As we move forward with our new standards, new assessments for ELA/literacy and mathematics, and the new DeSSA system, there are countless efforts taking place across the state to help make this transition a successful one. The Office of Assessment continues to focus on developing an understanding of the DeSSA system and the assessments included within the system, while also helping to foster the development of assessment literacy in general.

Some recent Office of Assessment efforts include:

- Monthly communications with districts/charter test coordinators (DTCs) via face-to-face professional development sessions and bimonthly eNewsletters
- Presentations for Delaware PTA
- Upward Bound presentations with parents and students
- Online presentations for the Parent Information Center (PIC)
- Presentations for content area coalitions/cadres
- Presentations for school districts and charter schools
- Face-to-face and online training modules for test implementation and administration

**Moving Forward With a System of Assessments**

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**Office of Assessment Meeting for District Test Coordinators (DTC 101)**

The Office of Assessment will be holding its second meeting for district and charter test coordinators on December 17, 2014, at the John Collette Education Resource Center. This half-day meeting will follow the morning Teaching and Learning Cadre meeting and will commence promptly at 1:15 p.m. so that we may finish by 4 p.m. Look for an official invite and tentative agenda coming.

For planning purposes, future face-to-face meeting dates are:

- February 18, 2015
- April 14, 2015
- June 17, 2015

Our first DTC professional development session seemed to be well received! So that we may continue to improve upon our future sessions, we need your feedback. If you attended the first session, please complete the survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5BXFBFJ. Survey responses need to received by December 8, 2014.

Please contact Carolyn Lazar for additional information regarding Smarter and DCAS.
Achievement Level Setting

Achievement level setting (ALS), also known as standard setting, is the process of establishing one or more threshold scores for an assessment making it possible to create categories of performance. Smarter Balanced Governing States approved the following design for achievement level setting:

- An Online Panel (October 6–17) allowed thousands of K–12 educators, higher education faculty, parents, and other interested parties to participate virtually in recommending achievement levels. Delaware had 142 participants.
- An In-Person Panel (October 13–19) with teachers, parents, higher education faculty, business leaders, and other community members from all of the Smarter Balanced states working in grade-level teams deliberated and made recommendations for the thresholds of the four achievement levels. Delaware had 25 nominees participate in this process.
- The Cross-Grade Review Committee (October 20), a subset of the In-Person Panel, examined recommendations across all grades to consider the reasonableness of the system of cut scores. Delaware had one participant involved in this process.
- Carolyn Lazar, from Delaware’s Office of Assessment, also served as an observer and an auditor of the ALS in-person panel and cross-grade review committee processes.
- Smarter Balanced Technical Advisory Committee members reviewed the process and the recommendations (October 30).
- State members of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (November 6 and 13) met and then voted to approve the achievement level setting process and the achievement levels for the English language arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics assessments that will be administered in 17 states and 1 territory this school year.

The Next Step – In order for the achievement levels to be approved for Delaware’s spring 2015 administration, the State Board of Education will vote on the achievement levels to be used on the Smarter assessments for ELA/literacy and mathematics. Additional information about the achievement levels, impact data, and implications will be shared at the December DTC meeting.

### Scoring Guides Released

This week, Smarter Balanced released the scoring guides for ELA performance tasks for grades 3, 6, and 11 baseline anchor sets. This scoring guide is an additional resource to help educators understand the scoring process. A scoring guide for selected short-text mathematics items is also available. These resources can be accessed on the [Smarter Balanced website](#).

### Planning for Hand Scoring Interims

There are a lot of questions around the specifics of interim assessments and hand scoring. The assessment team is currently participating in discussions with Smarter Balanced regarding the technical aspects of hand scoring and interfacing with the system. Also, the curriculum team is hard at work planning for hand scoring and the instructional aspects associated with the process and the usage of data. Plans for hand-scoring training as well as training for accessing the interims, system usage, and inputting scores will be released in December. Specifics will be shared at the December DTC session.

### Smarter Digital Library

#### User Account Training

District ISOs and DTCs received an email detailing access to training and documentation on maintaining user accounts for the Smarter Digital Library. This training will be available starting November 24, 2014. ISOs and DTCs will automatically receive a registration notice for the online training.

