Table of Contents

Purpose of the Smarter Balanced Interpretive Guide for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics ............................................. 4
Overview of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System ........................................................................................................... 4
  Summative Assessments .......................................................................................................................................................................... 5
  Interim Assessments ............................................................................................................................................................................... 5
Two Types of Interim Assessments Smarter Balanced offers two types of interim assessments: Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB) and Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICA) The lists below provide a summary of the features of each type. ................................................................................................................................. 6
Interim Assessment Content ........................................................................................................................................................................ 7
Administration of the Interim Assessments ........................................................................................................................................... 8
  Standardized ............................................................................................................................................................................................. 8
  Non-standardized .................................................................................................................................................................................... 8
Understanding Smarter Balanced Assessment Results ......................................................................................................................... 10
  Group-Level Results ............................................................................................................................................................................... 10
  Student-Level Results ............................................................................................................................................................................. 10
  Item-Level Results .................................................................................................................................................................................. 10
Scale Scores and Error Band ..................................................................................................................................................................... 11
  Student-Level Information ........................................................................................................................................................................ 11
    Scale Scores ...................................................................................................................................................................................... 11
    Error Band ...................................................................................................................................................................................... 11
  Group-Level Information ........................................................................................................................................................................ 12
    Average Scale Scores and Error of the Mean ........................................................................................................................................ 12
Reporting Overall Performance on Smarter Balanced Assessments ...................................................................................................... 12
  Interim Assessment Blocks .................................................................................................................................................................... 12
  Summative Assessments and Interim Comprehensive Assessments ................................................................................................ 13
    Claim Scores ...................................................................................................................................................................................... 14
    Target Reports (Summative Only) .................................................................................................................................................... 14
Guidelines for Appropriate Use of Test Results ..................................................................................................................................... 16
  Tests Results are Not Perfect Measures of Student Performance .................................................................................................. 16
  Use the Entire Assessment in Combination with Other Indicators ................................................................................................. 17
  Validity of Results Depends on Appropriate Interpretation and Use ............................................................................................ 17
  Manner of Administration Informs the Use of Results ...................................................................................................................... 17
The IAB Dashboard: A Quick View of Overall Group-level Results .................................................................................................. 19
Example of Classroom Use of an IAB: End-of-Unit Assessment ......................................................................................................... 20
## Table of Contents

- Group-Level Analysis ........................................................................................................ 20
- Group Item-Level Analysis ................................................................................................ 21
- Student-Level Analysis ...................................................................................................... 22
- Claims, Targets, Domain, and Standards ............................................................................. 24
- Depth of Knowledge ........................................................................................................... 25
- Item Difficulty .................................................................................................................... 25
- Key and Distractor Analysis ................................................................................................ 27
- Writing Trait Score Report .................................................................................................. 29
- Using IAB Results to Inform Next Steps for Instruction .................................................... 31
- Smarter Balanced Digital Library ........................................................................................ 32
  - Digital Library Connections Playlists ................................................................................. 32
- Glossary of Terms ............................................................................................................... 34
- Appendix A: Resources to Support the Use of Interim Assessments ...................................... 36
  - Test Blueprints .................................................................................................................. 36
- Appendix B: A Parent and Student Guide to Understanding the Individual Student Reports ................................................................. 39
  - What Are the Interim Assessment Blocks? ...................................................................... 39
  - What Do the Interim Assessment Block Scores Mean? ..................................................... 39
  - What Are the Interim Comprehensive Assessments? ....................................................... 39
  - What Do the Interim Comprehensive Assessment Scores Mean? .................................... 39
  - What Are the Summative Assessments? .......................................................................... 40
  - Summative Assessment Results ....................................................................................... 40
  - How Accurate Are the Assessment Results? .................................................................... 40
  - One Measure of a Student’s Success ................................................................................ 40
- Sample Interim Assessment Block Individual Student Report ............................................... 41
- Sample Interim Comprehensive Assessment Individual Student Report* ............................ 42
- Revision Log ...................................................................................................................... 43
**Purpose of the Smarter Balanced Interpretive Guide for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics**

The Smarter Balanced Interpretive Guide for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics is designed to help educators, parents, and other stakeholders interpret and explain Smarter Balanced interim and summative assessment results. This guide provides guidance to consider when analyzing summative assessment data for use in accountability purposes and analyzing interim assessment data for use in making decisions about classroom instruction.

This interpretive guide includes reports available in the Smarter Balanced Reporting System, however, the guidance may be applied to similar reports in a customized version of this reporting system, or a different reporting system. The names of the reporting elements in a customized version or different reporting system may be different that those described in this document.

Appendix A provides a list of helpful resources that support the use of interim assessments. Appendix B provides guidance on the Individual Student Reports (ISR) for use in student and parent discussions.

**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 Common Core State Standards for English language arts/literacy and mathematics and consists of three major components—a digital library, interim assessments, and summative assessments—all designed to improve teaching and learning.

The summative assessments are administered by states, 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. The Digital Library and interim assessments are also available to states and territories that participate in the full system. Schools and districts may contract with a service provider to purchase the Digital Library and interim assessments if not available statewide.

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 Digital Library.

**Summative Assessments**
The Smarter Balanced summative assessments are available in ELA/literacy and mathematics to students in grades 3–8 and high school. Each content area of the online test consists of a computer adaptive test (CAT) as well as a performance task (PT). Summative assessments are administered in a standardized manner in accordance with the policies described in the Online Summative Test Administration Manual available on member’s assessment portals.

**Interim Assessments**
The Smarter Balanced interim assessments are available in ELA/literacy and mathematics to students in grades 3–8 and high school. Unlike the Smarter Balanced summative assessments (which are adaptive), the interim assessments 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.

Administration of the interim assessments is flexible and can serve a variety of educator and student needs. Schools and school districts may establish timeframes, administration policies, and scoring practices for the interim assessments, keeping in mind any guidance from their own state department of education. Educators can use the interim assessments in a standardized manner as an assessment of learning after a period of instruction, or in a non-standardized manner (e.g., teaching tool, warm-up activity) as an assessment for learning. The interim assessments are powerful resources to improve teaching and learning for all students.

"Assessment has two fundamental purposes: one is to provide information about student learning minute-by-minute, day-to-day, and week-to-week so teachers can continuously adapt instruction to meet students’ specific needs and secure progress. This type of assessment is intended to assist learning and is often referred to as formative assessment or assessment for learning. A second purpose of assessment is to provide information on students’ current levels of achievement after a period of learning has occurred. Such assessments – which may be classroom-based, districtwide, or statewide – serve a summative purpose and are sometimes referred to as assessments of learning."

California Department of Education (2014)
English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve

The interim assessments are considered student and teacher facing. The student and teacher facing designation provides educators the flexibility to access the test questions and their students’ responses to the test questions. Because of this flexibility, the interim assessments are not intended to be used for accountability purposes. Interim assessments are not for public use, display, or distribution. This allows educators to use the interim assessments in the intended manner. 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. The interim assessments also include all the accessibility resources that are available in the summative assessment to provide accurate results for all students. Finally, interim assessment items must not be copied into third party systems without the permission of Smarter Balanced.

Two Types of Interim Assessments
Smarter Balanced offers two types of interim assessments: Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB) and Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICA) The lists below provide a summary of the features of each type.

Common Features:
- are available in English-language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics
- contain high-quality items that are placed on the same scale as the summative assessments and use the full array of accessibility resources and supports available on the summative assessments
- are designed for Grades 3 - 8 and high school, but may be administered to students in any grade level
- use the same item types and formats as the summative assessments
- include performance tasks
- are administered online using the same test delivery system as the summative assessments, but are fixed-form tests, not computer-adaptive

Interim Assessment Blocks:
- focus on specific topics (e.g., Measurement and Data, Fractions, Read Informational Text);
- can usually be administered in one class period; include between 4 and 18 items depending on grade and content area;
- provide information about student performance in three categories: Above Standard, Near Standard, and Below Standard;
- include a performance task for each content area;
- may require local hand scoring if the IAB includes constructed-response items or an essay;
- may be administered to students in a manner consistent with the sequence of the curriculum; and
- may be administered as a standardized or non-standardized assessment.

