

Peer Review and State Assessment Administration: A Resource for State Assessment Directors



To support rigorous educational opportunities for all students, all states are required to demonstrate how their assessment practices ensure that all students are participating in rigorous and valid testing. States must provide evidence of policies and practices that ensure a technically sound assessment system. This process, referred to as peer review, is a required process in which states must submit documentation that specifies how the state's assessment system meets federally determined technical requirements for review and possible refinement. Given the importance of this process, state education agency (SEA) staff may have questions about what this process entails and how states are supposed to demonstrate that their assessment system meets requirements for technical quality and validity.

To address these questions, the Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation (CSAI) has developed this resource to provide an overview of state assessment-related practices and their connection to peer review. This resource provides insights into the peer review process and requirements that states must meet, including:

- overview of different peer review requirements for statewide assessment systems;
- description of state practices for assessment administration and handling that are aligned with peer review requirements; and
- examples of state documentation that can be used to demonstrate how state assessment systems meet peer review requirements.

Peer Review Overview

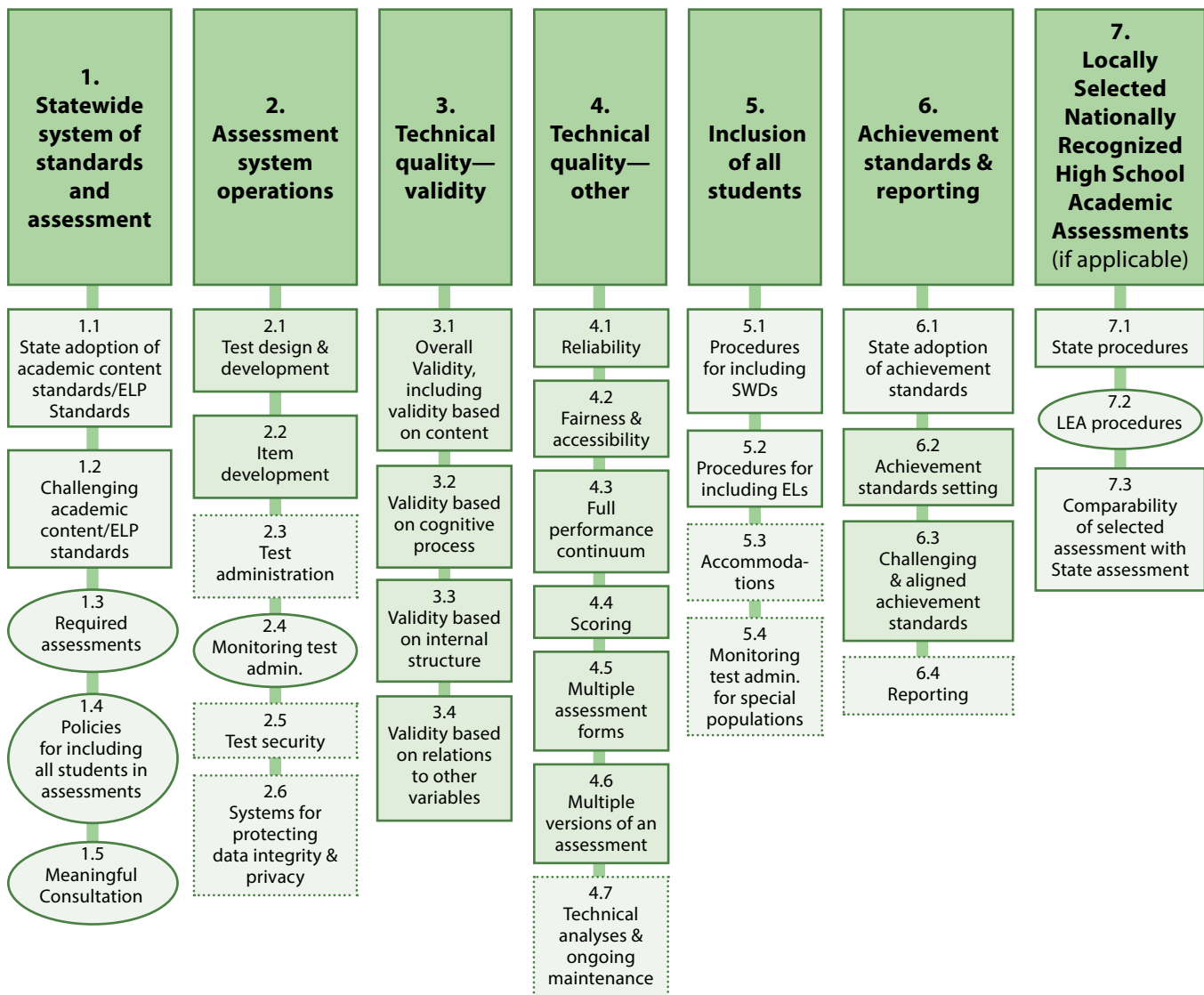
As part of efforts to ensure that all states are meeting the statutory and regulatory requirements under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the U.S. Department of Education (USED) requires all states to undergo peer review of their assessment systems. These statutory and regulatory requirements are in place to ensure the technical quality and validity of statewide assessments.

