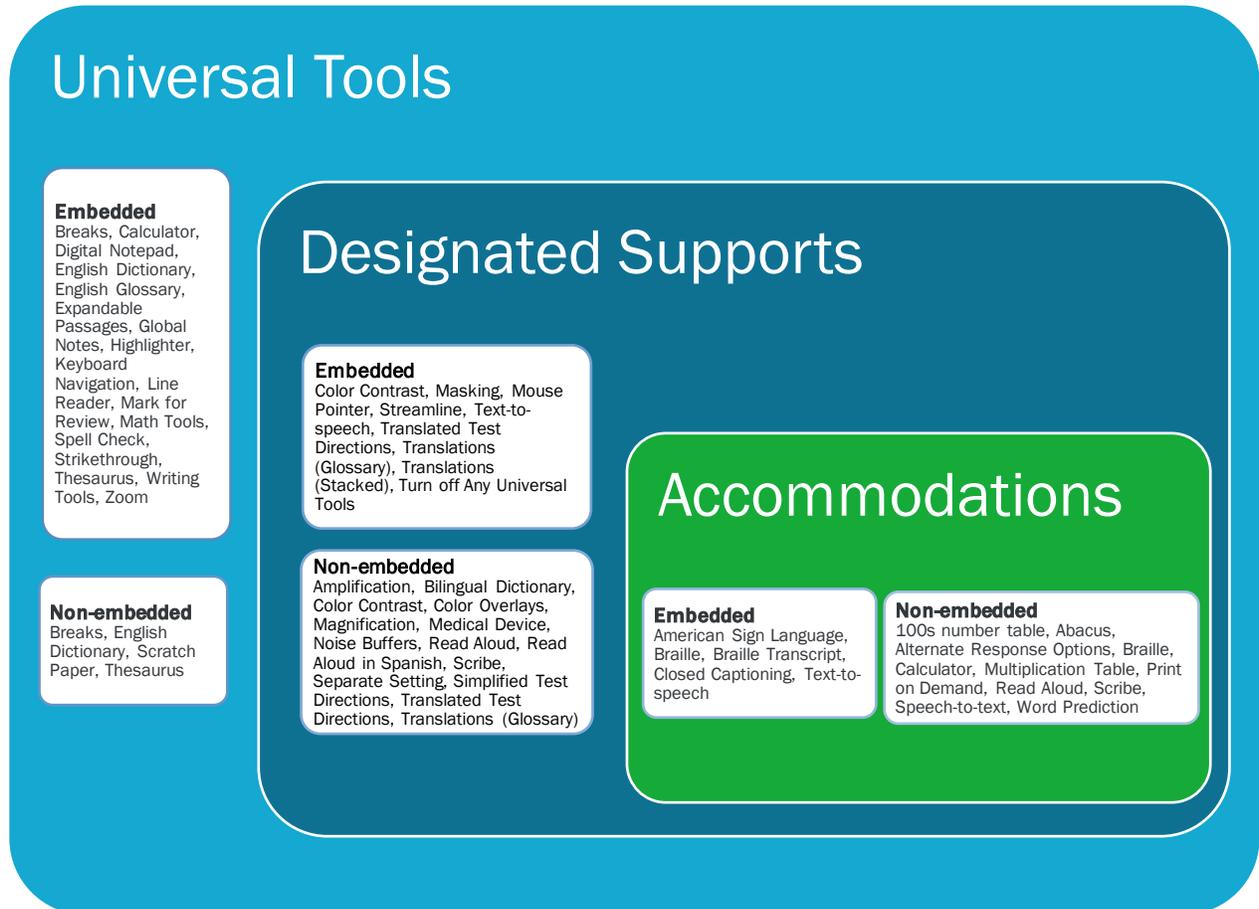
The Smarter Balanced assessment system is designed so that all students—including students who are learning English or have special needs—can participate in the tests and demonstrate what they know and can do. The interim assessments also include all the accessibility resources that are available in the summative assessment to provide accurate results for all students. Smarter Balanced accessibility resources include:

- A set of universal tools—such as a digital notepad and scratch paper—are available to all students based on student preference and selection.
- Designated supports—like a translated pop-up glossary are available to students for whom a need has been indicated by an educator or team of educators (along with the student and his or her parent/guardian) familiar with the student’s instructional needs.
- Accommodations—are available to students with a documented need noted in an IEP or 504 Plan. Accommodations include Braille and closed captioning, among others.

