

Transitioning to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): Assessments

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THE CENTER ON
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What remains the same in assessment implementation under ESSA?

- States are required to administer statewide assessments annually in both mathematics and English language arts to every student in grades 3–8 and once in high school, in addition to a science assessment once per grade span (elementary, middle, and high school).
- States must provide alternate assessments and accommodations as needed for students with disabilities.
- States must assess English learner (EL) students in grades K–12 annually for language acquisition.
- States must include English learners in their academic assessments, although the rules are slightly different.
- At least 95% of all students must be assessed.



What is different under ESSA?

- States will need to **demonstrate that standards are aligned with entrance requirements to state post-secondary institutions** and relevant state career and technical education standards
- Assessments may be delivered, in part, as projects, portfolios, and/or extended performance tasks.
- States are given the option to administer a single summative assessment (as they did under NCLB) or **multiple statewide interim assessments** that result in a single summative score about student achievement and growth.



What is different under ESSA?

- Districts are given the ability to use a nationally recognized high school assessment (e.g., ACT and SAT) in lieu of a state-developed assessment, **provided that the test provides comparable data and is approved by the state.** (Must meet peer review requirements.)
- States **may** set a target limit on the aggregate amount of time spent administering assessments in each grade level.
- May exempt **8th graders** from middle grades math assessments under certain conditions



What is different? cont'd.

- ESSA permits states/LEAs to use Federal **funding (Title 1) to audit their own assessment systems** in order to ensure that unnecessary, duplicative exams are not being layered on top of federally mandated annual assessments (20% of funds). Grants to be made available in the 2017-18 school year. Permits states/LEA to use Federal funds to **audit assessment systems** and eliminate unnecessary assessments.
- ESSA allows for **innovative assessment systems** to be piloted in a handful of states (seven states and a consortium of states [not to exceed four states]) with the potential to be used statewide. The locally designed competency- and performance-based assessments must meet nationally recognized professional and technical standards.



What is different? cont'd.

- In assessing students with disabilities, there is a **1% cap on the number of students** who can take an alternate assessment in each tested subject. If a district administered the alternate assessment to more than 1% of students, it would be required to submit justification to the state. States would be permitted to seek a waiver from the secretary of education if the overall 1% state cap is exceeded.
- For EIs enrolled in a US school less than 12 months, State can **either** :
 - (1) exclude EL from one administration of the reading or language arts assessment and exclude, for purposes of accountability, results on the math and reading or language arts assessment or EL proficiency assessment; **or**
 - (2) assess and report EL performance on reading or language arts and math and exclude results from accountability for the first year; include a measure of student growth for the second year; and include proficiency in the third year.



What are current assessment policies under consideration in states?

- **Florida** is considering a bill, Senate Bill 1360, which would allow districts to administer the ACT Aspire instead of the Florida Standards Assessment in grades 3–8 beginning in 2016–17. The bill would also give districts the option to administer the ACT, PSAT/NMSQT, and SAT in high school instead of the state exams. If districts decided to administer the ACT Aspire and one of the high school tests, parents could notify districts if they preferred for their child to take the state test. This bill would provide a menu of assessment options within a district or school.
- On March 11, 2016, Governor Ducey signed a bill, House Bill 2544, which allows districts in **Arizona** to administer assessments chosen from a menu of assessments approved by the state Board of Education in addition to the state AzMERIT assessments. This means that high school students taking college entrance exams, such as the SAT, could avoid having to take the AzMERIT. The new assessments must meet current standards and low-performing districts are still required to administer the AzMERIT assessments.



What assessment policies have states implemented?

- On March 7, 2016, the governor of New Mexico signed legislation that reduces testing requirements for students in grades 9–10; these students no longer have to take the reading, language arts, and mathematics assessments.
- From CSAI's scan of state assessment systems:
 - Three states (MT, WI, and WY) are using the **ACT** as their state test in grade 11.
 - Five states (CO, CT, DE, ME, and NH) are using the **SAT** as their state exam in grade 11. Michigan is using the SAT as one of its state exams in high school (grades 11–12).
 - Colorado is using the **PSAT** as its state test for grade 10, replacing the grade 10 PARCC test.
 - Six states are using the **ACT Aspire** as their state exam.
 - AL (grade 10), AR (grades 9–10), Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands (grades 9–10), Guam (grades 9–10), WI (grades 9–10), and WY (grades 9–10).



Possible Concerns and Questions...

- The use of interim assessments and nationally recognized assessments for accountability purposes may present concerns/questions about the validity, reliability, and consistency of tests with nationally professional and technical standards; alignment of nationally recognized assessments with state standards; and comparability of assessment results.
- How do we ensure that we meet peer review?
- Auditing assessment systems at the state and/or local level will be a concern. What is the best approach to auditing assessment systems? How can you leverage the audit to develop and promote the assessment system you envision?



Discussion

- Immediate and Long-term
 - Concerns
 - Questions
 - Clarifications
- Assistance



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