The peer review process requires states to demonstrate how their assessment systems provide valid and reliable information on student performance relative to state content and performance standards and provide valid and reliable information on the English proficiency of a state's English learners. For the purposes of peer review, states must submit the following assessments for review:

- General reading/language arts and mathematics for grades 3–8 and high school
- General science administered at least once in each of these grade spans: 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12
- Alternate assessments in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (in the grades identified for general assessments)
- English language proficiency assessments for grades K–12
- Alternate English language proficiency assessments for grades K–12

If a state administers locally selected, nationally recognized high school academic assessments, assessments used for the grade 8 mathematics exception, content assessments in languages other than English, and/or content assessments in Native American languages, these assessments must also be submitted for peer review.

To meet assessment peer review requirements, all states must submit evidence that demonstrates how its assessment system meets a series of statutory and regulatory requirements identified as Critical Elements. These Critical Elements address all aspects of assessment administration, including training and preparation for assessment administration, monitoring assessment administration, and secure handling of assessments. Critical Elements address assessment-related actions in preparation for, during, and after assessment administration. States are required to demonstrate how their assessment systems address all applicable aspects of the Critical Elements. An overview of the Critical Elements can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Overview of Assessment Peer Review Critical Elements¹

As SEA staff prepare to develop their peer review submissions, staff may have questions about what the assessment peer review process entails and what type of evidence states will need to compile. SEA staff may also have questions about what the Critical Elements require and how states will need to demonstrate meeting these Critical Elements. To support SEA staff with understanding and developing an assessment peer review submission, this resource is designed to help SEA staff identify how their state's current assessment practices align (or do not align) with requirements of specified Critical Elements. The focus of this document is on peer review requirements related to preparing for and administering statewide assessments (Critical Element 2—Assessment System Operations) and requirements related to data handling and reporting (Critical Element 6—Achievement Standards & Reporting). This resource is structured in three overarching sections, addressing the assessment practices and policies that states should have in place before, during, and after assessment administration periods.

¹ United States Department of Education. (2018, September 24). A state's guide to the U.S. department of education's assessment peer review process. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/saa/assessmentpeerreview.pdf>

Each of the resource's sections includes a description of assessment policies and procedures that states are expected to have in place and how related Critical Elements might be addressed by these policies and procedures. The sections also include considerations for states to strengthen their assessment protocols and address the statutory and regulatory requirements of the peer review process. For reference, each section also identifies best practices and states examples that SEA staff might use as a reference for understanding how states document their assessment practices, and how these documents might be used as part of a state's peer review submission. Examples are drawn from all states with publicly available information and assessment-related materials—not solely states that have met all peer review requirements. These state examples are not necessarily materials submitted for a state's peer review submission; instead, these examples are provided to present examples of documentation that states might consider for their own peer review submissions.

