**SUGGESTED NEWSLETTER CONTENT  
NOTE:** Most hyperlinks below will not be live until February 6 at 6 a.m. Pacific time. All communications materials are available for use and download on [our toolkit page](https://thesocialpresskit.com/smarter-balanced-toolkits#Sample-Items-Release).   
 **Newly Released Sample Questions Can Help Support Instruction**

The Smarter Balanced [Sample Items Website](http://www.sampleitems.smarterbalanced.org) now includes 104 newly released test questions that previously appeared on the year-end (summative) math and English language arts tests in grades 3-8 and high school. Educators can use the sample test questions to better understand how Smarter Balanced measures college and career ready content and what students need to know and do.

The newly released questions add to the nearly 500 questions that already appear on the Sample Items Website. The questions feature the full suite of accessibility resources, including translations and an illustration glossary in math to support English language learners.

Another exciting addition to the Sample Items Website is student writing samples for performance tasks. The writing samples include explanations to help teachers better understand how the papers were scored.

In late February, the Sample Items Website will support printing of the released test questions. Additional enhancements will be available in late spring.

**SIDEBAR**

**How to access the newly released questions**

To locate the 104 newly released test questions, please see the [handy interactive dropdown list](http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/samples/) on the Smarter Balanced Website or [the handout](http://portal.smarterbalanced.org/wp-content/uploads/Sample-Items.pdf) that lists all the newly released questions by grade, subject, and question ID. You can click on the question IDs directly in the dropdown list and handout, or input them into the [Sample Items Website search filter](http://sampleitems.smarterbalanced.org/BrowseItems).

**SIDEBAR**

[**VIDEO**](https://youtu.be/s_PYhBgHQTo)**: How we ensure test questions are high quality**

Every year, educators collaborate to create the questions that appear on Smarter Balanced tests.

"Once (the questions) are written, having multiple people look at them and bear in mind the accessibility issues, bias and sensitivity, alignment to the standards. It's a whole group that does this. It's not just one person's opinion,” said Ellen Irish, an elementary school teacher from Oregon.

Teachers then review each question. This ensures that the questions are fair and accurately measure what students know and can do.

"The most important piece to me is that we read the question and make sure that it is clear for the students, concise (not too wordy), and accurate,” said Dina Haney, an elementary school teacher from California. “We want to make sure there is no bias. We want to make sure that it's accessible to all students."

**INTERNAL USE FOR MEMBERS**

**Talking points**

* Sample Items Website includes newly released test questions that previously appeared on the Smarter Balanced summative assessment. The newly released questions add to the nearly 500 high-quality questions that already appear on the Sample Items Website.
* The questions feature the full suite of accessibility resources, including translations and an illustration glossary in math to support English language learners.
* The Sample Items Website can help educators, parents, and students familiarize themselves with how items are displayed and function on the end-of-year English language arts and math assessments.
* Every year, hundreds of educators participate in creating and reviewing the questions that appear on Smarter Balanced tests. This ensures that the questions are fair and accurately measure what students know and can do.
* Each test question is rigorously analyzed by experts before appearing on an actual test. The questions that do not make the cut are not added to the bank of questions.

**Questions and Answers**

* **Where do these new sample test questions come from?**

The newly released sample test questions previously appeared on the Smarter Balanced end-of-year tests in math and English language arts.

* **Why is Smarter Balanced releasing new test questions now?**Smarter Balanced tests require a large bank of questions to give students, teachers and parents the best information about what students know and can do. By working with educators for multiple years, the consortium has created a question bank that’s large enough so that we can now release questions.
* **How can educators use these newly released test questions to support their instruction?**

Educators can use these new sample test questions:

* + to understand how Smarter Balanced measures college- and career-ready content,
  + to dig into how items and tasks are scored, and
  + to interact with a full range of question types and accessibility resources.
* **How are Smarter Balanced test questions created?**

Every year, hundreds of educators participate in creating and reviewing the questions that appear on Smarter Balanced tests. This ensures that the questions are fair and accurately measure what students know and can do.

* **What happens to a question after it goes through the approval process by educators?**

Each item is rigorously analyzed by experts before appearing on a test by asking students to respond to questions as part of our field-testing process, which is essentially a test of the question.