Interim Comprehensive Assessments:
- measure the same content and the same standards as the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment;
- take between 3 and 4 hours to administer (like the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment);
- provide information about student performance overall (achievement levels) and for each claim in ELA and mathematics (three levels of performance);
- include a performance task in each content area;
- require local hand scoring of some constructed-response items and performance tasks;
- may be used to determine the knowledge and skills of students after a significant period of instruction; and
- may be administered as a standardized or non-standardized assessment.
Interim Assessment Content

Both the IABs and the ICAs are available in ELA and mathematics in grades three through eight and high school, though they may be administered to students in any grade for appropriate educational purposes. The ICAs assess the same content as the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment.

Beginning in the 2019–20 school year, Smarter Balanced will release new Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) focused on fewer assessment targets than most current IABs. These focused IABs are designed to measure smaller bundles of content to give teachers a better understanding of students’ knowledge and academic performance and provide teachers with precise next steps for instruction. The 107 current IABs will continue to be available to educators. These 107 include some IABs that meet the definition of a focused IAB: 19 in ELA that assess 1 target, and 20 in mathematics that assess 1–3 targets. Both existing IABs and new focused IABs consist of 10–15 items. Figure 1 describes the number of assessed targets and examples of ICAs, current IABs and Focused IABs.

Figure 1. Interim Assessments at a Glance
Administration of the Interim Assessments
The interim assessments can be administered flexibly by teachers to best meet their instructional needs. All student results will note the manner in which the assessment was administered (standardized/non-standardized). This information is provided when viewing results in the online reporting system.

Standardized
Standardized administration means that a student completes the interim assessment individually, following the procedure for administration used for the summative assessments. Results from a standardized administration can be interpreted in a consistent manner and used as a gauge of student learning that is comparable across students. In this approach, the interim assessment is used as assessment of learning after a period of instruction and results reflect an individual student’s mastery of the concepts assessed. Standardized tests can be used as part of an assessment of learning and an assessment for learning.

Non-standardized
Non-standardized administration refers to any administration that is not consistent with the administration requirements of the summative assessment. Some examples of non-standardized administration might include (but are not limited to):

- Administering tests while students answer cooperatively in pairs, in small groups, or as a whole class. Teachers may elect to include some discussion time between test items and may have students hand score items as needed.
- Providing interim assessment resources other than those approved in the Usability, Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines (e.g., use of a multiplication table by a student who does not have an IEP and a documented need for this accommodation).

**STANDARDIZED ADMINISTRATION = ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING**

**NON-STANDARDIZED ADMINISTRATION = ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING**

Because non-standardized administration does not necessarily describe the performance of individual students in a comparable manner, caution must be used when making instructional decisions based on results from a non-standardized administration and when interpreting classroom results that incorporate results from tests administered in a non-standardized manner. Remember that results from a non-standardized administration of an interim assessment are more appropriately used in the assessment for learning rather than the assessment of learning. Table 1 below provides several examples of standardized and non-standardized administration of interim assessments.
**Table 1. Possible Uses of the Interim Assessments: Examples of Standardized and Non-standardized Administration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Standardized Administration</strong></th>
<th><strong>Non-standardized Administration</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example 1:</strong></td>
<td>A teacher administers the Read Informational Texts IAB to assess the degree to which students</td>
<td>The teacher displays an item from the Read Informational Texts IAB that requires hand scoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learned the emphasized skills at the completion of a unit of instruction.</td>
<td>Using a service provider’s item viewer application, the teacher asks students to respond to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example 1:</td>
<td>question on paper. The teacher then scores the responses using the scoring guides and uses the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example 1:</td>
<td>results to inform next steps for instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example 2:</strong></td>
<td>A grade eight mathematics teacher administers the grade seven ICA in the fall to any student who</td>
<td>A teacher asks students to work in small groups and discuss the questions in an IAB as they take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>did not take the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment the previous school year. The teacher</td>
<td>the test. This is followed with a whole-class discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>uses these results, along with the grade seven summative results for the other students, as a</td>
<td>Example 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>foundation for her instructional planning at the beginning of the school year.</td>
<td>A teacher asks students to work in small groups and discuss the questions in an IAB as they take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example 3:</td>
<td>the test. This is followed with a whole-class discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A district pilots a new writing program to improve students’ writing skills. Teachers administer</td>
<td>Example 3:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the grade-level ELA Performance Task IAB. Teachers score the students’ work and discuss any</td>
<td>A teacher administers an IAB during instruction. The teacher projects the items on the screen and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impact they’ve observed in student performance.</td>
<td>elicits answers from the class followed by a discussion about the reasoning behind student responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example 3:</td>
<td>Example 3:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A teacher administers an IAB during instruction. The teacher projects the items on the screen and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>elicits answers from the class followed by a discussion about the reasoning behind student responses.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Understanding Smarter Balanced Assessment Results

The Smarter Balanced Reporting System allows educators to view results from the interim and summative assessments at the group and individual student levels. For interim assessments, the system also provides item level information to help identify what students know and can do and where they might need additional support to master the content.

**THE SMARTER BALANCED REPORTING SYSTEM SHOWS RESULTS ONLY FOR STUDENTS WHO COMPLETE THE ONLINE ASSESSMENT.**

**Group-Level Results**

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

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

The Reporting System allows teachers to view summative and interim test results for students to which they are assigned. This is typically students in the teacher’s classes. School and District users may view results for all students in the school and/or district to which they have been granted permission to access. The reporting system allows teachers to create new groups and customized groups to display results by demographic category, education status (e.g., IEP, EL) within a school.

**Student-Level Results**

Student-level results provide a roster of students with each student’s overall performance on a selected summative assessment, ICA or IAB. The report displays individual student achievement levels and claim reporting categories for summative assessments and ICAs and reporting categories for IABs. Student-level results can provide insight into those specific areas of content individual students have not yet mastered and assessed content on which they performed well.

**Item-Level Results**

Item-level results are available for interim assessments and provide information on student performance on individual items, including the student responses to test questions. This provides teachers with the information they need to evaluate any patterns in responses by looking at items on which the group did well and items on which 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.
Scale Scores and Error Band
Results from the summative and interim assessments include scale scores and an error band.

Student-Level Information
Scale Scores
Each student who completes a Smarter Balanced interim or summative assessment receives an overall scale score. The scale score is the basic unit of reporting. It allows for fair comparisons at both the individual student level and the aggregate or group level. This scale ranges from approximately 2000 to 3000.

The Smarter Balanced scale is a vertical scale, which means that student performance in all grades is reported on the same scale. This allows educators to compare a student’s scale score from a test in one grade to that student’s scale score from a test in another grade. However, this comparison should be done with caution, especially when interpreting or predicting scores for non-adjacent grade levels. An important aspect of a vertical scale is that the overall score range for each grade steadily increases, and the threshold scores between each level increase across grade levels. Figure 2 below shows the range of scaled scores for each grade and content area.

Figure 2. Smarter Balanced Vertical Scale

Scale scores provide information about overall student performance and can be used to evaluate student progress.

Error Band
Test scores are estimates of student achievement and come with a certain amount of measurement error for several reasons, including the sample of test questions administered, testing conditions, or student guessing. Each time a student takes a Smarter Balanced test, statistical procedures are used to calculate the scale score and the standard error of measurement (SEM) for the student’s score. Since this measurement error is known, the individual student report also provides the range of scores the student is likely to earn if that student were to take the test multiple times, or a test of parallel construction and similar difficulty, without receiving further instruction. This range, called an error band, represents one standard error of measurement above and below the student’s scale score.

An example of student scale score with the error band can be found in Appendix B of this document. For more examples on measurement error, please refer to “Tests Results are Not Perfect Measures of Student Performance” section on page 16.
Group-Level Information

Average Scale Scores and Error of the Mean
For group-level reports, an average scale score and error band based on the Standard Error of the Mean (SEM) for that score are displayed. The average scale score is an average of the scale scores for each individual student in the group. The average scale score is not assigned to an associated achievement level. Instead, a Student Score Distribution displays the percentage of students who performed at each achievement level. The standard error is a statistical term that measures the accuracy with which a sample distribution represents a population by using standard deviation. In statistics, the average mean deviates from the actual mean of the population—this deviation is called the Standard Error of the Mean.

