

NORTH COUNTRY UNION JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

Starting on March 13th, Vermont's students in grades three through nine will begin taking the Smarter Balanced Assessments of English Language Arts and Mathematics. The tests, which are administered on the computer and take approximately six hours to complete, can be administered at any time over a three-month period and are typically divided up into five or six testing sessions, each of which is about an hour in length. The schedule for testing in our school is as follows:

Grade	Date	Test Subject Area	Length of Test Session
7 & 8	March 19 - 30, 2018	Language Arts	
7 & 8	April 2 - 13, 2018	Math	

At the conclusion of testing for all schools in the state, school leaders will be able to access individual student reports that will be forwarded to parents on a date determined locally. These reports will give parents information on how well their student(s) achieved in relation to a common set of statewide academic standards. However, parents need to keep in mind that the tests provide only a broad overview of growth and success, and that results are most useful when viewed in the context of other data gathered by the teacher or the school. The primary purpose of the testing program is to provide parents and community members with the combined results for all the student in the school, and for major student groups, as one gauge of how well the school is meeting the educational needs of all its students.

Computer-based testing provides students with a variety of innovative formats, tools, and accessibility options. These options include the following:

- All testing is administered using a secure online assessment system that includes a variety of tools and technology enhanced test questions that will improve the assessment experience for our students.
- Foremost among the new technologies is Computer Adaptive Testing or CAT. CAT selects a unique set of test questions for each student that will produce very precise results in less time than the last generation of pencil and paper tests.
- In addition to the CAT portion of the test, students will also participate in a hands-on, minds-on performance task that permits students to use their skills on an authentic and engaging challenge.
- The assessment also includes an array of embedded accessibility tools for special populations – features such as Text-to-Speech (TTS), color and contrast choices, expandable reading passages, key word translation glossaries, American Sign Language translation, Braille, and many other tools.
- Because the test is administered on a computer, student results will be returned to schools very quickly. We can expect school scores by mid-June and we can expect to receive individual student scores before that.

Please note that Vermont's test delivery system uses state of the art security features that will protect our students' privacy and will adhere to all federal and state confidentiality regulations, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

To learn more about Smarter Balanced, log on to the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal where you will find additional information for parents, as well as practice tests that will allow you to try out the test your student will be taking this spring. Here is the link: <http://vt.portal.airast.org/>. If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call at 766-2276 ext. 5122.

Sincerely,

Todd Morey
Guidance Counselor