



# Support Responsibilities and Tier Definitions

*Excerpted from State Procedures Manual  
Appendix B Section 1*

*The following is an excerpt from the Smarter Balanced State Procedures Manual, Appending B Section 1. (Page 39)*

## Customer Support and Help Desk Services

Customer support and help desk services should provide states with a unified, single point for school-, district-, and state-staff to contact for information regarding everything from general inquiries such as password recovery to assistance with technical issues that will need to be handled by systems engineers.

## Tiered Support

A customer support and help desk solution will require Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 services; however, Smarter Balanced will provide Tiers 2 and 3 support for some components. Table 6 shows the different tiers of support that states need to provide for each component of the Smarter Balanced system. This table reflects the tiers of service for those states using components developed by Smarter Balanced. States using proprietary systems will need to provide or procure all tiers of help desk service. For example, states will need to provide Tiers 1 and 2 support for the Formative Digital Library but Smarter Balanced will supply Tier 3 support for this component.

**Table 6: Provider of Help Desk Support by Component and Tier**

Component	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Test Delivery System	State	State	Smarter Balanced
Interim System	State	State	Smarter Balanced
Summative Test—Paper-and-Pencil Administration	State	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Data Warehouse and Reporting	State	State	Smarter Balanced
Formative Digital Library	State	State	Smarter Balanced
Single Sign On	State	State	Smarter Balanced
Item Authoring	State	State	Smarter Balanced

## Tier 1 Support.

Tier 1 offers the first line of customer support, addressing the most basic customer issues (e.g., general inquiries, non-technical questions, password recovery, website navigation assistance, basic procedural “how-to” questions). In general, Tier 1 support will provide information that may be found in manuals, with questions not found in manuals (generally more technical in nature) going to Tier 2 support. Prior to testing, states will determine what, if any, questions should be directed to the state instead of the Tier 1 help desk.

## Tier 2 Support.

Issues not resolved by Tier 1 support are automatically sent to Tier 2, which offers more in-depth technical support than Tier 1. Tier 2 customer support personnel are technicians who can assist with common mid-level technical questions such as local system set-up, local network issues, or compliance with data and interoperability standards, as well as applying technical solutions to issues that have established resolution methods.

## Tier 3 Support.

Tier 3 requires the greatest level of technical expertise and addresses the most complex technical problems. Tier 3 issues are handled by systems engineers and other technical experts and may require multiple interactions with the customer before the issue is resolved. These issues are bugs in the system that prevent a student from completing a valid test or otherwise prevent a user from using the system (e.g., producing student reports). These are not enhancement requests or changes that are comprised of style or preferences.

During the procurement process, states should request that vendors name the Tier 3 liaison who will be assigned to each component of the Smarter Balanced Assessment System. Vendors will interact with Smarter Balanced on Tier 3 issues, and they will report back to stakeholder who submitted the issue.