



## Common Core Testing Company Fails to Meet Testing Mandate in Three States

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New Hampshire-based company Measured Progress, which developed online Common Core tests used in Montana, Nevada, and North Dakota, has acknowledged a major glitch in the tests' rollout.

Technical malfunctions, such as servers crashing during testing, resulted in only 37 percent of Nevada students being able to take their exams. Meanwhile, Montana and North Dakota only managed to test 76 percent and 84 percent of students, respectively.

Though Measured Progress admitted the online test completion rate in all three states failed to meet the federal mandate of 95 percent of 3rd through 8th graders, the company denies any breach of contract. Measured Progress was tasked with rolling out the Common Core-aligned Smarter Balanced assessments online for all three states.

Neal McCluskey, director of the Center for Educational Freedom at the Cato Institute, says the testing complications are not surprising.

"The more parts a machine has, the more there is to break," said McCluskey. "That's what we've seen with Common Core testing, which is ideally supposed to be computer-based and adaptive, which may be nice if it works, but getting it to work well is tough. That's a major reason to avoid top-down dictation of standards, tests, or anything else. Let small groups try things, and if they work, others can replicate them. If they don't, not everyone goes down with the ship."

### **'Frustration and Inconvenience'**

Martin Borg, CEO of Measured Progress, apologized for the testing failures in Nevada.

"We regret that schools in the Clark County School District were unable to complete their Smarter Balanced online assessments over the past few days, and we apologize for the frustration and inconvenience that students and educators experienced," said Borg. "We are actively working with the State of Nevada on a plan to resolve the difficulties and improve the testing experience for all students. We are eager to move forward once we receive the state's approval

of the plan. We continue to work with officials in Nevada to deliver Smarter Balanced online assessments. To date, more than 115,000 students in Nevada have successfully completed Smarter Balanced assessments.”

Brent Mead, executive director of the Montana Policy Institute, says officials in his state who support Common Core and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) are trying to pass the blame onto Measured Progress, since it was the vendor behind the botched exams.

In Montana, there was a testing delay until March.

“Montana’s Office of Public Instruction is the proverbial broken clock,” Mead said. “The OPI was correct in granting flexibility to local districts in administering the SBAC assessment this year, but is steadfast in its wrongheaded support of Common Core and high-stakes testing. While the testing fiasco was in full swing, OPI was going before the legislature opposing testing reform bills and asking for appropriations to write Measured Progress a \$1.35 million check next year. Unfortunately, the leadership at OPI will continue to pursue a policy that does not benefit students [and] will cost taxpayers millions of dollars.”