Lessons Learned from First Week of SBAC Testing
Submitted by SPS Administrators during Desk Activity
April 30, 2014

Device / Technology:

- WiFi issues:
  - We had isolated areas of WiFi connectivity problems in several buildings. Fortunately, City Technology Department had technicians assigned to every building and most WiFi issues were resolved within the day.

- iPads:
  - Random iPads would log student off.
  - “Test is Not Secure” message appeared on random iPads. Problem went away by itself on some iPads and restarting the iPad also allowed the test to resume.
  - Need to collect more information on Keyboards, entering of symbols, need for stylus. Overall, touchscreens versus mouse.
    - Overall, iPad external keyboards performed better than onscreen keyboards.
  - Extra iPads were needed as proctor (TA) stations in several schools.
  - iPad case (screen protector) sometimes hindered test navigation
  - Highlighting procedure was problematic on the iPads.

- Desktop PCs:
  - Some students were logged out because other programs were supposedly running (but they were not).
    - We are still investigating this issue and soon will have a solution.
  - Students need to restart computers before beginning SBAC (they cannot enable any other applications prior to starting schools)
  - Some desktops lost the SBAC icon and a technician needed to re-install.
  - Some desktops needed to be checked before the test started to make sure the Volume was not muted.

- iPads versus Computers
  - In the future, we need to think through our technology before committing iPads to be used for SBAC.
    - We are collecting information on all devices used (iPads, Desktops, Laptops, Netbooks) to see if one device should be preferred over another for SBAC testing.

- Some students were not able to activate the save button on their screen, so they had to hit pause to stop testing.
- Volume of the computer has to be set before starting the test.

Login Problems:

- Some students were unable to sign-in.
  - These students were fixed (or added) as soon as the support team received the information

- Random students got logged off and did not resume test at same question.

- There were some password problems for TA
  - Teachers have to click on “Forgot Password” or contact Smarter Balanced for password resets. SPS support staff cannot reset passwords.

- Some students did not have login information due to the Oct. 1 upload.
  - These students were fixed (or added) as soon as the support team received the information.
• Schools needed the SSAID numbers in advance and earlier.
• The state ID and the confirmation code are NOT case sensitive

**Preparation / Professional Development:**

• We need to prepare earlier
• Get login information earlier to minimize login time on actual day of testing
• Allow time for student and teacher practice
• Some transfer students still listed old school on SBAC.
• Need hands on practice for Staff, students and parents
• Need more staff PD – start earlier and more intensive
• Share best practices of scheduling
• Run a full trial practice session
• Need more effective parent communication on SBAC activities.
• Need to know as early as we can what the test will look like...adaptive?
• We need to make sure accommodations are in place for SBAC and checked ASAP
• We need a plan in place for students who finish quickly
• Need many stakeholders involved in the planning to effectively administer
• Streamline (refine) online resources
• Trouble shoot earlier for VI students w/ state; make sure we have the hardware required
• Brainstorm different options regarding scheduling to minimize loss of instructional time

**Other:**

• One student had test in Spanish and English. Should have been in English.
  - The test this student had was reset and the student can now retake it.
• Some students finished much too soon
• Timeline of IT work @ schools needs to be better communicated.
• Large versus small group
• Need systematic typing program for students in district to prepare them for SBAC.
• Questions were difficult and seemed above grade level.
• Overall, computer labs had much less technology problems compared to connectivity problems encountered by iPads.

**Administrative thoughts for next year from Central Office:**

• Need to create timeline for essential tasks below:
  a. Initial upload of student names and monthly editing of new and leaving students.
  b. Upload of Accommodations
     i. Establish contact person for setting and overseeing of student accommodations in TIDE.
  c. Creation of teacher accounts
  d. Creation of student test tickets
  e. Provide PD for staff/students
• One school used ONE TA for the entire building. Over 400 students were approved remotely. Another school used the “Lab Assistant” to run TA for each group of students who came in to test. We need to gather feedback on each school’s procedures to share best practices.
• Technology Department will enhance WiFi for density versus coverage over the summer.
• We will create survey for feedback (debriefing) of SPS teachers and administrators.
• Need to initiate online APPEALS process when situations warrant contacting the CSDE.
• Need to emphasize a positive teacher attitude at our schools while testing is taking place.
• Need to groom (deletions/transfers/leave district, etc.) students in TIDE to aid in participation rate.
• Need to keep up-to-date with district progress by running reports via OLR.

Frank Rodriquez Thoughts:

SBAC Proctor Interface

• Overall SBAC user interface to Proctor test is very easy and straightforward
• There are many advantages to the new SBAC proctor interface vs old CMT proctoring
  o (Didn’t see such a need for large bulky manuals considering the ease of proctor interface)
  o Let’s make sure we keep this and communicate this positive aspect of the test

Make-ups – Management/Logistics

• Make-ups are more easily managed due to the SBAC Proctor Interface
  o One Test session ID for various tests
  o Teachers are able to proctor multiple grade levels and tests at once
  o Teachers are able to proctor tests at different start intervals of tests, as students come in
• Building decision to do Make-ups on desktops vs ipads - due to quicker set-up

Hardware

• Reasons to favor Desktops
  o Bigger screens
  o No connectivity issues (WIFI vs landline)
  o Better keyboards
  o No Battery issues
  o Ease of Set-up -- Hardware connections are already ‘set-up’
  o Glare of ipads
  o Less clutter
• Reasons to favor tablets
  o Mobility
  o More utility outside of testing
  o App universe centered on tablets
  o Favored apparatus by students in non-testing environments
  o Space (computer labs space)

SBAC Test Logistics

• We are choosing to Manually set up Guided Access vs locking it in through configurator (advantages are:)
  o Can power off faster when there is a connectivity issue
  o Can manually remove guided access vs being locked out through configurator
Can test internet connectivity by getting out Secure Browser manually