Before Test Administration

Successful state assessment administration is contingent on clear policies and procedures to guide both state and local agency staff actions. Having documented assessment administration policies supports standardization in communication, actions, and outcomes. Prior to administering large-scale assessments, states should have clear guidelines for assessment administration processes and what staff roles will be in these processes. To underscore how important an overarching assessment administration plan is, Critical Element 2.3 of the Peer Review process requires states to present evidence of policies and procedures for assessment administration. States must demonstrate a comprehensive vision for handling all the different aspects of assessment administration: defining policies and procedures in a coherent plan, defining roles and responsibilities for those involved, and training personnel on policies and procedures. States must also demonstrate their readiness to administer and secure technology-based assessments as part of their assessment systems. To meet requirements for peer review, states must demonstrate clear policies and procedures for the administration of their assessments. This must include documentation of standardized procedures for assessment administration (including assessments with accommodations) and evidence that these procedures have been clearly communicated to test administration personnel. Documentation can include test coordinator manuals, test administration manuals, accommodations documents, and any other documentation that outlines assessment administration policies and procedures for staff.

These selected resources address different facets of assessment administration procedures, including how assessments are delivered and monitored, when assessments are scheduled, and how assessments are kept secure before being administered. State examples are also included as a reference for how states might develop and disseminate their assessment administration policies. As states evaluate how well their assessment administration policies and procedures are being implemented with fidelity, these resources and examples can be used to support development and dissemination of how to properly administer statewide assessments.

Preparing for Test Administration (CE 2.3)

Overview

- » States must have policies and procedures that guide all the different aspects of assessment administration. Staff at the state, district, and local levels will need guidance on state assessment administration protocols and how to properly enact them. These policies and procedures must specify how all involved staff handle each aspect of administering, monitoring, and collecting statewide assessments, with details on all roles and responsibilities of each of those phases. Having clear policies and procedures also supports standardization of administration, ensuring that state assessments are presented, administered, and monitored in the same way across districts and schools. Clear, comprehensive policies and procedures for assessment administration are needed to communicate and enact proper assessment practices across local education agencies (LEAs) and schools.

State Examples

- » [Connecticut Smarter Balanced: Summative Assessment Test Administration Manual](#)—This manual provides an overview of the Smarter Balanced English language arts and mathematics assessments administered in Connecticut. The manual includes guidance for administration practices for before, during, and after the administration period. In line with CE 2.3 requirements, Connecticut’s guide includes clear descriptions of required procedures throughout the test administration process. Guidance for administration also includes examples of test security issues.
- » [Florida Standards Assessments Computer-Based Test Administration Manual](#)—Focusing on the state’s computer-administered assessments, this Florida guide provides guidance for how assessments are to be administered. Guidance includes instructions for preparing computers and devices for students to take computer-based assessments, which are needed for delineating assessment administration preparation.
- » [Massachusetts Comprehensive Statewide Assessment System \(MCAS\) Spring 2018 Administration Resources](#)—The resources collected here outline all necessary information to ensure an organized and standardized test administration. These resources provide information on preparation for both paper-based and computer-based assessments, with instructions for expected actions during the test administration.
- » [New York State Test Manuals for School Administrators and Teachers](#)—Test manuals are provided, arranged by subject, grade, and administration mode (NY provides separate manuals for paper-based and computer-based assessments). Manuals are further divided according to staff role; separate manuals exist for administrators and teachers, with directions given according to role. These manuals provide needed information for planning for the different aspects of test administration.
- » [Pennsylvania System of School Assessment: Handbook for Assessment Coordinators](#)—This assessment guide includes an overview of necessary actions for preparing for, administering, and handling assessments. Responsibilities for district and school assessment coordinators are specified, as well as responsibilities for test administrators/proctors. Also included are instructions for assessing different groups of students and expectations for students’ conduct during assessment administration.

Training (CE 2.3)

Overview

- » To properly implement assessment administration policies and procedures, comprehensive training is necessary to ensure that all stakeholders administer assessments in a correct, uniform manner. Training must be provided to staff involved in assessment administration, including administrators, teachers, and all school staff involved in the handling of materials or online administration. This training should provide all staff with the necessary understanding of the procedures that must be used to properly administer statewide assessments and ensure that these procedures are applied consistently and correctly across assessments and schools. States should consider how they provide training, resources, and support to all LEAs to communicate assessment administration policies, as well as consider how and when these supports are provided to staff.