Reporting Overall Performance on Smarter Balanced Assessments

Interim Assessment Blocks
Based on their individual scale scores and the error band, student results for IABs are reported as one of three reporting categories: Above Standard, Near Standard, or Below Standard. Each reporting category represents a range of scale scores. A student score distribution by reporting category is also provided for group-level reporting, providing educators with the proportion of students that performed within each reporting category.

Reporting categories used for the IABs are different from achievement levels used to communicate overall performance on the summative and ICA tests.

The IAB reporting categories that are used to classify students are calculated using the grade-level performance standard, which is defined as the summative (and ICA) cut score between Levels 2 and 3 for each tested grade, as the starting point. The student's performance on the IAB is evaluated against the grade-level performance standard. (e.g., a student's scale score for the Grade 3 Numbers and Operations—Fractions IAB is compared to the Grade 3 mathematics summative assessment performance standard as the starting point). Since the SEM represents the uncertainty around a student's scale score, the SEM is multiplied by 1.5 to create a confidence interval that likely includes the student's true score. The confidence interval is even larger than the student's SEM, so it provides greater certainty, or confidence, in the reporting category classification.

Figure 3 below contains a dot representing the scale score for each of seven students being evaluated on a Grade 4 Math IAB. The bars above and below the scale score are the confidence interval, or 1.5 times the standard error of measurement on the test. The dark horizontal line is the performance standard for the summative and ICA Grade 4 Math assessments—a scale score of 2485. If the confidence interval for the student's scale score on the IAB is completely above the performance standard, as in Students 1, 5, and 6, the student's reporting category is Above Standard. If the confidence interval for the student's scale score is completely below the performance standard, as in Students 4 and 7, the student's reporting category is Below Standard. If the confidence interval for the student's scale score touches the performance standard, as in Students 2 and 3, the student's reporting category is Near Standard, regardless of whether the reported scale score is above or below the performance standard. Please note: The scale score of some students in the Near Standard category will be either above or below the performance standard, but not far enough above or below such that we can confidently label the performance as Above Standard or Below Standard.

Figure 3. Comparison between Performance Standard and the IAB Scale Score and Confidence Interval to determine IAB Reporting Category
Please note that IAB scale scores are derived using fewer items than the overall vertical scale scores on the summative and Interim Comprehensive Assessments; therefore, the standard error of measurement for an IAB scale score will be greater than that of the overall vertical scale score.

Since the IAB reporting categories are derived in a different way from the summative and ICA achievement levels, there is not a direct comparison between reporting categories on the IABs and achievement levels on the ICA or summative test. For full technical details on the calculations used, please refer to the Smarter Balanced Scoring Specifications available on the Smarter Balanced website under Technical Documentation at http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/.

**Summative Assessments and Interim Comprehensive Assessments**

Based on their individual scale scores and the error band, student results for the summative assessment and ICAs are reported in one of four achievement levels, Level 4 (Exceeded the standard); Level 3 (Met the standard); Level 2 (Nearly met the standard); Level 1 (Did not meet the standard). The achievement levels were established by a committee of member state representatives, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders through a process called Achievement Level Setting, a process that asked participants to closely examine assessment content to determine threshold scores for each achievement level. Educators who work with English language learners and students with disabilities were also included to help ensure that the achievement levels are fair and appropriate for all students. The panelists established the level of knowledge and skills that all students should demonstrate to be ready for a variety of options after high school. Smarter Balanced members voted to approve the initial achievement levels for mathematics and ELA Literacy in November 2014.

Members voted to approve cut scores for grades 9 and 10 in February 2019. These cut scores may be used for summative assessments administered in grades 9 and 10 and for the high school ICAs administered in grades 9 and 10, as part of an early detection system of college readiness.

Beginning in the 2019-20, Smarter Balanced will release Grade 9 and Grade 10 ICAs in English language arts/literacy and mathematics.

The tables in Figure 4 below show the range of scaled scores for each achievement level in the summative assessment and ICA in mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy.
Figure 4. Smarter Balanced Summative and ICA Scale Score Ranges by Content and Grade

### Mathematics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&lt;2381</td>
<td>2381–2435</td>
<td>2436–2500</td>
<td>&gt;2500</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;2411</td>
<td>2411–2484</td>
<td>2485–2548</td>
<td>&gt;2548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&lt;2455</td>
<td>2455–2527</td>
<td>2528–2578</td>
<td>&gt;2578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&lt;2473</td>
<td>2473–2551</td>
<td>2552–2609</td>
<td>&gt;2609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>&lt;2484</td>
<td>2484–2566</td>
<td>2567–2634</td>
<td>&gt;2634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>&lt;2504</td>
<td>2504–2585</td>
<td>2586–2652</td>
<td>&gt;2652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>&lt;2517</td>
<td>2517–2600</td>
<td>2601–2675</td>
<td>&gt;2675</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2533–2613</td>
<td>2614–2696</td>
<td>&gt;2696</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&lt;2543</td>
<td>2543–2627</td>
<td>2628–2717</td>
<td>&gt;2717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### English Language Arts/Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&lt;2367</td>
<td>2367–2431</td>
<td>2432–2489</td>
<td>&gt;2489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;2416</td>
<td>2416–2472</td>
<td>2473–2532</td>
<td>&gt;2532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>&lt;2442</td>
<td>2442–2501</td>
<td>2502–2581</td>
<td>&gt;2581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&lt;2457</td>
<td>2457–2530</td>
<td>2531–2617</td>
<td>&gt;2617</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>&lt;2479</td>
<td>2479–2551</td>
<td>2552–2648</td>
<td>&gt;2648</td>
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<td>2487–2566</td>
<td>2567–2667</td>
<td>&gt;2667</td>
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<td>&lt;2489</td>
<td>2489–2570</td>
<td>2571–2671</td>
<td>&gt;2671</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>&lt;2491</td>
<td>2491–2576</td>
<td>2577–2677</td>
<td>&gt;2677</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>&lt;2493</td>
<td>2493–2582</td>
<td>2583–2681</td>
<td>&gt;2681</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Claim Scores**

The reporting system displays claim scores for the summative assessments and ICAs. A claim is a summary statement about the knowledge and skills students will be expected to demonstrate on the assessment related to an aspect of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The ELA/literacy Claims are Reading, Writing, Listening, and Research. The mathematics claims are Concepts and Procedures, Problem Solving, Communicating Reasoning, and Modeling/Data Analysis. Claim scores are reported in one of three reporting categories: Above Standard, Near Standard, or Below Standard. These reporting categories are determined using the same calculation used to determine the IAB overall reporting categories. (See page 12 for additional information.)

**Target Reports (Summative Only)**

Each Smarter Balanced Claim for ELA/literacy and mathematics includes a set of assessment targets that provide more detail about the range of content and Depth of Knowledge levels. For the summative assessment, target-level scores are calculated for each ELA/literacy claim. For mathematics, target-level scores are calculated for Claim 1 only. The reporting system displays aggregate target-level reports for each summative assessment. Target scores are reported as Performance Relative to the Entire Test and Performance Relative to Level 3 (Met the standard).

**Performance Relative to the Entire Test**
Performance Relative to the Entire Test is reported in one of three reporting categories: Better, Similar or Worse. This report indicates whether a group of students' performance on a target was better than, the same as, or worse than the students' performance on the entire test. A "Worse" indicator does not necessarily mean poor performance on a target, but rather that students' performance in this area was weaker than their overall performance.

**Performance Relative to Level 3 (Met the standard)**

Performance Relative to Level 3 (Met the standard) is reported in one of three reporting categories: Above, Near, or Below. This report indicates whether a group of students' performance on a target was above, near, or below the performance standard (Level 3: Met the standard). A "Below" indicator suggests that students have not yet mastered the content assessed in a target. The sample target report shown in Figure 5 below, shows the students' average scale score and error of the mean. For Target 1, the students performed as well on this target as they did on the entire test and also performed near Level 3. This indicates neither a strength nor a weakness for this assessed content. For Target 4, students performed worse than they did on the entire test and below Level 3 which indicates a possible weakness for this target.

**Figure 5: Sample Target Report for Summative Assessment**

![Sample Target Report for Summative Assessment](image)
Guidelines for Appropriate Use of Test Results

Many variables influence test results and it is important that educators understand the following guidelines when analyzing assessment results to inform educational decisions.

