

Walnut Valley Unified School District

"KIDS FIRST - Every Student, Every Day"

Robert P. Taylor, Ed.D., Superintendent
880 S. Lemon Avenue • Walnut, California 91789 • Tel. (909) 595-1261

January 27, 2014

Dear Walnut Valley Parents/Guardians,

As you are aware, schools across the nation have been transitioning to new standards in language arts and math. These Common Core standards focus on teaching students not only foundational skills, but how to think critically and probe each subject with depth. With the purpose of better preparing our students to succeed in college and workplace, our state, along with 45 other states, adopted these new standards. To better align with 21st century skills, nearly all future state testing, beginning this spring, will be computer based. These tests are called the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC).

What are the pilot Smarter Balanced assessments? The official SBAC assessments will not be administered until the 2014-2015 school year. This spring, all public schools in California have the opportunity to pilot these computer based assessments. This allows districts and schools time to work through the logistical and technical glitches inherent in such a large and unfamiliar undertaking. It also gives our students the opportunity to become familiar with a completely different assessment without receiving scores. With the 2014 Smarter Balanced field tests, no scores will be reported to schools, teachers or parents. Consequently, the district will not be given a state API score. Additionally, the field tests will be a "test of the tests," allowing experts to examine individual test items for their effectiveness before the official assessments begin in 2014-2015.

What is WVUSD's testing plan for spring 2014? Our schools are designing site specific testing schedules. Between March 18 and April 25 our 3rd-8th graders will be testing in both language arts and math with the computer assessments. Walnut High School's 10th graders and Diamond Bar High School's 11th graders will also be administered the Smarter Balanced assessment in language arts and math. Our students will not be taking the paper/pencil STAR tests with the exception of science tests for 5th, 8th and 10th graders. All our 11th graders will participate in the Early Assessment Program (EAP), which gives students feedback on whether or not they are prepared in language arts and math for the California State University system. This requires our 11th graders to take the STAR paper/pencil test.

How can you as a home educator help your student prepare for these assessments? First, take the practice tests yourself so you will experience the challenges your student will face. Then, have your student take the practice tests and help him/her think and reason his/her way through them. The more familiar our students are with the types of questions asked, the more confident they will be on test. Following is the link to the Smarter Balanced practice tests (simply leave the logins as "guest" and "guest session" and then choose the appropriate grade level and subject area): <https://sbacpt.tds.airast.org/student/>
This link will lead you to the test question answers so you know how each item will be evaluated (scroll down on this page to the section titled 'Scoring Guides'): <http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/resources/>

How has instruction changed in classrooms? Teachers have begun shifting instruction, transitioning to Common Core Standards, involving more inquiry, and requiring text-based evidence to answer more challenging questions. All students reap the benefit of our commitment to help them grow and succeed in the 21st century! Your support in helping our students meet these new California requirements is invaluable.

Where can I get additional information? WVUSD will be hosting three district-wide parent informational meetings at Walnut and Diamond Bar High Schools and the District Office at the end of February. Please see the back of this letter for the dates, meeting sites and times. Along with these district sponsored meetings, your child's school will continue to provide information on how these new standards and assessments are changing instruction. If you have any questions, please contact your child's principal or Jackie Brown, Director of Educational Projects at 909.595.1261, extension 31215.

Thank you,



Jackie Brown
Director of Educational Projects and Assessment

Please Join Us!

Walnut Valley Unified School District

Is proudly sponsoring

Parent Information Meetings

For Kindergarten - 12th grade families & community

Common Core Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessments

The same presentation will be offered on all three evenings:

Tuesday, February 25

Walnut High School's Theater • 7:00 p.m.

Presentations in Mandarin, Korean, Spanish, and English

Wednesday, February 26

Diamond Bar High School's Theater • 7:00 p.m.

Presentation in English

Thursday, February 27

District Board Room • 7:00 p.m.

Presentation in English

For further information, please visit our website at
www.wvusd.k12.ca.us



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