State Examples

- » [California Test Administrator Resources](#)—To demonstrate the professional learning resources that are available, California developed this series of resources that include resources for administering state summative and interim assessments. These resources include training supports for test administrators as they work with teachers and school staff to plan for assessment administration.
- » [Colorado Assessment Trainings](#)—The Colorado Department of Education website provides links to training materials for different statewide assessments. This includes links to resources and recorded trainings. One of these links includes a document that outlines the training requirements school personnel must complete before administering statewide assessments.
- » [New Mexico District Test Coordinator Resources](#)—The New Mexico Public Education Department website includes links to resources designed for district test coordinators. This includes links to assessment guidance and training webinar recordings.
- » [Oregon Assessment Training Materials](#)—The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) site notes that district test coordinators must participate in annual test security and administration training, which is provided by ODE. Oregon maintains an archive of training modules presented for its statewide assessments. For state summative assessments, this page provides presentations and videos of modules on administration, test security, and accessibility supports.
- » [Texas Student Assessment Training Resources](#)—Texas holds Texas Education Telecommunication Network training sessions to provide training updates on state assessments; presentations are linked on this page. Materials from other presentations on state assessments are also provided.

Testing roles and responsibilities (CE 2.4)

Overview

- » To ensure proper assessment administration, states and LEAs must identify the different personnel that will be involved in the assessment administration process. This should also include specification of the responsibilities assigned to each role to ensure accurate assessment administration. Assessment administration policies and procedures should identify who is responsible for handling assessment materials or online procedures, monitoring students as they test, and identifying who will securely handle assessments after completion. States should also identify individuals who will be responsible for providing support for understanding and implementing assessment administration policies and procedures.

State Examples

- » [California Online Test Administration Manual for CAASPP Testing](#)—These California test manuals for English language arts, mathematics, and science assessments include the different staff involved in test administration. For each identified staff role, this manual delineates what staff responsibilities are, along with any credentials needed for each role. Where needed, this guide also specifies the training that is needed in order to complete assessment administration roles.
- » [Arizona Spring 2019 District Test Coordinator Important Tasks Checklist](#)—For district test coordinators, this checklist can be used to ensure all appropriate actions have been taken to ensure a smooth testing administration. This checklist specifies the steps for individual assessments and provides clear instructions for logging into these assessments.
- » [New York State Testing Program: School Administrator’s Manual](#)—New York’s guide specifies responsibilities for different phases of assessment administration. Responsibilities are specified for test security, assessment administration, and handling test materials.
- » [Pennsylvania System of School Assessment \(PSSA\) and Keystone Exams Handbook for Secure Test Administration](#)—This guide provides an overview of the different district and school staff roles during assessment administration, with descriptions of each role’s responsibilities before, during, and after test administration. These responsibilities include necessities for securing assessment materials and monitoring the administration period.

Technology infrastructure (CE 2.3)

Overview

- » As states choose to administer computer-based or supported assessments, it is critical to evaluate their technological capacity to properly administer such assessments. States must have the technological infrastructure to reliably administer computer-based assessments to all students. Evaluation of technological infrastructure must examine state and local capacity to provide all needed technological tools (e.g., computers, laptops) as well as bandwidth to properly administer computer-based assessments. States must consider the number of concurrent users, potential online security issues, and the preparedness of LEAs to respond to possible disruptions to the systems. Infrastructure also includes stakeholder capacity to properly administer and monitor computer-based assessments. Infrastructure evaluation is necessary for states to determine their ability to deliver computer-based assessments and ensure that there will not be technological issues that could prevent students from being able to complete the assessment.

State Examples

- » [California Technical Specifications and Configuration Guide for CAASPP Online Testing](#)—California provides a manual of technical system requirements and configurations for its computer-based assessments. The manual includes system and network requirements, with instructions for securing browsers for test administration. This guide also identifies the operating systems that can administer assessments, with identification of minimum hardware requirements. The intended audience of this document is technology coordinators and network administrators.
- » [New York Technology Personnel Checklist](#)—This checklist for administering the New York State Alternate Assessment specifies requirements for reviewing technology roles and responsibilities. There are also links for technology requirements for administering these computer-based assessments.