Tests Results are Not Perfect Measures of Student Performance

All tests include measurement error; no test is perfectly reliable. An error band is included with a student’s test score as an indicator of its reliability. A statistical calculation is made by the system, determining how much worse or better the student could be expected to do on the assessment if the student took the test multiple times. Since performance could increase or decrease, the error band is represented on the report by the entry after the scale score, with a +/- before it.

For example, as shown in Figure 6 below, a Grade 6 student takes the ELA Interim Comprehensive Assessment and receives a score of 2542 with an error band of +/- 69 points. The error band indicates that the student’s true score lies between 2473 (2542 minus 69) and 2611 (2542 plus 69). This means that if the student took a test with a similar difficulty again without receiving further instructions, using either a different sample of test questions, or taking the test on a different day, his or her score would likely fall within the range given by the error band. The student’s scale score falls within the Level 3 achievement level. With the error band, the student’s true score falls within both Level 2 and Level 3.

Figure 6. Student’s Scale Score and Error Band

Measurement error in testing may result from several factors such as the sample of questions included on the test, a student’s mental or emotional state during testing, or the conditions under which the student took the test. For example, student factors, like whether the student was tired, hungry, or under stress, classroom factors such as noise or temperature, or technical issues with the computer might all affect the student’s test performance. In addition, any required human scoring for a test item may also influence the test result due to factors associated with the accuracy of the human scorer.

REMEMBER:

IABs are fixed-form tests. Repeated exposure to the same test items may influence a student’s score, therefore educators should be mindful about how often a student responds to the same IAB.
Measurement error in testing is expected and unavoidable. Using a test result in conjunction with other indicators about student performance improves the accuracy of judgments about what students know and can do.

Use the Entire Assessment in Combination with Other Indicators

Items in an interim assessment vary in format, content, target skill, and difficulty level. While it may be possible to make some inferences about what students know and can do based on their performance on a single test item, students’ performance on the entire test is a better indicator of students’ knowledge and skills.

All test results include some degree of error. Therefore, it is critical to use results from a test in combination with other information about student learning. This can encompass student work on classroom assignments, quizzes, observation, and other forms of evidence.

Educators may use assessment results as one part of an “academic wellness check” for a student. The test results, when analyzed alongside additional information about the student, can strengthen conclusions about where the student is doing well and where the student might benefit from additional instruction and support.

Validity of Results Depends on Appropriate Interpretation and Use

The Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments were designed to be used by educators to evaluate student performance against grade-level standards. When used as designed, results from the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments can provide useful information to help educators improve teaching and learning for their students. However, any inferences made from the test results may not be valid if the test is used for purposes for which it was not designed and validated.

Manner of Administration Informs the Use of Results

Teachers may use the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments in several ways to gain information about what their students know and can do. When a test examiner begins a test session for the interim assessment, the examiner must first determine if the test will be administered in a standardized or non-standardized manner of administration.

The teacher selects the manner of administration when starting a test session. Non-standardized is the default setting if the teacher doesn’t select Standardized.

When combined with other forms of evidence, results from standardized administrations can be reasonably used to gauge student knowledge and growth over time after a period of instruction because those results represent individual student knowledge. Standardized administration of the IABs is much like an end-of-unit test and can be used both as an assessment of learning and an assessment for learning.

Non-standardized administration of the interim assessments is done primarily for learning. Results from a non-standardized administration should be used with caution when evaluating an individual student. Individual student scores may be produced, but if a student is working with other students, the individual student scores are not reflective of the individual student’s ability. However, non-standardized administrations may yield valid results for other purposes. The goal of a non-standardized administration is to learn where students are succeeding and where they might need more support during instruction.
MORE THAN ONE MEASURE OF STUDENT PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE SHOULD ALWAYS BE USED TO MAKE EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS.
The IAB Dashboard: A Quick View of Overall Group-level Results

The Smarter Balanced Reporting System IAB Dashboard provides educators with a quick view of overall results for the IABs administered to a group of students. A teacher can view the score distribution for each IAB to see the percentage of students who performed in each reporting category (Above, Near, and Below Standard) as shown in Figure 7 below. The teacher can also see which IABs were completed by all students in the group.

Figure 7. IAB Dashboard

The teacher can see from the IAB Dashboard that not all 25 students in the class completed each IAB. The score distributions for each IAB show overall group performance so the teacher can quickly see on which IABs students did well and which they did not do well. By selecting an IAB, the teacher can see more detailed information about student performance.
Example of Classroom Use of an IAB: End-of-Unit Assessment

In this section, we provide an example of how an educator might use one of the IABs to improve teaching and learning in her classroom. Included in this example are screenshots from the Smarter Balanced Reporting System that illustrate the different views available to educators to analyze the data and interpret it within their local context. Results will be analyzed at the group level, individual student level, and item level. At each level, highlights of appropriate use and cautions will be provided.

SAMPLE SCENARIO

Ms. Garcia is a third-grade teacher who administers the grade three ELA IAB Read Information Text as one measure of how well her students can read closely and analytically to comprehend a range of increasingly complex informational texts.

Group-Level Analysis

As shown in Figure 8 below, Ms. Garcia’s classes had an average scale score of 2374 on the Grade 3 ELA – Read Informational Texts IAB. She can also see the error band (Standard Error of the Mean) of +/- 27 points. This means that if a test of parallel design were given to these students on another day without further instruction, their average scale score would likely fall between 2347 (2374 minus 27 points) and 2401 (2374 plus 27 points).

Figure 8. Group-Level View of IAB Results
Ms. Garcia can see from the Student Score Distribution section that 5% of her students scored within the Above Standard reporting category, 57% of the students scored within the Near Standard reporting category, and 38% scored within the Below Standard category.

From the group results page, Ms. Garcia can access links to instructional resources. Each IAB has an associated Digital Library Connections Playlist. Connections Playlists are time-saving tools that were developed by teachers for teachers. Each playlist provides resources that were selected and organized based on the reporting categories for an IAB. More information about Connections playlists is available on the Digital Library page of the Smarter Balanced website. In addition to the Smarter Balanced Connections Playlists, districts and schools may include links within the Reporting System to local district or school resources.

There are several ways that Ms. Garcia can access these resources. By selecting the “Instructional Resources” button, Ms. Garcia can access resources for all reporting categories. To view resources that would be useful for students at particular reporting categories, she can select the book icons located on the student score distribution and student rosters. Through any of these links, Ms. Garcia can find resources to:

- provide students who scored above standard with instruction designed to enrich and expand their skills; and
- provide differentiated instruction based on student needs.

See page 32 for additional information about the Digital Library.

**Group Item-Level Analysis**

For each item in the IAB, the Ms. Garcia can see the claim, target, item difficulty, the relevant standard assessed, and the proportion of students who received full credit, as well as the proportion of students at each score point.

For example, as shown in Figure 9, item #5 is noted as Difficult. Ms. Garcia sees that 40% of her students received full credit on Item #5. Continuing in the same row, she can also see that 60% of her students did not receive any points on Item #3 and 40% received the maximum of one point. This information indicates a need for additional support.

**Figure 9. Item-Level View of IAB Results: Group Scores**

Ms. Garcia can also sort on the Full Credit column to quickly identify test items that students performed well on and items where students struggled.
Student-Level Analysis
To inform her teaching to help students comprehend a range of increasingly complex informational texts and provide better instructional support to her students, Ms. Garcia can use individual student performance results by looking at the “Results by Student” screen as shown in Figure 10 below. The “Reporting Category” column is sortable so that Ms. Garcia can easily identify the students who performed within each reporting category.

Using the test results for students in the Above Standard reporting category, combined with her knowledge of student performance on classroom assignments, homework, and other observations, Ms. Garcia makes inferences about her students’ ability to read and comprehend informational text. She is confident that students who scored in the Above Standard category have mastered the skills and knowledge taught in the classroom and are in no need of additional support on that content.

