



December 23, 2013

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Secretary of Education

**Rick Miller**

Executive Director

Secretary Arne Duncan  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

We are aware that you are currently considering a double testing waiver request from the state of California to allow our state to best transition to the Common Core State Standards and the aligned Smarter Balanced Assessments during the 2013-2014 school year. We encourage you to approve this request because it will support a successful transition to the new assessments, by providing an important opportunity for our schools, teachers, and students to experience the new learning expectations for both math and English language arts.

However, we also feel that the value of this field-testing experience will only be fully realized if districts and schools received actionable feedback on student results. To be clear, we do not want, nor would we support, the use of this information for accountability purposes. Rather, this information will inform teachers about their progress toward preparing all students to meet these new and rigorous expectations. Getting actionable results will also help align teacher, parent, and student expectations around preparing our students for college and careers.

We understand that twenty percent of each state's students taking the Smarter Balanced Assessments will be part of a pilot test that is solely and appropriately intended to inform the design of a high-quality assessment. However, with California's commitment to assess every child in grades 3-8 and 11 in both English Language Arts and mathematics, the remaining eighty percent of students are not part of this test of the test. We believe this provides California an important opportunity to provide a psychometrically appropriate, statistically relevant common set of questions that will provide the meaningful feedback we desire for our systems.

Having district, school, grade level, class and or student level data (to the extent possible) for the vast majority of students in California will enable us to both test our readiness and improve instruction aligned to the Common Core. We recognize that Smarter Balanced may not have developed sufficient items under your federal grant for this purpose, but we urge you to work with SBAC and its member states to identify an appropriate set of items across the grade levels and in the content areas in order to achieve this goal.



# CORE

CALIFORNIA OFFICE TO REFORM EDUCATION

The million students we represent and the millions more in our state and nation deserve every opportunity to be prepared for these higher level expectations and we urge you to join with us in working to provide this valuable information.

Sincerely,

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Dr. John Deasy, *Superintendent, Los Angeles Unified School District*

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Richard Carranza, *Superintendent, San Francisco Unified School District*

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Michael E. Hansen, *Superintendent, Fresno Unified School District*

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Matt Navo, *Superintendent, Sanger Unified School District*

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Sara Noguchi, *Interim Superintendent, Sacramento City Unified School District*

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Christopher J. Steinhauser, *Superintendent, Long Beach City Unified School District*

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Dr. Gary Yee, *Superintendent, Oakland City Unified School District*

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Dr. Janet Young, *Superintendent, Clovis Unified School District*

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Gabriela Mafi, *Superintendent, Garden Grove Unified School District*

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Dr. Richard L. Miller, *Superintendent, Santa Ana Unified School District*



CC:

Governor Jerry Brown

Mike Kirst, President California State Board of Education

Tom Torlakson, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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