Supporting Distance Learning Using Interim Assessments

Interim Assessments for Smarter Balanced and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessments can be used in a variety of ways to support student instruction while educators plan for and conduct distance learning opportunities. Given that students may be learning at home through distance learning, the Connecticut State Department of Education will allow students to take Interim Assessments at home using the Cambium Secure Browser as had been required, the SecureTestBrowser iPad app, **or** Chrome or Firefox web browsers.

Purpose:

This resource describes recommended uses and considerations for the incorporation of the Interim Assessments during distance learning. These assessments can support instruction aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy and the Next Generation Science Standards with elementary, middle, and high school students.

Teachers can use Interim Assessments as a way to "check-in" on student progress. Using the Centralized Reporting System, teachers can examine evidence of student understanding and enhance lesson development.

Recommended Use:

Teachers and school administrators should **purposely** plan how the Interim Assessments will be used and how results will be interpreted prior to use. Interim Assessments should be used with students who are familiar with taking Smarter Balanced or NGSS Interims. Furthermore, students should know how to access universal tools and designated supports (and accommodations, if applicable), and independently navigate the Test Delivery System.

Teachers can use the Interim Assessments **informally** by browsing items from the Assessment Viewing Application (AVA) by grade and content area (math, English language arts, and science) to meet specific learning purposes and goals. Items can be presented to students in a live lesson as a "Do Now" activity or items can be used to model a particular concept. Items can be used as a pre- or post-activity to gauge student knowledge. Teachers can access answer keys on the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) by choosing Interim Assessment Materials under the General Resources drop-down menu.

Additionally, teachers can **formally** administer Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB). See the Quick Guide to Administering Smarter Balanced and NGSS Interim Assessments Remotely to do this while students are at home. Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICA) **should not** be administered as part of distance learning as the duration is comparable to the administration of a full summative assessment.

As teachers plan for the use of Interim Assessments, items and blocks should be selected based on their alignment with the teacher's instruction. Interim Assessments can be used out-of-grade level to support specific student needs such as pre- and post-activities, remediation, or enrichment. For example, an above grade-level assessment might be used by a teacher to assess students who are receiving instruction with curriculum aligned to above grade-level standards. A below grade-level assessment might be used by a teacher who wants to assess students who are struggling with grade-level content to identify areas of weakness in prior learning. When using Interim Assessments for this purpose, careful interpretation and use of student results should be clearly defined prior to test administration. Judgments about student performance must be based on the conditions of this test administration.

Security:

Interim Assessments should only be accessed by the student and an effort should be made by the teacher and student to maintain test security procedures. This means that students should not disclose test content. Test Administrators must communicate with students to provide a Session ID and provide support for students through the log in process, including helping them **securely** locate their State Assigned Student ID (SASID). *It is important that the SASID is communicated using a secure method, such as a classroom management system, as opposed to a non-secure method such as private text messages or emails.*

Interim Assessments must not be publicly displayed or distributed outside the "learning environment" to ensure use of these assessments as intended. Only authorized local educational agency staff and students should have access to the Interim Assessments. Finally, Interim Assessment items must not be copied into third-party systems without the permission of Smarter Balanced or Cambium Assessment, Inc. Without permission, such activity is a copyright violation.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities and English Learners:

Embedded designated supports and accommodations are available for eligible students using Interim Assessments remotely through distance learning assuming the supports are identified in the student's TIDE profile. Prior to the administration of the test, teachers should verify the activation of supports (and accommodations for eligible students) in TIDE Test Settings. Refer to the [Test Information Distribution Engine User Guide](#) for details about setting supports and accommodations in TIDE and the [Manually Entering Designated Supports and Accommodations](#) brochure if entering these supports using the Test Administration Interface.

As a reminder, designated supports are available to all students with an identified need based on educator decision, while accommodations are **only** available to students with an active IEP or 504 Plan. Refer to the [Assessment Guidelines](#) and the [Embedded and Non-Embedded Designated Supports for English Learners](#) brochure for more information.

Do's and Don'ts for the Interim Assessments

Do's

- Know the purpose for administering the Interim Assessment (or an item). For example, what new information do you need about your students' skills?
- Choose which Interim Assessment will provide the best information or whether presenting an Interim item during instruction will best meet your needs.
- Match the conditions with the purpose including:
  - o the student's environment (access to external information);
  - o accessibility resources; and
  - o timing based on when instruction was provided.
- Use the results to inform next steps in instruction.
- Follow all test security protocols outlined in the first two "Don't" bullet points on the next tab prior to Interim testing.

Don'ts

- Do not post the test items on the internet or a public page
- Do not email Interim test items
- Do not email or text students' personal or confidential information (SASID)—even to parents. Use a secure method provided by your district.

Resources and Online Professional Development:

Interim Assessment blueprints and a variety of resources and training modules are available on the [Connecticut State Department of Education's Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Web page](#). For quick access, key resources are listed below:

Resource	Description
Quick Guide to Administer Interim Assessments Remotely	This user guide provides critical steps to set up Interim Assessments for remote use to support distance learning.
2020-21 Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Overview	This overview provides the features of available Interim Assessments and information to support formal and informal use of these tools.
Test Delivery System Test Administrator User Guide	This user guide provides instructions and support for users viewing student Interim Assessment performance reports in the Centralized Reporting System.
Next Generation Science Standards Test Administration Quick Guide	This quick guide provides information related to the administration of the Next Generation Science Standard Interim Assessments and includes an overview, instructions for user login and proctoring, and how to access results through the Centralized Reporting System.
Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Test Administration Manual	This manual provides information for Test Examiners administering the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. This manual includes screenshots and step-by-step instructions on how to administer the Interim Assessments.
How to Activate an Interim Assessment Test Session	This document provides the current IABs available. (Reminder: ICAs **should not be used** for distance learning.)
Assessment Viewing Application (AVA) User Guide	This user guide provides an overview of how to access and use the Assessment Viewing Application that allows teachers to view items on the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments for administrative or instructional purposes.
Centralized Reporting System User Guide	This user guide provides instructions and support for users viewing student Interim Assessment performance reports in the Centralized Reporting System.

Training	Description
Training Modules	A variety of training modules are available on the Interim Assessment web page.