

Smarter Balanced: An academic check-up

The Smarter Balanced state assessment is an academic check-up that tells parents and teachers whether the student is on track for college and career readiness. Readiness begins with clear, consistent standards and high expectations for what students should know and be able to do in English language arts and math from kindergarten through 12th grade.



Vital Signs: What do results mean?

Test results are like vital signs – they provide a measurement of a student’s performance in English and math. A student’s Smarter Balanced test score falls into one of four levels. Scores that are within levels 3 and 4 are considered proficient; students should be aiming for these levels.

WARNING: Smarter Balanced measures student mastery of more rigorous standards; resist the urge to compare results to the old Dakota STEP test!



Charting a Path: How are results used?

Grades 3-8

- Parents and students use results to understand student performance.
- Teachers use results to adjust their instruction.
- Schools use results to identify patterns related to student achievement.

Grade 11

- South Dakota’s public universities use grade 11 results to determine college placement.

High school and beyond

Career interest inventory



Smarter Balanced scores provide one piece of information students can use in creating a personal learning plan for high school

- Levels 1 and 2: Meet with school counselor to talk about areas for improvement
- Levels 3 and 4: Stay on track for college and career readiness

9TH GRADE



10TH GRADE



Career aptitude inventory

Smarter Balanced test



12TH GRADE



Rigorous coursework

GRADUATE



College



Technical Institute



Career



Military



Plan ahead

Students can use resources at SDMyLife.com to think about what they want to do after high school and how to get there.

Try out a career

Students can participate in work-based learning opportunities to gauge interest in specific careers.

Need a little help?

Students who need additional help to prepare for college can take advantage of online coursework targeted to specific needs.

Get a jump on college!

Students who are on track can earn college credit – and reduce costs – by enrolling in a dual credit program.