



## Why has Hawaii changed to a new assessment?

- The demands of the world are challenging. To better prepare students to succeed in college, work and life, Hawaii public schools have implemented the [Hawaii Common Core](#) — a new set of consistent learning expectations in English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA) and Mathematics that explains what students should know and be able to do at each grade to be ready for life after graduation.
- The [Smarter Balanced Assessments \(SBA\)](#) in ELA and Math measure how well students are learning the Common Core. In the spring of 2015, SBA replaced the Hawaii State Assessment (HSA) in reading and math.
- Hawaii students in grades 3-8 and 11 take the SBA, which focus on real-world skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, and provide a more accurate picture of students' progress toward being college and career ready. SBA results provide parents information on how their child is performing in relation to students in other Hawaii public schools and even other states.

## How has it affected student test scores?

- The Hawaii Common Core and the Smarter Balanced Assessments are more rigorous than previous standards and assessments. As students become familiar with the new learning expectations and the assessment system, we expect scores to improve.
- First-year results for the 2015 SBA showed that 48 percent of students in ELA and 41 percent in Math met or exceeded achievement standards. This provides a solid baseline and highlights areas where improvement is needed. This doesn't mean students aren't learning or working hard enough, rather it reflects the more challenging nature of SBA.
- Assessment scores don't provide the full picture of a student's learning. Assessments serve as one important indicator of what students have learned and give teachers information about where support is needed.

## Can we compare results from the old Hawaii State Assessment (HSA) to the new assessment?

- No. There is no direct comparison of student proficiency percentages between the new SBA and the old HSA. However, the tool we use to determine student growth — the [Hawaii Growth Model](#) — allows us to measure student learning from one year to the next, even with the change in assessments.

### *How does that work?*

- Students' scores on the new SBA are compared to the results of students in their academic peer groups. Each student then receives a "Student Growth Percentile" (SGP), which tells you how much that student progressed relative to other students in the same grade with a similar academic history.

- In other words, students' SBA scores will be compared to Smarter Balanced scores of students with a similar academic history, and not to their previous HSA scores.
- The SGP is used as part of the school performance system ([Strive HI](#)) and teacher and principal evaluation systems.

## What is the value of the new assessments to the students themselves?

- Based on 2015's 11th grade scores, more than 5,000 public high school seniors from the Class of 2016 qualify for college-level coursework. At nearly 200 colleges and universities in seven states, students can use their SBA scores to be exempted from placement exams and enroll directly into entry-level courses.
- The SBA is a better tool for understanding students' readiness. Unlike past assessments, Smarter Balanced assessments focus on real-world skills and are better aligned with the demands of college and careers.
- Assessments provide valuable information to parents, teachers, students, policymakers and the community on how children are doing and areas where they may need extra help. This will help everyone work together to support children in their education.

## Who developed the new assessment?

- Teachers, parents and higher education faculty from Hawaii and more than 20 other states collaborated on the development of these assessments. SBA was created by a multi-state Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, of which Hawaii is a governing member.
- Hawaii has worked with other states to thoughtfully test content and technology that support the assessments. This has included collecting feedback from students on the format of questions and accommodations for students with disabilities.

## How are the new assessments an improvement?

- SBA measures deeper knowledge of skills deemed particularly important to students' futures, including engaging items that ask students to demonstrate an array of research, writing, critical thinking, and real-world problem solving skills.
- SBA focuses on relevant application of skills, and provide students, parents, and teachers with information to address issues throughout.
- [Score reports](#) provide information on student performance in the following areas: Reading, writing, listening, and research (ELA); and concepts and procedures; problem solving and modeling/data analysis; and communicating reasoning (Math).

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