Resources

- » Overview of technology requirements for consortium online assessments: [Center for K–12 Assessment & Performance Management at ETS Coming Together to Raise Achievement](#)—This report provides an overview of different assessment consortia, including alternate and English language assessments. As part of this overview, technology requirements are discussed for the different assessment consortia, which can be illustrative as states consider their capacity to administer computer-based assessments.
- » Technology needs assessment example: Friday Institute for Educational Innovation [School Technology Needs Assessment](#)—This needs assessment is designed for use by school-level decision-makers when conducting a needs assessment of local technology capacity. The worksheet is designed to capture information about organizational readiness, training opportunities, and school readiness for technological tool use.

Testing window/schedule

Overview

- » A comprehensive assessment plan includes consideration of when all assessments should be administered and ensuring that all state, district, and school staff are aware of the testing schedule. A testing schedule is critical for communicating when assessments need to be administered and allows staff to plan for how much testing time will be needed, as well as how they will need to manage the state assessments along with district or school level assessments. When developing a testing schedule, states must consider how much time is needed for students to complete each assessment, as well as when assessments must be completed and submitted in order to receive results data in a timely manner. States will also have to consider how administering timed versus untimed assessments might impact scheduling. A testing schedule will communicate when each assessment, considering all tested subjects, needs to be administered to ensure all assessments are properly administered.

State Examples

- » [Oregon Best Practices in Administering OAKS](#)—This document for district staff includes a decision-making matrix with rationale for when a state assessment is best administered and which student groups should be tested at those different times.
- » [Colorado CMAS and CoAlt Procedures Manual Spring 2018](#)—This manual provides specifications for how much testing time is to be allotted for each statewide assessment, along with options for scheduling make-up testing times. Colorado’s testing calendar includes dates for assessment trainings and delivery of testing materials.
- » [2019–2020 Kansas Assessment Program Overview](#)—This calendar specifies the testing window for each statewide and interim assessment, with details for the subjects and grades each assessment is administered in and the estimated time of completion for each assessment.
- » [Washington Inventory of Time Testing Worksheet](#)—Washington State administers an untimed assessment and requires district testing coordinators to complete an inventory of time spent testing to collect data on the time students spend completing assessments.

Test security (CE 2.5)

Overview

- » As part of the peer review process, states must detail the security protocols that are used to protect the integrity of testing materials and administration processes. To ensure the validity of assessment results, it is critical to secure test materials and the test environment. Security protocol must include identification of the stakeholders who will be responsible for securing test materials before, during, and after the testing period, ensuring that materials are not comprised. During test administration, protocols must outline how test irregularities will be identified, reported, and investigated. States must demonstrate that there are protocols to ensure test security throughout the administration process, as well as protocols for handling any test irregularities that might occur.

State Examples

- » [North Carolina Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel](#)—This testing security handbook provides an example for states seeking to communicate testing security principles. This document contains identification of the state policies that govern secure testing protocols, including the storing and processing of test materials. This guide includes protocols that describe secure protocols throughout the testing process. North Carolina’s guide includes a testing code of ethics.
- » [Pennsylvania Handbook for Secure Test Administration](#)—This guide specifies test security instructions for both district and statewide assessments. Instructions include actions that must be completed prior to, during, and after test administration, delineated by district or school staff role.
- » [Texas STAAR Materials Control Form](#)—This reproducible form created by the Texas Department of Education is meant for campus testing coordinators to track the chain of custody for secure paper-based testing materials. States might find this an illustrative example as a tool to maintain the security of testing materials and identify the staff members responsible for securing materials.
- » [West Virginia Test Administration Manual](#)—Section 4 of West Virginia’s Test Administration manual outlines the state’s protocols for ensuring test security, including security of the test environment and secure handling of printed materials. The guide includes instructions for the steps staff must take before, during, and after testing to ensure that test materials are secured and that the test environment is also secure.

