

CHAMBERLAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT #7-1
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CHAMBERLAIN SD 57325

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March 2014

Dear CSD Parents,

This time of year the district is usually preparing for the DakotaSTEP test. Not anymore...the state has switched over to the SmarterBalanced Assessment, which our students will begin to participate within the next month. The biggest change to the test is that it is all computerized and on-line. South Dakota is one of several states that will be taking both the English/Language Arts and Math assessments. By moving to the new assessment now, we avoid having to test students twice during the transition year-once on Dakota Step and once on the SmarterBalanced Assessment. There is one exception to the on-line testing and that is the administering of the DakotaSTEP Science Test which will continue to be paper/pencil and taken by students in grades 5, 8, and 11. There have been no changes to the science standards or the science assessment.


The test will take place at various times for different grade levels. Below is a "big picture" of when identified grade levels will take the SmarterBalanced Assessment:

3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th Grades: March 24-April 4 (portions of a.m. and p.m.)
7th & 8th Grades: April 7-11 (mainly a.m.)
11th Grade: April 14-17 (a.m.)

The district has provided opportunities for our staff members to have training sessions on what the test looks like, tools for student use, and how to navigate through the test. In addition, students are spending some time working on the practice tests so they too know what will be expected and how to navigate through the system. The results of the first year will be used to set a baseline for measuring progress moving forward; no data on individual students will be available.

Each year state assessment data is used in combination with other data to provide an accountability measure so that parents and the public know how South Dakota schools are performing. As the state's school districts transition to a new assessment, South Dakota will have a one-year suspension on making new school accountability classifications. All other school accountability information will continue to be collected. Current data is available at <http://doe.sd.gov/reportcard/index.aspx>.

Finally, it is very important for parents to note that as we move to new standards and a new assessment, student performance will look different than in the past. This occurs any time a new assessment is implemented and new baselines are established. South Dakota is raising the bar for students with these new standards and assessments, and it will take several years for students to adjust to these higher standards. If you are interested in knowing more about the SmarterBalanced Assessment, including viewing practice test items, visit www.smarterbalanced.org. Please call my office at 234-4477 if you have questions.

Dr. Debra Johnson 
Superintendent

Dr. Debra Johnson	Holly Nagel	Allan Bertram	Joel Bergeson	Valerie Johnson	Rick Hargens
Superintendent 605-234-4477	Business Manager 605-234-4478	Principal 7-12 605-234-4467	Principal K-6 605-234-4460	Special Education 605-234-4467	AD/Dean of Students 605-234-4467 or 4462

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD TO TAKE A TEST

Here are some things your child can do:

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REST

Get a good night's sleep before the test.

EAT

Eat a good breakfast. A breakfast and/or snack will be served at the school to all students being tested each morning.

LISTEN

Listen carefully to the directions that are given for the test and follow them exactly. If the directions are not clear, ask the teacher to repeat them or to explain them.

TRY

Do your best and do not give up.

DISCUSS

Help your child understand that the SmarterBalanced Assessment gives him or her a chance to show what he or she knows about a subject.

SUPPORT

Ask your child to maintain regular study habits. Do not ask your child to give extra study time for the *SmarterBalanced Assessment*. The test covers more schoolwork than your child can learn in a few extra hours.

RELAX

Students who are calm and sure of themselves do better on tests.

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