

**Smarter Balanced Assessment
Implications from Observations**
November, 2013

“We need to change our habits of teaching and learning.”

| Summative Statement | Specific Action | Evidence/Research-Based practices HOW |
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| Reading/writing | | |
| Students must be able to analyze author’s craft at the word and sentence level; determine/infer central idea/theme; go back into the text to re-read for different purposes; determine how words, sentences, and paragraphs serve the writing as a whole. | Teach students to analyze author’s craft at the word and sentence level; determine/infer central idea/theme; go back into the text to re-read for different purposes in grade-level text. | To deeply understand text we must engage in and practice the art of close reading regularly. |
| Students and teachers must be familiar with and use the vocabulary associated with the CCSS, e.g., <i>claim, text structure, lesson, author’s purpose, author’s craft.</i> | Make agreements on vocabulary and how we use it. | Teachers need to work together, not in isolation. Develop a district glossary. |
| There is no writing without reading. | All content areas need to focus on reading and responding (written) using proper format and appropriate conventions. | |
| A new focus on listening for details/information. | Teach students how to listen and support thinking with what they hear. Teach students how to take notes when listening to a speech. | Provide regular practice with listening to others, listening and answering, and listening with and without text transcript as part of classroom tasks. Play audio stories for students who already have questions to give students purpose for their listening. Set a purpose for each lesson/read aloud. Direct instruction—note taking strategies. Written responses to short, structured read-alouds or recorded materials. |

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| Students must be able to answer text-dependent questions that emphasize critical thinking and use text evidence to support their thinking. | <p>Teach students how to support their thinking with direct evidence from the text.</p> <p>Teach students how to recognize relevant evidence.</p> <p>Teach note taking skills.</p> <p>Ask focused questions requiring critical analysis to develop an appropriate answer.</p> | <p>Provide resources and develop teachers' skills for creating and using text-dependent questions.</p> <p>Make text annotation a regular part of classroom activity.</p> <p>Practice a variety of ways to take notes from a variety of sources across content areas.</p> <p>Shift focus from narrative to evidence-based writing.</p> |
| Students do more research-based informational writing, especially in elementary school | Teach students how to research, including: citing sources, comparing sources, determining relative importance of evidence. | Work with librarians for research/resources. |
| Claims and counterclaims are both included in questions and performance tasks. | Teach students how to support a claim by arguing against a counterclaim. | |
| Students must be able to choose/write a topic sentence/claim for a paragraph. | | |
| Vocabulary/Language | | |
| Grammar is a specific focus on parts of the assessment. | Grammar and usage must be taught to a higher level sooner. | Identify and correct grammatical problems in students' own writing |
| Students must be able to revise a passage with a focus on word choice and elaboration | Enrich vocabulary and teach students how to revise their writing by choosing more specific language and adding appropriate details. | Provide students with useful feedback; teach students to peer revise; develop specific, focused revision lessons. |
| Students and teachers must be familiar with and use the vocabulary associated with the CCSS, e.g., <i>claim, text structure, lesson, author's purpose, author's craft</i> . | Make agreements on vocabulary and how we use it. | Teachers need to work together, not in isolation. Develop a district glossary for teachers. |
| "Tougher" vocabulary | Teach academic vocabulary | |

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| Readiness | | |
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| Students will need to be able to persevere and work through struggles; the assessment is rigorous and requires endurance and efficient time management; assessment items require students to tackle multi-step, cognitively complex tasks without a lot of scaffolding, e.g., steps of writing process not provided. | Daily reading and writing practice. Increase rigor in daily lessons. Provide tasks that require sustained attention to a task in an intense, problem-solving environment. Teach for independence | Vertically align the curriculum and use grade level standards to develop lessons/tasks of appropriate rigor. Gradually reduce scaffolds. |
| Speaking and Listening | | |
| A new focus on listening for details/information. | Teach students how to listen and support thinking with what they hear. Teach students how to take notes when listening to a speech. | Provide regular practice with listening to others, listening and answering, and listening with and without text transcript as part of classroom tasks. Play audio stories for students who already have questions to give students purpose for their listening. Set a purpose for each lesson/read aloud. Direct instruction—note taking strategies. Written responses to short, structured read-alouds or recorded materials |
| Assessment Context/Environment | | |
| Bulleted lists do not appear to be acceptable as answers to constructed response items. | Teach students to write coherent, fluent answers to constructed response items. | Use the standards and exemplars to set classroom standards collaboratively with other teachers. |
| Students will need to have word processing/keyboarding and other computer/technical skills, especially for the performance assessment. | | |

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| <p>Multiple choice items are complex and sometimes ask for more than one correct answer, have two parts, etc. Most answers to the multiple choice questions provide truths, but only one addresses the question.</p> | <p>Develop and use complex multiple choice questions when appropriate.</p> | |
| <p>Students must become familiar with the test-taking environment/context</p> | | |