Resources

- » [USED/IES/NCES Testing Integrity Symposium: Issues and Recommendations for Best Practice](#)—Based on discussions from the Testing Integrity Symposium (held in Washington, D.C. on February 28, 2012), this report provides suggestions for preventing, detecting, investigating, and responding to testing irregularities. There is a section that focuses specifically on security and best practices for computer-based assessments. This report can provide states with suggestions on protocols to incorporate for securing the test environment and its results.
- » [CCSSO Student Privacy & Data Security: A State Education Agency Discussion Framework](#)—This document is designed to guide discussions among state chiefs of education, chief information officers, chief privacy officers, and education data and information systems teams about understanding state measures to protect data privacy and security. It is suggested that state staff discuss how data are collected, stored, and shared, and identify any areas where security protocols should be updated.

Communication/documentation for LEAs/schools/parents/students

Overview

- » To support understanding of the state assessment system and its function, effective communication tools are needed. Communication tools should explain how the state assessment system operates, the assessments students will be required to take, what data will be collected, and how the assessment system fits into state learning expectations. States will also want to consider how to disseminate information about assessment scheduling and identify when assessment data might be available for stakeholder review. States might also include details about security protocols and protecting students' data. This information will be important for stakeholder understanding of why the assessment system is important for state expectations, as well as for communicating how stakeholder groups are expected to participate in the state assessment system.

State Examples

- » [Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools \(PEAKS\) and Alaska Science Assessment Parent and Community Resources](#)—Alaska provides links to documents created specifically for parents and community members to explain the statewide assessment system and its resulting data. Multiple frequently asked questions sheets, an informative video, and student preparation links are included on the site.
- » [Arkansas Department of Education ACT Aspire Resources for Parents and Students](#)—To help parents and community members understand the score reports from the general ACT Aspire assessment, Arkansas developed letters and descriptors that can be disseminated. These letters describe the purpose of the ACT Aspire assessment and what the score report indicates about student performance. Arkansas presents these letters in English, Spanish, and Marshallese.
- » [California CAASPP Communications Toolkit](#)—California has created documents for communicating with parents around the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, including handouts for addressing questions about these assessments and explaining the score reports. Resources include videos (in English and Spanish) that provide key information about the Smarter Balanced assessments. California also includes sample letters that districts can send to parents and community members to describe the Smarter Balanced assessments and their purposes.
- » [New York 2019 Parent Resources](#)—The New York Office of State Assessment website includes links to communication resources to address questions that parents may have about statewide assessments. Parent resources have been translated into Chinese (Simplified), Haitian Creole, Russian, and Spanish resources.
- » [South Dakota 2018 Reporting Memo](#)—South Dakota's Department of Education website includes a link to a reporting memo that identifies resources for communicating Smarter Balanced and ACCESS assessment results.

Resources

- » [Achieve Guidance to States on Reporting Assessment Results to Families and Educators](#)—This brief provides broad suggestions for developing communication tools for families and educators. While this brief is focused on communications about assessment results, the suggestions provided (e.g., avoiding jargon use, avoiding information clutter, providing supporting resources) could apply to other communications about assessment.

- » Sample parent communications regarding assessment: [Achieve Sample Communication Materials](#)—These samples can be adapted or used as an example for developing communications that explain assessment score reports. This includes a sample frequently asked questions section that states can modify to discuss their assessment system.
- » [Reform Support Network Communications and Engagement Assessment Rubric](#)—This resource is not specific to assessment issues but provides a rubric for evaluating how states communicate with stakeholders. States are guided through developing a broad communications plan, engaging with stakeholders, tailoring messages for different stakeholder groups, and evaluating communications capacity.

Contingency plans (CE 2.3)

Overview

- » Despite having clear, thoughtful plans for assessment administration, issues can arise in assessment administration. For example, during administration of a computer-based assessment, technology issues may arise and interrupt testing. In cases where testing is interrupted and students are not able to take or complete an assessment, states must have contingency plans to continue testing as best as possible. For example, state and local contingency plans may require districts and schools to have extra copies of assessments available for use, to have alternate assessment modes available in case testing issues arise, or to make arrangements to expand designated testing windows. States will need to identify potential testing administration issues that may arise and determine the protocols that districts and schools are to apply to these issues.