Because she feels confident in the abilities of more than half of her students, Ms. Garcia chooses to focus her attention on the students who scored in the Below Standard category, suspecting that there might be need for additional instruction for that group. Ms. Garcia remembers that the information from the IAB is only one measure and it should always be used in combination with other information about her students. However, the information from the IAB can assist her in adjusting instruction to the specific needs of her students, thereby improving teaching and learning in the classroom. For example, Ms. Garcia could use the reporting categories to determine the specific needs of her students and tailor the instruction and processes of collaborative learning groups to meet those needs.

Figure 10. Results by Student View of IAB Results

As shown in Figure 10, Ms. Garcia can select an individual student from the group list (by selecting the blue box with the student’s name) to examine the student’s performance on items within the IAB. When an individual student is selected, Ms. Garcia can select the option to view the student’s responses and a screen showing each item in the IAB is displayed as shown in Figure 11 below.
Ms. Garcia selects item number 1 and the following three tabs appear Item Viewer, Rubric and Exemplar, and Item Information as shown in Figure 12 below.

By examining student responses in the Item Viewer tab, Ms. Garcia can identify patterns in student responses that might reveal common misconceptions or misunderstandings. If several students chose the same incorrect response, for example, Ms. Garcia can isolate areas to revisit with her class.
As shown in Figure 13 below, the Rubric and Exemplar tab shows the exemplar (i.e., correct response), any other possible correct responses to the item, and a rubric that defines the point values associated with specific responses. For multiple-choice questions, the key or correct response is provided.

**Figure 13. Rubric and Exemplar Tab**

As shown in Figure 14 below, the Item Information tab describes the claim, assessment target, domain, and standard that the item assesses. This tab also provides the Depth of Knowledge, the item difficulty, and links to other supporting documentation.

**Figure 14. Item Information Tab**

**Claims, Targets, Domain, and Standards**

Claims and targets are a way of classifying test content. The claim is the major topic area. For example, in English language arts, reading is a claim. Within each claim, there are targets that describe the knowledge and skills that the test measures. Each target may encompass one or more standards from the CCSS. Within the Reading claim, for example, one of the targets is concerned with finding the central idea in a text. Domains are large groups of

**Depth of Knowledge**

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels, developed by Webb (1997), reflect the complexity of the cognitive process demanded by curricular activities and assessment tasks (Table 2). Higher DOK levels are associated with activities and tasks that have high cognitive demands. The DOK level describes the kind of thinking a task requires, not if the task is difficult in and of itself.

**Table 2. Depth of Knowledge Levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOK Level</th>
<th>Title of Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Recall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Skills and Concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Strategic Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Extended Thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Item Difficulty**

Each Smarter Balanced test item is assigned a difficulty level based on the proportion of students in the field-test sample who responded to that item correctly. The students who responded to the item are referred to as the reference population. The reference population determines the difficulty level of a test item. (Note: The reference population for an item consists of all the students who took the test the year the item was field-tested. Depending on when the item was field tested, the reference population may refer to students who took the spring 2014 Field Test or a subsequent summative assessment that included embedded field-tested items.)

Test items are classified as easy, moderate, or difficult based on the average proportion of correct responses of the reference population, also referred to as the average proportion-correct score (Table 3). The average proportion-correct score can range from 0.00 (no correct answers meaning the item is difficult) to 1.00 (all correct answers meaning the item is easy).

**Table 3. Item Difficulty Categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty Category</th>
<th>Range of Average Proportion Correct (p-value) Score</th>
<th>For items worth more than 1 point, the average proportion correct score is the item’s average score among students in the reference population divided by the maximum possible score on the item. For example, if the average score for a 2-point item is 1, its average proportion correct score is 1 divided by 2, or 0.50. In this example, that test item would be rated as moderate on the item difficulty scale.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Minimum 0.67 Maximum 1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Minimum 0.34 Maximum 0.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>Minimum 0.00 Maximum 0.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Easy items** are answered correctly by at least 67% of the students in the reference population.
Moderate items are answered correctly by 34-66% of the reference population.
Difficult items are answered correctly by 33% or fewer of the reference population.

As previously shown in Figure 14, item #1 is aligned to Standard 3.RL.5 (Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently) and assesses Reading claim, Target 13 (TEXT STRUCTURES/ FEATURES: Relate knowledge of text structures or text features (e.g., graphics, bold text, headings) to obtain, interpret, or explain information). This information tells Ms. Garcia what concepts and skills the item assesses.

Ms. Garcia can also see from this tab that Item #1 is classified as difficult. Ms. Garcia can include item difficulty in her inferences about student performance because item classification provides her with additional context when reviewing test results and considering instructional implications.

Student scores on more difficult items should be treated differently from the scores on less difficult items. For example, if half of the students get an item wrong, Ms. Garcia should avoid making generalized inferences about student needs. Instead, Ms. Garcia can account for the item difficulty when drawing conclusions from test results to determine what students know and can do. If the item is rated difficult, Ms. Garcia’s conclusions about her students may differ from conclusions based on an item rated easy. If half of the students answer an easy item incorrectly, she may decide to re-teach the concepts addressed in that item. On the other hand, if half of her students got a difficult item incorrect, she may choose to address that result by encouraging additional practice on this type of item.
Key and Distractor Analysis

For selected response items on IABs and ICAs, a teacher can analyze whether a large number of students selected a particular incorrect response, which may signal a common misconception about a topic or skill. This report is available by selecting Key/Distractor Analysis from the dropdown in the “Select a results view” as shown in Figure 15 below.

Figure 15. Select to View Key/Distractor Analysis

As shown in Figure 16 below, the Key and Distractor Analysis view displays information for multiple-choice and multi-select items. The teacher can see the claim, target, item difficulty, and related standard(s) for each item, the percentage of students who earned full credit for each item, and the percentage of students who selected each answer option. (For multi-select items that have more than one correct answer, these percentages may not add up to 100 percent.) The teacher can sort the list by the percentage of students who earned full credit to see those items on which students had the greatest difficulty and then determine whether there were incorrect answers that many students selected. (The correct answers are shaded.)
The teacher identifies Item 9 as one on which several students selected the same incorrect answer, D. To learn more about this item, the teacher can select the item number and see four tabs, Student Scores and Responses, Item Viewer, Rubric and Exemplar, and Item Information as shown in Figure 17 below. From the Student Scores and Responses tab, the teacher can sort on the Response column to see which students incorrectly selected option D. By selecting the Item Viewer, the teacher can see all the response options and, using other information about the students based on classroom discussion and assignments, begin to form hypotheses about why those students may have chosen the incorrect response option.
Writing Trait Score Report

Each ELA Performance Task IAB and ELA Interim Comprehensive Assessment (ICA) includes a full write or essay question. For these tests, a Writing Trait Score is provided, as shown in Figure 18 below, that allows teachers to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of student writing based on student performance on the essay question.

Figure 18. Group Report on the Essay Question

![Group Report on the Essay Question](image)

This report provides the information found on other group summary reports (average scale score and error band, student score distribution and item information). In addition, it indicates the writing purpose of the essay question. The purpose may be argumentative, explanatory, informational, narrative, or opinion depending on the grade level of the assessment (Note: The current version of the Smarter Balanced Reporting System Sandbox indicates “Not Specified.”)

The report provides the average points earned by the group of students and maximum number of points for each writing trait. The three writing traits describe the following proficiencies in the writing process.

- **Purpose/Organization**: Organizing ideas consistent with purpose and audience
- **Evidence/Elaboration**: Providing supporting evidence, details, and elaboration consistent with focus/thesis/claim, source text or texts, purpose and audience
- **Conventions**: Applying the conventions of standard written English; editing for grammar usage and mechanics to clarify the message
There is a maximum of four points for organization/purpose, four points for evidence/elaboration, and two points maximum for conventions.

The report also displays the Transformed Points value that is calculated by adding the Conventions score to the average of the Organization/Purpose and Evidence/Elaboration scores. These two values represent two dimensions that are used to compute the student’s overall scale score and the Claim 2 – Writing reporting category for the ELA ICA.

A student’s score is computed as follows:

- Organization/purpose: 4 points earned  
  Average = (4+1)/2 = 2.5, which is rounded up to 3 points
- Evidence/elaboration: 1 points earned
- Conventions: 2 points earned

3 + 2 = 5 Transformed Points

The report also provides the percentage distribution of students by the number of points they earned for each writing trait and the percentage of students who earned each possible number of Transformed Points.