#### User Accounts

Smarter Digital Library User Account passwords were passwords reset on November 4 for users who had not accessed the Digital Library or set security questions for their accounts. All users whose passwords were reset were notified via email. This password reset does not expire in 7 days as previous password resets. For password resets after December 1, 2014, contact your District ISO or DTC.

Please contact [Lisa Alexander](#) for additional information regarding Digital Library User Accounts.
**Parent Refusal to Student Assessment**

As the administration of the Smarter Assessments gets closer, questions and comments surface related to parent refusal to student assessment. Some districts have requested information to share with parents asking questions about this topic.

Assessment is an integral part of the instructional process and necessary to help ensure the needs of our students are addressed. The Department of Education recently released a one-page document for parents at a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) event, including information relating to this topic. This excerpt was taken from the document:

> There are no provisions in state or federal regulation that allow Delaware to have a system for parents to refuse student assessment. In addition, state and federal laws are clear that there is an expectation that all students will participate in the state assessment system. The only instances in which students can be excluded relate to exemption requests. Only two reasons are allowable for requests for exemptions: extreme medical incidents or for reasons of mental health of the child (each requires documentation from a physician).


This parent document, in its entirety, can be found at: [http://dedoe.schoolwires.net/domain/111](http://dedoe.schoolwires.net/domain/111). Also, this topic, with additional resources, will be discussed during the December DTC session.

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**DeSSA Portal and Document Release**

**November**

- *Assessment Accommodations User Guide* – This user guide provides instruction and information on how to enter assessment accommodations for DeSSA testing.
- *Smarter Digital Library User Guide* – This user guide provides instruction on how to create and maintain user accounts for the Smarter Digital Library.

**December**

- *DeSSA Test Administration Manual (TAM) for DCAS* – This manual provides the necessary information and detail on how to administer DCAS assessments for science, social students, and end-of-course assessments.
- *Smarter Test Administration Manual (TAM) for Interim Assessments* – This manual provides the necessary information and detail on how to administer the Smarter interim assessments.

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**DeSSA Training Schedule Release**

**November**

- Smarter Digital Library User Account Training – Provides District ISO training to create and maintain user accounts for the Smarter Digital Library.
- Assessment Accommodations Application Training – Provides information to enter and/or maintain accommodations for DeSSA assessments.

**December**

- Smarter Interim Assessment Training by User Role – Training provides information to administer the Smarter Interim Assessments based upon user role.
- DCAS Test Administrator Training by User Role – Training provides information to administer DCAS assessments based upon user role.

**February/March**

- DCAS-Alt1 New Test Administrator Training (Face-to-Face) – This mandatory one-day training provides information for new test administrators of the DCAS-Alt1. Training dates available are February 3, 4, 5, or March 3. Online update training will be available and is also mandatory for experienced DCAS-Alt1 Test Administrators.
New documents regarding the Smarter mathematics assessments are now posted on the DOE website.

- **DeSSA Calculator Policy for 2014** – Explains the calculator policy for all tested grades on the Smarter Mathematics Assessment.
- **DeSSA Formulas, Measurement Conversions, and Angles** – Provides a reference outlining the formulas, measurement conversions, and angles that may be included on the Smarter Mathematics Assessment.

If you have any questions, please contact Katia Foret.

October and November have been busy months for reviewing materials for ELA/literacy and mathematics Smarter assessments. These reviews have included some Interim Blocks and Data Review of flagged items. Delaware is often being requested to participate in these activities to draw upon our expertise with online assessments, whether it is writing items, reviewing items, or creating training material.

**DCAS-Alt1 Rosters Issued Week of November 15**

During the week of November 15, DCAS-Alt1 rosters will be emailed to District and Charter DCAS-Alt 1 coordinators or DTC if a separate DCAS-Alt1 coordinator has not been identified. The DCAS-Alt1 roster contains all students listed in the Assessment Accommodations database as participants of the DCAS-Alt1 alternate assessment. Coordinators must verify that students on the list are currently registered and their information is correct, and you must enter the test administrator’s name and employee ID for each student. Detailed instructions will accompany the roster. The information is used to determine the number of test kits for each grade band should be shipped to each school. The completed roster should be returned by email to Helen Dennis by December 10, 2014.

Please contact Rita Fry if you have any questions about the list of milestones.