State Examples

- » [Colorado Measures of Academic Success Test Administrator Manual](#)—Colorado’s guide provides instructions before, during, and after administration of the state’s computer-based assessments. This includes instructions for responding to stops in testing. Section 2.4.2 of this manual for administration of computer-based tests outlines strategies for managing possible challenges or disruptions during test administration.

Resources

- » [Council of Great City Schools Implementing Common Core Assessments: Challenges and Recommendations](#)—Page 22 of this document provides suggestions for troubleshooting that state agencies can conduct prior to implementation of a computer-based test to identify potential issues and develop contingency plans for assessment administration. Starting on page 24, the document also provides recommendations for ensuring smooth administration of computer-based assessments, including the development of an inventory that identifies existing technological readiness.
- » [Recommendations for Addressing the Impact of Test Administration Interruptions and Irregularities](#)—This document, produced by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), outlines different possible technology-related interruptions that may occur during computer-based testing administration and their implications. Common types of technology-related interruptions (e.g., students unexpectedly being logged out of an assessment, delays in assessment loading) are identified. This document may be used by SEAs when determining their own procedures and policies related to contingency plans.

Contextual issues (technological capacity, universal design, inclusion, accommodations, perceived advantages/challenges) (CE 1.4, 2.3)

Overview

- » Assessment administration requires states to consider student needs and accommodations that may be needed to ensure all students can participate. For example, English language learners may need linguistic supports in order to properly access and demonstrate understanding on state assessments. State documentation regarding assessment accommodation should clearly identify all accommodations that are available to students, how appropriate accommodations will be identified for individual students, and the guiding protocols for administering and monitoring accommodation use. For any assessment accommodations that are provided, protocols are needed to detail how to properly implement accommodations and monitor to ensure students' testing needs are met.

State Examples

- » [Colorado Instructional Accommodations Manual](#)—This manual provides guidance for Individualized Education Program teams and educators, presenting a five-step process for the selection and implementation of instructional and assessment accommodations. It offers tools and suggestions for using technology for students with disabilities to best access instructional context. To support peer review requirements for documenting accommodations, this guide also includes guidance for documenting and monitoring assessment accommodations.
- » [Kansas Accommodations Manual](#)—Kansas's accommodations manual outlines the protocols and procedures in the state regarding how to select, administer, and evaluate accommodations for instruction and assessment. Each of the five steps in this process is identified and explained to support understanding of how to identify, administer, and evaluate accommodations. This manual includes guidance for developing a plan to monitor accommodations during the testing period.
- » [Maryland Public Schools](#)—This guide provides an overview of accommodations that might be provided to students for participation in classroom, district, and state assessments. Maryland's guide also includes instruction for selecting appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities, including the responsibilities of different school staff for administering and monitoring assessment accommodations. This includes instructions for evaluating accommodation use at the district and school levels.
- » [Ohio's Accessibility Manual](#)—Ohio's Accessibility Manual is a comprehensive policy document providing information about the accessibility features of Ohio's State Tests (OST) for grades 3–8 and high school in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and Ohio's Graduation Test (OGT), along with instructions for the use of accommodations allowed by the state that address each accommodation.
- » [Pennsylvania Accommodations Guidelines: 2019 PSSA and Keystone Exams](#)—Pennsylvania's guide includes federal guidelines for including all students, including students with disabilities, in statewide testing. This guide includes an overview of the different types of assessment accommodations that are available to students and specifies instructions for identifying and documenting selected accommodations.

Resources

- » [CCSSO Accessibility Manual](#)—CCSSO outlines a five-step decision-making process for district and school staff to use when determining and implementing accessibility supports for students. This document also includes tools school staff can use when planning and implementing assessment interventions. The guide also recommends processes for documenting assessment accommodations and monitoring accommodations during the testing period.
- » [CrossCultural Developmental Education Services](#)—This checklist is designed for the review of assessments to document and support selection of appropriate cultural and linguistic modifications. The checklist walks through an analysis of assessment content, potential modifications, and scoring and interpreting modified assessments.
- » Overview of universal design: [NCEO Universal Design of Assessments](#)—For states interested in understanding universal design principles, this NCEO page provides an overview of universal design elements. NCEO also includes answers to frequently asked questions about universal design, as well as links to other NCEO publications about assessments.
- » Applying universal design to assessment design: [NCEO Universal Design Applied to Large Scale Assessments](#)—This is another resource for understanding universal design elements, with focus on how universal design applies to instruction and assessment. There is a section devoted to the application of universal design to computer-based assessments.