Hand scoring training guides are available in the Interim Assessment Hand Scoring System. The guides include the rubrics and annotated scored student responses that are used to determine student scores.

The Performance Task Writing Rubrics are also available in the links below:

- Argumentative (PDF)
- Explanatory (PDF)
- Informational (PDF)
- Narrative (PDF)
- Opinion (PDF)

As shown in Figure 19 below, the teacher can view the writing trait scores for individual students by selecting the blue box for item 3. This displays a report on individual student performance by writing trait and Transformed Points earned. The teacher can sort by Transformed Points to quickly identify students who performed well and those who need additional support. The Student Scores and Responses tab allows the teacher to read each student’s essay after selecting the blue box with the student’s name. The Item Viewer displays the essay question as it appeared on the test. The Rubric and Exemplar tab provides the writing rubrics and the Item Information tab provides information about the claim, target, standard, item difficulty, and Depth of Knowledge.
As teachers review these results, they should keep in mind all the same caveats about considering student scores in the context of everything else known about a student’s performance, factoring in the difficulty of the test item and manner of test administration, and recognizing that no test or single test question should be used as the sole indicator of student performance. Using all the information about their students, teachers can determine whether the class or individual students need additional support related to the writing process. Teachers can also use the rubrics and student test score information to help students and their families understand where a student’s writing skills are on track and where they need further practice.

**Using IAB Results to Inform Next Steps for Instruction**

The IAB results can provide information about:

- group and individual student knowledge after completing a unit of study; and
- student response patterns on each item.

The IAB results can help educators:

- identify students who have a strong grasp of the material and need enrichment activities to support expansion of their skills;
- group students by knowledge/skill level for differentiated instruction; and
- pinpoint areas to emphasize during classroom instruction.

To further help educators use IAB results to inform instruction, the Smarter Balanced Reporting System links directly to the Smarter Balanced Digital Library.
Smarter Balanced Digital Library

The Smarter Balanced Digital Library is an online collection of instructional and professional learning resources created by educators for educators. All resources are aligned to the CCSS, Smarter Balanced assessment targets, and one or more formative assessment attributes. The resources are designed to help educators implement the formative assessment process to improve teaching and learning. The resources can support instruction by:

- providing guidance on differentiated instruction for diverse learners;
- increasing educator’s assessment literacy;
- engaging students in their own learning;
- designing professional development opportunities; and
- providing materials for Professional Learning Communities.

For more information about the Digital Library, including how to receive login information for educators in Smarter Balanced states, is available at [http://www.smarterbalanced.org/educators/the-digital-library/](http://www.smarterbalanced.org/educators/the-digital-library/).

Digital Library Connections Playlists

Created by expert educators in collaboration with Smarter Balanced, the Digital Library Connection Playlists link student performance on the IABs to resources in the Smarter Balanced Digital Library (DL). These documents can be easily accessed through the Instructional Resources button in the Smarter Balanced Reporting System. Each IAB has an associated Digital Library Connections Playlist. Educators can use these documents to find relevant and useful instructional supports that are aligned to students’ needs.

The DL Connections Playlists provide just a sample of educator-recommended DL resources that can supplement curriculum and other classroom activities, such as the example shown in Figure 19 below. The DL Connections Playlists are not meant to replace curriculum or define an instructional sequence. Many of the resources can be implemented “as-is,” while others will likely need to be adapted to suit unique classroom and individual student needs. By considering IAB results along with other classroom assessment results and professional judgment, educators can decide how to use DL resources to support their instruction.

Figure 19. Smarter Balanced Connections Playlist for Grade 5 Fractions
To create the DL Connections Playlists, educators reviewed the items in each IAB, determined the skills and knowledge aligned to each reporting category, and identified corresponding resources in the DL.
## Glossary of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievement Level</strong></td>
<td>A category of performance based on students’ scaled scores on the ICA and summative assessment. The four achievement levels indicate progress toward meeting the expectation of content mastery and college and career readiness: Level 4: Standard Exceeded; Level 3: Standard Met; Level 2: Standard Nearly Met; Level 1: Standard Not Met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Scale Score</strong></td>
<td>Information about the average performance of students in a defined group for the tested grade and subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Claim</strong></td>
<td>A summary statement about the knowledge and skills students are expected to demonstrate on the assessment related to a particular aspect of the CCSS. The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment for ELA includes claims in reading, listening and speaking, writing, and research/inquiry and for mathematics includes concepts and procedures, problem solving and modeling &amp; data analysis, and communicating reasoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common Core State Standards (CCSS)</strong></td>
<td>A set of standards that describe what students should know and be able to do in mathematics and English language arts/literacy in each grade K–12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confidence Interval</strong></td>
<td>A calculated range around the student’s scale score on the IAB, equal to 1.5 times the standard error of measurement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correctness</strong></td>
<td>Value arrived at by dividing the maximum score possible for an item by the student’s score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Depth of Knowledge (DOK)</strong></td>
<td>Levels that describe the cognitive demand associated with curricular activities and assessment tasks (not to be confused with difficulty).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Difficulty (Item Difficulty)</strong></td>
<td>The rating of an item as easy, moderate, or difficult is based on the proportion of students who answered the item correctly. See page 18 for the definitions of the item difficulty categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain</strong></td>
<td>Larger groups of related standards in the mathematics CCSS (e.g. Numbers and Operations—Fractions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Error Band</strong></td>
<td>A student’s test score can vary if the test is taken several times. The error band is the level of uncertainty around a student score. The error band represents a score range that the student’s score would likely fall within if the student took the test multiple times before any additional instruction or learning occurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exemplar</strong></td>
<td>An example of a response that would earn full credit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IAB</strong></td>
<td>Interim Assessment Block that measures a limited portion of the material taught at each grade level, such as fractions or reading a literary text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ICA</strong></td>
<td>Interim Comprehensive Assessments that measure the same content as the summative assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key and Distractor Analysis</strong></td>
<td>An item analysis feature that displays the percentage of students who selected the correct response option(s) (Key) and incorrect response items (Distractors).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERFORMANCE STANDARD</strong></td>
<td>The scale score associated with the cut score between the Level 2 and Level 3 achievement levels on the summative assessment for a particular grade and content area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REFERENCE POPULATION</strong></td>
<td>The reference population is a group of students. In this context, the reference population for an item consists of all the students who took the test the year the item was field-tested. Depending on when the item was field tested, the reference population may be students who took the Spring 2014 Field Test or a subsequent summative assessment that included embedded field-tested items. These students’ responses to test items were used to classify each item into one of three difficulty categories—easy, moderate, or difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REPORTING CATEGORY</strong></td>
<td>A category of performance based on students’ scaled scores on the IABs. The three reporting categories are: Above Standard, Near Standard, and Below Standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RUBRIC</strong></td>
<td>A scoring guide for evaluating the quality of student responses that describes the performance expectations for each test item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCALE SCORE/STUDENT SCORE</strong></td>
<td>The score, ranging from 2000 to 3000, based on student results on a Smarter Balanced assessment. Smarter Balanced uses a single vertical scale across all tested grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STANDARD ERROR OF MEASUREMENT</strong></td>
<td>The statistical uncertainty around a student's true scale score, which may be affected by several factors such as the sample of questions included on the test, a student's mental or emotional state during testing, or the conditions under which the student took the test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STANDARD ERROR OF THE MEAN</strong></td>
<td>The standard error is a statistical term that measures the accuracy with which a sample distribution represents a population by using standard deviation. In statistics, a sample mean deviates from the actual mean of a population—this deviation is the standard error of the mean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STATUS</strong></td>
<td>An indication of how the IAB was administered, including whether the test was a standardized or non-standardized administration, and whether the test was completed or partially complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TARGET</strong></td>
<td>Describes the expectations of what will be assessed by the items and tasks within each claim. Also known as an assessment target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WRITING TRAIT SCORES</strong></td>
<td>Measures of the following writing proficiencies: Purpose/Organization: Organizing, Evidence/Elaboration, and Conventions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A: Resources to Support the Use of Interim Assessments

Several resources, including the Smarter Balanced Content Specifications, Item and Task Specifications, and the interim assessment test blueprints, are available to support educator understanding and use of the IABs and ICAs:

- The content specifications provide information about the claims and targets assessed on the interim and summative assessments.
- The item and task specifications provide guidance on how to translate the Smarter Balanced Content Specifications into actual assessment items.
- The interim assessment test blueprints provide information about the claims and targets assessed on each IAB, the number of items, and the Depth of Knowledge for the items.
- The summative assessment test blueprints provide information about the claims and targets assessed on each ICA and the Depth of Knowledge (for the items. However, because the ICAs are fixed-form tests, the number of items on an ICA is not a range as noted on the summative blueprints.
- The Digital Library Connections Playlists provide instructional resources housed in the Smarter Balanced Digital Library that are linked to student performance on the IABs.
- The Digital Library includes instructional and professional learning resources developed by educators for educators in ELA, mathematics, and other subject areas.

