The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is one of two multi-state consortia awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education to develop an assessment system based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). West Virginia is one of 28 states that is part of this consortium. These assessments are comprehensive measures of achievement in English language arts and mathematics for grades 3—8 and 11.

It is the goal for these assessments to replace West Virginia’s current statewide achievement test, the West Virginia Educational Standards Test - 2nd Edition (WESTEST2), beginning spring 2015. The Smarter Balanced Assessments will be unique to WESTEST2 in four key ways:

**ONLINE**
The assessments will be administered online through computers, tablets or other types of electronic workstations.

**ADAPTIVE**
Based on student responses, correct or incorrect, the assessment software adjusts the difficulty level of questions throughout the assessment. By adapting to the student’s abilities as the assessment takes place, each student is presented an individually tailored set of questions. This results in more accurate scores and more efficient testing.

**VERTICALLY ALIGNED**
Test questions are developed so that they progress seamlessly from grade level to grade level rather than the distinct grade level questions that are typically used in achievement tests.

**NORM REFERENCED**
Unlike the current WESTEST2 which can only compare students’ scores with other students' scores in West Virginia, the Smarter Balanced Assessments will be norm-referenced. Norm-referenced tests compare a student’s scores against the scores of a representative group of students that have already taken the exam. Scores can then be reported with percentile ranks in addition to performance levels and scaled scores reported with WESTEST2.

Several steps are required in the development of any large scale assessment product such as the Smarter Balanced Assessments. As a member of the consortium, some West Virginia schools and students will be part of this multi-year development process.

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**ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE**

- **Winter/Spring 2013**
  - Pilot testing of assessment items and performance tasks

- **Spring 2014**
  - Field testing of summative and interim assessments

- **2014-15 School Year**
  - Implementation of assessment system

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**PILOT TESTING - 2012/2013**
The Smarter Balanced Pilot Test has two components, the scientific and volunteer.

1. The “Scientific” component targets a representative sample of schools and yields critical information about test items as well as how the assessment is functioning. A few Harrison County Schools have been selected for this component.

2. The “Volunteer” component is open to all schools to allow students and schools to have the opportunity to experience how this assessment system functions.