- We are choosing to do make-ups one day after in the computer lab
- We are choosing to not use keyboards for math – less utility than for reading

Connectivity on iPads
- Connectivity on iPads continues to be ‘quirky’
  - Some iPads simply disconnect probably due to its limitations in classroom (vs. iPad air and newer models)
- We find this to be the root of most if not all of our issue (error messages on server, connectivity, questions not processing freezing of screens)

Tips and Tricks:

Notes regarding the Math test. Submitted by Deb Gerber:

• When you want to write a mixed number follow the following steps:
  ◦ Write the whole number first (not the fractional part)
  ◦ Click on the straight arrow pointing to the right
  ◦ Click on the fraction icon (looks like a percent sign but with squares not circles)
  ◦ Write the numerator
  ◦ Write the denominator
  • When answering a question that would normally require you to label your units (12 square feet), just type the NUMBER. The test will not except words in your answer.

• When moving between segments, make sure to go back and do your MARK FOR REVIEW QUESTIONS. Once you click to move on to the next session you can’t go back even if it’s marked.

• DO NOT HIT THE END TEST icon without direct permission from your proctor.

• Problem: Deleting points and lines was nearly impossible. We were able to click on the delete icon and saw the message below the answer box that said to tap on the item you want to delete but it rarely ever worked. ◦ Solution: As an avoidance strategy, state this quirk at the beginning of the test so the students can be more accurate with their placements.
  ◦ Solution: After the fact, we encouraged the students who had already had the issue to try and delete it about five times. If they were not successful we just recommended that they move on to the next question.

• Problem: Dragging numbers into an answer box.
  ◦ Solution: Have the student hold their finger on the number until they see the background behind it change to a grey color and then without picking up their finger drag it to where they want it.

• Problem: A student would be actively typing a short response answer in a text box. Then it would not let them type any more. The student had not finished their work and had not touched any icons on the screen, but a bubble notice had appeared in the upper right corner of the screen saying, “The test has been completed and is ready to be submitted.”
  ◦ Solution: We had the student click the SAVE icon. Then we had the TA pause the student. We did a HARD RESTART of the iPad and the student was able to log back and continue to work right where he left off. :)

Another issue we are having is the fact that we don’t know how the tests are segmented. Today was the perfect example. We gave the 30 m in class activity a 15 m break and began the ELA PT test. This being a 2 hour blocked test
we said we could stop after an hour have them go back and do their marked for review questions, save and then pause. The following day they would pick up where they left off. However, if we would have know that there was a "segment" break after question 3, we could have them all stopped at that point and saved question 4 for tomorrow. Is there anyway we can get this information from the state? Where are there built in segment breaks?

**Tips and Tricks from Anu:**

**iPads**

**Problem:** Network connectivity  
**Possible Solution:** Don’t leave the SBAC testing app locked through configurator after the test is over. Back it out and close the program. Lock it again within a 1/2 hour of the test. Not keeping the app locked in 24/7 seems to have greatly cut down on issues when logging into the test.

**Problem:** Network connectivity  
**Possible Solution:** Don’t leave unused iPads active. Unplug them from the cart so they are not drawing power and click the power button on the top of the iPad to put it asleep. Having any "extra" iPads in sleep mode (click of the top power button) seems to have greatly reduced the pressure on the network. There are only a handful of specific situations that are continuing to be bumped off.

**Glitches / Quirks with the SBAC testing App.**

**Problem:** When logging or trying to move on to the next question in it spins its wheels and doesn’t get through.  
**Solution:** Hard restart and re-log in.

**Problem:** A student is working on a text response answer and the test refuses to let them continue typing / editing their answer.  
**Solution:** From the TA, pause the student. Have the student do a hard restart and log back in. When they get to the pick your test screen they will see their test and it should say RESUME. When they click on it, it will bring them back to their question and they can finish their answer.

**Problem:** How to write a fraction or mixed number.  
**Solution:** Use the number keypad within the question. The keyboard seems to gum things up. Type the whole number (NOT the fractional part). Next, click on the arrow to the RIGHT. Then click on the Fraction icon. Type the numerator and then the denominator.

**Problem:** Icons at the top of the test disappear.  
**Solution:** If your student is answering questions and needs to move on but the icons have disappeared try unplugging the external keyboard. They should reappear.

**Problem:** Accessing sound files with the test:  
It doesn’t work at all.  
It works fine but then dies half way through.  
**Solution** to both is to have the TA pause the student, hard shut down the iPad, restart and log in again.

**Problem:** Questions that require the student to click on a word, phrase or sentence to highlight it.  
**Theory:** Here’s the theory I’ve been working on ... Given a paragraph of 5 sentences with a total of 75 words and the question asks you to highlight 2 words or 3 phrases that need to be changed and the students clicks on what they thinks is the answer and nothing happens. Of the paragraph it seems that only a certain number words, phrases or
sentences will highlight. The students had to be told to look further into their answers and try again. NOT EVERYTHING will be highlight-able.

**COMPUTERS**

**Problem:** Some computers are intermittently receiving messages that Internet Explorer/Chrome is starting in the background, which causes the test to freeze and the student has to logout and back in; requiring the Test Administrator to “re-”approve them.

**Solution:** if login in does not resolve the issue, Secure Browser applet may need to be reinstalled. Request Tech on call to do this.

**Discovery:** We discovered that students should right-click on items to hear text-to-speech.

**Problem: 4/28/14** An entire class got this message in the midst of the test "You cannot test in this session. Ask your test admin for more help (1207)  
Or, there is a problem with the system (11045)

**Solution:** Hartford said they are experiencing a high volume of test takers today. We were able to resume by restarting teachers session and having the kids sign in with new session code.