Test Blueprints

IAB blueprints are available for both ELA and mathematics. The IAB blueprints contain information that will help educators understand the content of each IAB and ways in which the IABs might be effectively integrated within classroom instruction. The blueprint includes:

- The IABs available for each grade level
- The number of items included in each IAB
- The focus of each IAB, including information about the:
  - Claim(s)
  - Assessment target(s) and the emphasis of each target relative to other targets in the block
  - DOK level(s) addressed by items
  - The number of items by type (for ELA only - e.g., short text, machine scored)

The Interim Assessment Overview and Blueprints for IABs in mathematics and ELA can be found at:

http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/

Summative assessment blueprints are available for both ELA and mathematics. The summative assessment blueprints contain information that will help educators understand the content of each ICA and summative assessment.

- Each summative assessment blueprint includes information about the:
  - Claim(s)
Assessment target(s) and the emphasis of each target relative to the other targets
- DOK level(s) addressed by items
- The types of items (for ELA only - e.g., short text, machine scored)

The Summative Assessment Blueprints for mathematics and ELA can be found at:
http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/development/

Sample Use of the IAB Blueprints

A Grade 5 teacher wishes to determine the writing expectations for students who will take the ELA IABs.

After reading the blueprints, the teacher understands that the Revision IAB is composed of fifteen machine-scored items and that students are expected to revise narrative, informational, and opinion texts as shown in Figure A1 below.

Figure A1. Grade 5 Block 4 IAB: Revision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Assessment Target</th>
<th>DOK</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Total Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>1b. Revise Brief Texts (Narrative)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 Machine Scored</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3b. Revise Brief Texts (Informational)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 Machine Scored</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6b. Revise Brief Texts (Opinion)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 Machine Scored</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL ITEMS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking further, the teacher sees another IAB on brief writes composed of six Short Answer items across the same three writing purposes, each requiring hand scoring as shown in Figure A2 below.

Figure A2. Grade 5 Block 3 IAB: Brief Writes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Assessment Target</th>
<th>DOK</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Total Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>1a. Write Brief Texts (Narrative)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0 Machine Scored</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3a. Write Brief Texts (Informational)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0 Machine Scored</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6a. Write Brief Texts (Opinion)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0 Machine Scored</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL ITEMS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These items are designed for hand scoring and may be AI scored with an application that yields comparable results by meeting or exceeding reliability and validity criteria for hand scoring.*
The teacher also finds a performance task that deals solely with research and informational writing. It includes 1 machine scored and 3 human scored items as shown in Figure A3 below.

**Figure A3. Grade 5 Block 8 IAB: Informational Performance Task**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Assessment Target</th>
<th>DOK</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Total Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>2. Compose Full Texts (Narrative)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>2. Interpret &amp; Integrate Information (2)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Analyze Information/Sources (0)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Use Evidence (1)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL ITEMS 4

39 The Writing PT score is derived from a single student response scored on three distinct traits. There are also two or three Research items in each PT, for a total of three or four items per task.

Given the differences in class time required to administer each IAB and the amount of time needed to score them, the teacher decides which IAB best meets the instructional needs of the class.
Appendix B: A Parent and Student Guide to Understanding the Individual Student Reports

This guide explains the Individual Student Reports for Interim Assessment Blocks, Interim Comprehensive Assessments, and Summative assessments, and provides additional resources to help you understand what a student knows and can do.

What Are the Interim Assessment Blocks?
Interim Assessment Blocks are computer-based assessments teachers can use throughout the school year to focus on sets of concepts in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. Most Interim Assessment Blocks can be administered in a single class period. They provide teachers, parents/guardians, and students with information about what concepts students have already mastered and where they might need additional help. For more information about Interim Assessment Blocks visit the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Web site at: https://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/

What Do the Interim Assessment Block Scores Mean?
A student’s score is a number between 2,000 and 3,000 that falls into one of three reporting categories: Below Standard, Near Standard, or Above Standard. The score provides information about what a student knows and can do based on the assessed content. A student’s teacher will use the score, along with other information, such as classroom assignments and quizzes, to decide what additional support is needed to help the student master the material covered in class.

What Are the Interim Comprehensive Assessments?
Interim Comprehensive Assessments are computer-based assessments teachers can use during the school year that measure the same content as the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment. There is one Interim Comprehensive Assessment for each grade level in English language arts/literacy and mathematics and each assessment includes a performance task. The Interim Comprehensive Assessments provide information about overall student performance in English and mathematics. For more information, visit the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Web site at: https://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/

What Do the Interim Comprehensive Assessment Scores Mean?
A student’s score is a number between 2,000 and 3,000 that falls into one of four achievement levels (Level 4: Standard Exceeded; Level 3: Standard Met; Level 2: Standard Nearly Met; Level 1: Standard Not Met). The score provides information about what a student knows and can do based on the assessed content. Claim scores provide information about the knowledge and skills students are expected to demonstrate on the assessment related to a particular aspect of the learning standards. For example, a claim within the English Assessment is reading. Claim scores are reported in one of three reporting categories: Above Standard, Near Standard, or Below Standard. A student’s teacher will use these results, along with other information, such as classroom assignments and quizzes, to decide what additional support is needed to help the student master the material covered in class.
What Are the Summative Assessments?
The summative assessments are administered by states, 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. The Smarter Balanced summative assessments are available in ELA/literacy and mathematics to students in grades 3–8 and high school. Each content area of the online test consists of a computer adaptive test (CAT) as well as a performance task (PT). For more information, visit the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Web site at: https://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/

Summative Assessment Results
Similar to the Interim Comprehensive Assessment scores, a student’s score is a number between 2,000 and 3,000 that falls into one of four achievement levels (Level 4: Standard Exceeded; Level 3: Standard Met; Level 2: Standard Nearly Met; Level 1: Standard Not Met). The score provides information about what a student knows and can do based on the assessed content. Claim scores provide information about the knowledge and skills students are expected to demonstrate on the assessment related to a particular aspect of the learning standards. For example, a claim within the English Assessment is reading. Claim scores are reported in one of three reporting categories: Above Standard, Near Standard, or Below Standard.

How Accurate Are the Assessment Results?
All tests include error, meaning that test results are not perfect measures of what a student knows. On an IAB report, there is an error band that is reported as a +/- number. The error band is located next to the student’s score. The error band accounts for the fact that several factors may affect a student’s test score, such as the sample of test questions, the student’s mental or emotional state during testing, or the conditions under which he or she took the test. For example, being tired, hungry, or under stress and classroom factors such as noise or temperature, or technical issues with the computer might all affect a student’s test performance.