As shown in the following figure, each category of accessibility features—universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations—includes both embedded and non-embedded versions of the tools, supports, or accommodations depending on whether they are provided as digitally-delivered components of the test administration system (embedded) or separate from the test administration system (non-embedded). The *Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines UAAG*) that includes the full list of universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations, can be found at:

<https://mt.portal.cambiumast.com/resources/accessibility/>.

Figure 2. Conceptual Model Underlying the Smarter Balanced Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines.



5.3. Use of Calculators

The following describes calculator policies for the Smarter Balanced online summative assessments and for students taking the online interim assessments using standardized administration procedures. Teachers administering the interim assessments using non-standardized conditions or for formative purposes may offer students more flexibility regarding the use of calculators.

- An embedded calculator is available for some mathematics items in grade 6 and above. A non-embedded calculator may only be used by students with a documented accommodation in an IEP or 504 Plan per guidance provided in the UAAG. The non-embedded calculator should have no internet or wireless connectivity, and all security procedures need to be followed.
- Smarter Balanced mathematics assessments for grades 3–5 do not allow calculators to be used.

- The mathematics ICAs assessments for grades 6 through high school are divided into two sections: Calculator Available and Calculator Not Available. Some grade-level mathematics IABs have a calculator available and others do not, depending upon assessed content.
- The types of embedded calculators available on the Smarter Balanced Mathematics tests are described below.
 - Grade 6—Basic calculator
 - Grades 7 and 8—Scientific calculator
 - High School— Scientific, Graphing, & Regression Calculator

5.4. Electronic Devices

For standardized test administration conditions, students should only have what is needed and allowed for testing on their desks, unless a device is needed for medical monitoring as described in the [Usability Accessibility and Accommodation Guidelines](#). All other student belongings should be placed in the location identified by the Test Administrator.

For test administrations, no digital, electronic, or manual device may be used to record or retain test items or stimuli (reading passages). Similarly, these materials may not be shared using email, social media websites, etc. This is consistent with the interim assessments being “student and teacher facing” only and the information provided in Section 5.3 Test Security.

5.5. Scratch Paper

Scratch paper is a non-embedded universal support for students to take notes, write computations, or develop draft responses. Scratch paper should be provided to students for all of the interim assessments. Only plain paper or lined paper is appropriate for ELA. Graph paper is required beginning in sixth grade and can be used on all math assessments. A whiteboard with marker may be used as scratch paper. As long as the construct being measured is not impacted, assistive technology devices, including low-tech assistive technology (e.g., Math Window), are permitted to make notes, including the use of digital graph paper. The assistive technology device needs to be familiar to the student and/or consistent with the child's IEP or 504 Plan. Access to internet must be disabled on assistive technology devices.

For a standardized interim assessment administration, the teacher may either destroy scratch paper, or securely store it after each test session if the teacher plans to use student notes after testing for instruction. This includes when students take notes and/or draft responses to ELA or mathematics performance tasks (PTs). For the ELA PT IAB and the PT portion of the ELA ICA, the notes on the embedded universal tool, Global Notes, are retained from Part 1 to Part 2 so that the student may return to the notes even though the student is not able to go back to specific items in Part 1. While the embedded Global Notes is the preferred mode for note-taking

during the ELA PT, students may use scratch paper to make notes, create graphic organizers or develop draft responses.