One Measure of a Student’s Success
Assessment results are only one measure of a student’s academic performance. They should be considered along with other available information, such as classroom tests, assignments, grades, and feedback from the teacher, in deciding what additional support a student needs to succeed in his or her learning.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS PROVIDE ONE MEASURE OF A STUDENT’S STRENGTHS AND AREAS WHERE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MIGHT BE NEEDED.
Sample Interim Assessment Block Individual Student Report

1) Student information: name, grade, school, district, and state
2) Name of report
3) Definition of Error Band
4) Name of the assessment
5) Student’s scale score and error band information (If this student took the test again without further instruction, the student’s scale score would likely fall within this range.)
6) Date of the assessment and student’s reporting category
7) Frequently Asked Questions
8) Useful information and additional resources about interim assessments
**Sample Interim Comprehensive Assessment Individual Student Report***

1. **Name of report, type of assessment, subject, and year**
2. **Student information: name, grade, school, district, and state**
3. **Student’s scale score and error band and a description of the student’s achievement level**
4. **Information about the student’s achievement: scale score, achievement level, error band, and other possible achievement levels with maximum and minimum scores for each level**
5. **Student’s achievement for each of the tested claims**
6. **Additional information**

*Note: The Summative Assessment report includes the same reporting elements for achievement levels and claims.*
### Revision Log

Updates to the Interim Assessments Interpretive Guide after September 15, 2017 are noted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description of Change</th>
<th>Revision Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Updated screen shots for Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10</td>
<td>3/16/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Added new screen shots, Figures 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15</td>
<td>3/16/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Moved the original “Item-Level Analysis” section up to “Group Item Level Analysis”</td>
<td>3/16/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-25</td>
<td>Added new section for Key and Distractor Analysis</td>
<td>3/16/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-27</td>
<td>Added new section for Writing Trait Scores</td>
<td>3/16/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Added new section for IAB Dashboard with new Figure 4. Renumbered existing figures accordingly.</td>
<td>6/25/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Updated screen shots and associated text for Figures 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17</td>
<td>6/25/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38-40</td>
<td>Updated screen shots and associated text for the Sample IAB and ICA Individual Student Reports</td>
<td>6/25/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Updated the language about interim assessments being considered “non-secure/non-public” to match the current description “student- and teacher-facing” to align with the Interim Assessments Overview document posted on the Smarter Balanced website</td>
<td>2/21/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Added an example to clarify Providing interim assessment resources other than those approved in the Usability, Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines</td>
<td>2/21/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>In Table 1, clarified Example 1 under Non-standardized</td>
<td>2/21/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Changed the example under Test Results are Not Perfect Measures of Student Performance to ICA results and added Figure 4 to illustrate the example. All subsequent figures re-numbered accordingly.</td>
<td>2/21/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Updated screen shot for new Figure 16: Group Report on the Essay Question</td>
<td>2/21/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Replaced text about “total points” with “Transformed Points” to clarify how the writing trait scores are used to calculate a student’s overall score and Claim 2 – Writing reporting category for ELA ICAs and summative assessments</td>
<td>2/21/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Change Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Updated new Figure 17. Individual Student Report on the Essay Question</td>
<td>2/21/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Updated screen shot of Sample Interim Comprehensive Assessment Individual Student Report</td>
<td>2/21/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover page</td>
<td>Changed the title from “Interim Assessments Interpretive Guide” to Interpretive Guide for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics Assessments</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables and Figures</td>
<td>Removed this page</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Revised the first paragraph to include information about interpreting results for summative assessments.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moved the section about interpreting student results for IABs and ICAs to the Interim section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Replaced the section titled “Smarter Balanced Assessment System” with a new section, “Overview of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System” with language and screen shots from the Smarter Balanced website.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Under Two Types of Interim Assessments, added the complete names for IABs and ICAs in the first sentence</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Changed the name of the section from “Assessment Content” to Interim Assessment Content.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removed “and the same standards” in, “The ICAs measure the same content and the same standards as the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Added information about Focused IABs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Added new Figure 1. Interim Assessments at a Glance and renumbered subsequent figures accordingly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Under Administration of the Interim Assessments, removed a reference to manner of administration (standardized/non-standardized) being available on printed student reports</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Updated Table 1 to match the examples of standardized and non-standardized uses of the interim assessments to match the Interim Assessment Guide for Administration</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Under Understanding Smarter Balanced Assessment Results, changed references to the “Interim Assessment Reporting System” to the Smarter Balanced Reporting System” and added information about summative assessments.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Under Group-Level Results, changed “a classroom of students” to “A teacher's classes,” removed “a grade level of students” and clarified the definition of a group of students.

Under Student-Level Results, added information about the roster of students that provides information about individual students.

Under Item-Level Results, clarified that these are available for interim assessments only, and added a description of item information that is provided for each item (claim, target, item difficulty, standard, maximum score, and the student’s score for the item).

<p>| 11 | Under Scale Scores and Error Band, added a reference to summative assessment results including scale scores and an error band. | 10/29/2019 |
| 12 | Added a section titled Group-Level information that includes information about average scales scores, the Student Score Distribution, and Error of the Mean. Changed the title of the section from “Reporting Overall Performance on Interim Assessments” to “Reporting Overall Performance on Smarter Balanced Assessments” Under Interim Assessment Blocks, clarified the description of the IAB reporting categories in the 3rd paragraph. In the description about Figure 3, replaced “achievement level” with “scale score” in the last sentence. | 10/29/2019 |
| 13 | In the second paragraph under Figure 3, changed “performance levels” to “reporting categories” for IABs and added “achievement levels on” the ICA or summative test in the last paragraph. Also added a reference to the Smarter Balanced website for the location of the Scoring Specifications. Changed the section title from “Interim Comprehensive Assessments” to “Summative Assessments and Interim Comprehensive Assessments.” Added information about summative assessments including a description of the Achievement Level Setting process. Added information about approved cut scores for grades 9 and 10 and the release of Grade 9 and Grade 10 ICAs beginning in 2019-20. In Figure 4, added the scale score ranges for grades 9 and 10 Mathematics and grades 9 and 10 English Language Arts/Literacy Under Claim Scores, clarified that the reporting system displays claim scores and added the names of the Claims for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics. | 10/29/2019 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Added a section about Target Reports for summative assessments, including information about how target performance is reported (relative to the entire test and relative to Level 3 (Met the standard).</th>
<th>10/29/2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Added new Figure 5: Sample Target Report for Summative Assessment and renumbered subsequent figures accordingly</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Replaced the screen shot in Figure 6: Student's Scale Score and Error Band with an updated report and changed the accompanying text accordingly. Under Use the Entire Assessment in Combination with Other Indicators, replaced “assessment form” with “interim assessment” and “IAB” with “test” in the first paragraph.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Under The IAB Dashboard: A Quick View of Overall Group-level Results, added “Smarter Balanced Reporting System” before “IAB Dashboard” in the first paragraph.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Replaced the screen shot in Figure 8 with an updated report and changed the descriptive text accordingly.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Under Claims, Targets, Domain, and Standard, updated the location of more information about claims, targets, and standards on the Smarter Balanced website.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Replaced references to “Ms. Garcia” with “the teacher” since this is not part of an example of Classroom use of an IAB. Replaced screen shots in Figure 15 with updated reports and changed the accompanying text accordingly.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Replaced the screen shots in Figures 16 and 17 with updated reports and changed the accompanying text accordingly.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>In the Writing Trait Score Report section, removed references to “Ms. Garcia” and replaced with “the teacher.” Replaced the screen shot in Figure 18 with an updated report and changed the accompanying text accordingly.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Added Standard Error of the Mean to the Glossary of Terms</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Replaced screen shot in Figure A1 with updated blueprint (“Short Text” changed to “Short Answer.” Replaced screen shot in Figure A2 with updated blueprint (“Short Text” changed to “Short Answer” with footnote explaining that these items require hand scoring. Added reference to Short Answer items in the accompanying text.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Replaced screen shot in Figure A3 with updated blueprint (Narrative Performance Task) and changed the accompanying text accordingly.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Changes</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Changed the title of Appendix B from “A Parent and Student Guide to Understanding the Interim Assessment Reports” to “A Parent and Student Guide Understanding the Individual Student Reports.”&lt;br&gt;Added “and Summative assessments to the first paragraph.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Added two new sections, “What Are the Summative Assessments?” and “Summative Assessment Results.”&lt;br&gt;Changed the title of the next section from, “How Accurate are the Interim Assessments?” to “How Accurate Are the Assessment Results?”</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Replaced the screen shot of the Sample Interim Assessment Block Individual Student Report with an updated report and changed the accompanying text accordingly.&lt;br&gt;Added new #3 “Definition of Error Band” and renumbered the next elements accordingly.</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Replaced the screen shot of the Sample Interim Comprehensive Assessment Individual Student Report with an updated report and changed the accompanying text accordingly.&lt;br&gt;Added “Student’s scale score and error band to #3 and “*Note: The Summative Assessment report includes the same reporting elements for achievement levels and claims.”</td>
<td>10/29/2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>