To maintain the security of interim test items, teachers should direct students to write their names (or some appropriate identifying information) on their scratch paper used for notes on the ELA or mathematics PTs. The teacher should collect and securely store the scratch paper to be used during a subsequent ELA PT test session. All scratch paper must be securely destroyed or stored upon the student's completion of the PT similar to the protocol used for the summative assessment.

Work that students do on scratch paper for interim assessments may contribute to classroom discussions, (e.g., compare first drafts to later versions of a writing response). It may also help inform teacher's next steps in instruction or be used in a Professional Learning Community within the school environment. In all cases, the scratch paper must be kept securely and should be destroyed/shredded when the instructional use ends.

5.6. Breaks

There is no limit on the number of breaks or the length of a break that a student may be given according to his or her unique needs. However, for some portions of the test, breaks of more than 20 minutes will prevent the student from returning to items already attempted by the student. If the test is paused for more than 20 minutes, the student will not be able to go back to items on the previous screens. It is recommended that a single test session should not include a break longer than 20 minutes. Instead, separate test sessions should be scheduled around extended breaks (e.g., lunch).

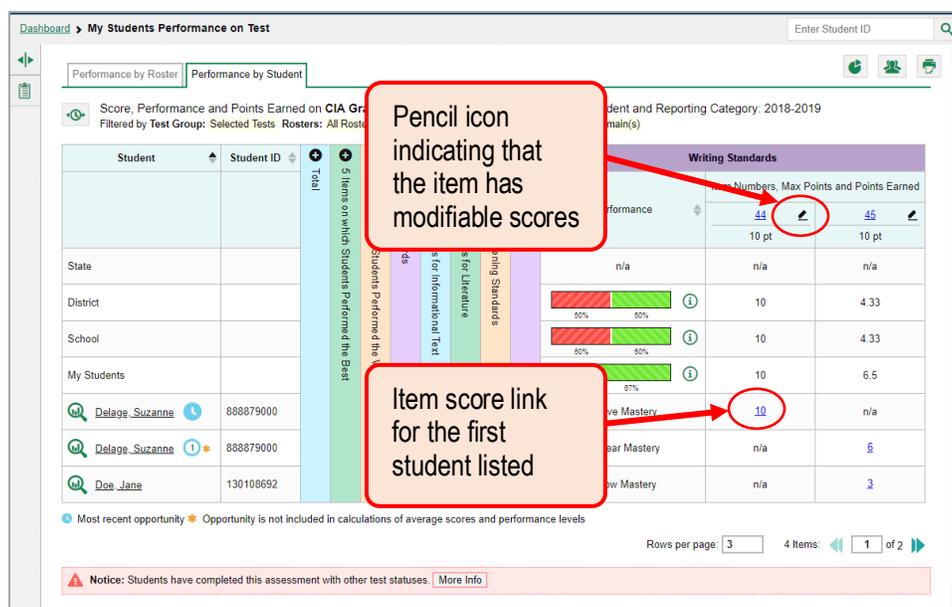
For a performance task (PT), the student can take a break for any amount of time and still return to any previously answered item within the PT's current segment only. The mathematics PT has only one part. The ELA Performance Tasks are presented in two parts. Students can take breaks within Parts 1 and 2; however, once a student moves from Part 1 to Part 2, he or she will not be able to review or revise items in Part 1. It is recommended that students complete Part 1 in one test session and Part 2 the next school day in a separate test session.

5.7. Verbal Instructions/Script

The purpose of the Smarter Balanced interim assessments is to provide educators with student- and class-level results that can be used to inform instruction. To support the intended flexibility of the assessments, a standard verbal script is not required. For a standardized administration of the ICAs, TA's may use the scripts and directions provided in Section 5.0: Guidelines for Administering the Interim Assessments.

SECTION 6.0: HANDSCORING OF CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE ITEMS

Handscore items arrive in the Reporting System with automated scores suggested by the machine scoring system, which authorized users can override if necessary. For example, all full write items have machine-suggested scores that can be overridden. If a machine-suggested score has a low confidence level,  appears next to that score number. It is highly recommended that you review low-confidence scores.



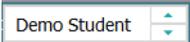
The screenshot shows a 'My Students Performance on Test' report. A table lists students with columns for Student ID, Total Score, and Performance. A red box highlights a pencil icon in the 'Performance' column, with a callout stating 'Pencil icon indicating that the item has modifiable scores'. Another red box highlights the score '10' in the 'Total' column for the first student, with a callout stating 'Item score link for the first student listed'. The interface also includes a search bar, filters, and a notice at the bottom: 'Notice: Students have completed this assessment with other test statuses. More Info'.

1. On a report with modifiable scores, click the item score link in the student's row of the report. The **Item View** window opens.

2. On the **Rubric & Resources** tab, review the item’s rubric and available resources, if necessary.
3. On the **Item & Score** tab, review the student’s entered response and click  in the Scoring Criteria table at the top of the window.



4. Do one of the following:
 1. To enter a score for the response, select a numerical score from the **Points Earned** drop-down list.
 2. To assign a condition code to the response, select one from the **Condition Code** drop-down list.
5. If the item has multiple scoring criteria, repeat step 4 for each criterion.
6. Click **Save**.

7. To continue modifying scores, do one of the following:
 3. To view another item for the same student, use the buttons   labeled with the previous and next item numbers at the upper corners of the **Item View** window.
 4. To view the same item for another student, use the up or down arrow buttons on the right side of the *Student* field  at the top of the **Item View** window.

The performance data in the test results update automatically when you close the **Item View** window.

For more detailed information on view and modifying scores in the Reporting System, refer to the [Reporting System User Guide](#).

SECTION 7.0: VIEWING SCORES AND RESULTS

Following the administration and scoring of the interim assessments, results will be available in the Reporting System.

7.1. The Reporting System Overview

The Reporting System is an interactive, online reporting platform that provides clear, easy-to-understand data on student achievement and delivers intuitive and timely reports for teachers and administrators to track student progress toward college and career readiness. Educators can view results from the interim assessments at the group, student, and item-level to help identify what students know and can do and where they might need additional support to master the content. Results may be exported to a comma-separated values (csv) or Excel file.

Teachers, principals, and district administrators who have access to the reporting system may also view, download, and print individual student reports for parents.

Below is a brief description of each level of results.

7.1.1. Group-Level Results

Group-level results can help educators evaluate the degree to which they may need to adjust their instruction by analyzing in which areas students are excelling and for which they may need additional support. The definition of a group is locally defined. Some examples are:

- A teacher's classes
- The group of students who received similar instruction or who participates in a specific program (e.g., intervention or enrichment)

The reporting system allows users to establish customized groups or to display results by grade-level, demographic category, education status (e.g., IEP, EL) within a particular school.

Instructional supports are available for each IAB and provide teachers with instructional next steps based on a group of students' performances on an IAB.

7.1.2. Student-Level Results

Student-level results provide a roster of students with each student's overall performance on a selected ICA or IAB. The report displays individual student achievement levels and claim reporting categories for ICAs and reporting categories for ICAs.

7.1.3. Item-Level Results

Item-level results provide student responses to test questions and enable educators to evaluate any patterns in responses by looking at which items the group did well on and on which items

they struggled. The item-level view for an individual student shows the claim, target, item difficulty, standard, the maximum score, and the student's score for the item.

7.2. Accessing the Reporting System

Access to student information in the Reporting System depends on the user's role, permissions, and the assignment of students to teachers which are created and maintained by districts.

Users can access the Reporting System through the CAI Single Sign On System. Users that have an account in TIDE can log into the Reporting System with their TIDE credentials to view and review student data. Group-level results are dependent on the permissions assigned to the user role (e.g., District Coordinator, School Coordinator).

See the [Reporting System User Guide](#) for complete information on navigating the system, reviewing and modifying student scores, and generating reports.

SECTION 8.0: SMARTER BALANCED TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

8.1. Smarter Balanced Tools for Teachers Overview

The Tools for Teachers website is an online collection of instructional and professional learning resources. These resources are aligned with the Common Core State Standards and help educators implement the formative assessment process to improve teaching and learning. Tools for Teachers was developed by educators for educators and provides a variety of resources, including: Instructional resources that include ideas, activities, and lessons that can be infused into classroom instruction, Instructional Resources developed by educators through a collaborative development and quality review process utilizing a set of consistent criteria,

- Formative Assessment and Accessibility Strategy resources which are embedded within instructional resources and available independently for educator use,
- Connections Playlists, which are collections of resources that provide educators with a means of understanding the student performance progressions of a concept, and
- Professional Learning Resources focused on educator professional development, mentoring, and coaching.

Tools for Teachers includes several innovative design features that make it user-friendly. State-of-the-art search features help educators locate materials which can be bookmarked and annotated with the “notes” feature. In addition, Tools for Teachers is web accessible (I.e., WCAG 2.1 AA compliant). Resources are built with the realities of classroom instruction in mind: they include options for differentiating instruction, student-focused accessibility strategies, and are embedded with cross-cutting formative assessment strategies that can be transferred to other lessons and activities. Also embedded across the site are hyperlinks to other Smarter Balanced applications to allow educators to address questions and curiosities with ease.

Tools for Teachers is embedded with “help features” throughout the site. Additional support may be needed beyond what the help function provides. Technical support for Tools for Teachers will be provided by the member. Additional information about the instructional resources is available on the Tools for Teachers page of the Smarter Balanced website

<https://smartertoolsforteachers.org/>.

8.2. Accessing the Tools for Teachers

Access to the Tools for Teachers is available to educators in subscribing states/territories and requires a username and password. Eligible educators log in or register for an account on the Tools for Teachers landing page (<https://smartertoolsforteachers.org/>)

APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources provide additional information about the Smarter Balanced interim assessments. All user guides and resources can be found on the Montana Testing Portal: <https://mt.portal.cambiumast.com/>.

Resource	Description
<i>Reporting System User Guide</i>	Describes the features of the Reporting System for Interim Assessments and Summative Assessments.
<i>What is Tools for Teachers?</i>	Provides a brief overview of the types of tools and resources available within Tools for Teachers
<i>Tools for Teachers Resources</i>	Access additional Tools for Teachers resources on the Smarter Balanced Website: https://smartertoolsforteachers.org/ .
<i>Interim Assessment Overview</i>	Provides an overview of the Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) and the Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs), describes key features of the assessments, and provides annual updates
<i>Interim Assessments Interpretive Guide</i>	Designed to help educators, parents, and other stakeholders interpret reports in the Smarter Balanced Reporting System. This document focuses on interpreting student test results from the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) and the Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs).
<i>Interim Assessment Technical Report for Educators</i>	Provides evidence in support of the validity and value of the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments, with the understanding that the flexibility of the interim assessment system allows for educators to make local decisions about its best and most appropriate uses; therefore, focuses on the development of test items and on characteristics of test forms
<i>Practice and Training Tests</i>	Practice tests are available for ELA and mathematics for all tested grades. They are similar in format and structure to the actual test and include about 30 questions based on similar but abbreviated content as the summative test. Practice Tests include Performance Tasks for each grade.

Resource	Description
	<p>Training tests are shorter than practice tests and offer a sample of six questions, so students can become familiar with the testing software.</p>
<p><u>TA User Guide</u></p>	<p>Describes the features of the Online Testing System, including creating and administering a test session for the interim assessments.</p>
<p><u>TIDE User Guide</u></p>	<p>Describes the features of the Test Information Distribute Engine (TIDE), including user information, student information, interim test eligibility, and student test settings.</p>
<p><u>Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guidelines</u></p>	<p>Describes the Smarter Balanced universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available for the Smarter Balanced assessments. The guidelines provide information for classroom teachers, English language development educators, special education teachers, and related services personnel to use in selecting and administering universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations for those students who need them.</p>