During Test Administration

States should have clear policies and procedures for actions that must occur during assessment administration. These policies and procedures will guide how staff should monitor students during administration and ensure that all students are tested in a fair and reliable manner. Policies and procedures are also needed to ensure that assessment administration is completed in a secure manner. Peer review requires each state to provide documentation of how the state monitors assessment administration across its districts and schools. It is critical to ensure that assessment administration policies are implemented uniformly across a state. States may submit documentation of monitoring practices or an overview of those monitoring practices. Documentation must also include a description of the security protocol used to prevent test irregularities and ensure valid test results. States may submit documentation that explains how state policies and procedures guide secure handling of test materials, as well as state processes for identifying test irregularities.

These resources and state examples can be used to support states to develop new policies and practices or evaluate existing ones to guide assessment administration monitoring. States will need to ensure that there are standardized processes for monitoring, securing, and handling assessment materials.

Administration (CE 2.3)

Overview

- » During assessment administration, states must have protocols that standardize and secure the testing environment. These protocols should include guidance for how assessments are to be administered and completed, with guidance for students. States should also specify what staff is needed to properly administer state assessments, and what staff will need to do to properly administer assessments. These protocols must be shared across districts and schools to provide necessary guidance for accurate administration of state assessments.

State Examples

- » [Arizona Test Administration Directions](#)—This manual provides test administrators with detailed information beginning with activities that should take place prior to testing, and then provides guidance through the actual test administration and after testing has concluded. Instructions in this guide describe the stipulations for monitoring the testing environment and precautions to secure the environment. This guide also includes guidance for resolving common issues related to computer-based test administration.
- » [Colorado CMAS and CoAlt Procedures Manual Spring 2018](#)—For an example of how states should outline and communicate testing roles and responsibilities, Colorado has included a breakdown of roles associated with test administration. The manual lists responsibilities for district and school assessment coordinators; this includes responsibilities prior to and during the administration period. In addition, this manual also addresses the other components listed in CE 2.3.
- » [New York 2019 Operations EI ELA/Math Test Manuals for School Administrators and Teachers](#)—The New York Office of State Assessment developed operational manuals for administering both the computer-based and paper-based versions of statewide assessments. These manuals include instructions for preparing the testing room and administering assessments.
- » [Oregon Test Administration Manual 2017–18 School Year](#)—Oregon’s comprehensive manual includes sections for scheduling test administration, planning for test administration, and day-of-administration policies. The manual includes information on timing and duration for the statewide assessments. This guide includes a section that focuses on administration of the state English language arts and mathematics assessments, with step-by-step guidance for administering these computer-based assessments.
- » [Washington ELPA21 Test Coordinator Training Materials](#)—Washington provides annual training presentations to district test coordinators, district administrators, and school test coordinators in Washington. These presentation focus on administration of the ELPA21 assessment, the state’s English language proficiency assessment.

Resources

- » [Ensuring Fair Testing Practices](#)—This paper, presented at the February 2002 meeting of the Association of Test Publishers, focuses on fair testing practices. There is a section that focuses specifically on test administrators’ responsibilities in overseeing a secure testing environment and minimizing test irregularities.

- » [Code on Fair Testing Practices in Education](#)—The American Psychological Association’s Joint Committee on Testing Practices created this code to ensure professionals provide and use tests that are fair to all test-takers. This document also outlines best practices for administering assessments appropriately.

General monitoring (CE 2.4)

Overview

- » During the assessment administration period, staff may need guidance on how to monitor the testing environment and ensure that external factors do not impact administration. State protocol should provide clear guidance for how staff are to distribute and handle testing materials and monitor students during the assessment administration period. During the assessment administration period, state policies and procedures should be clear about how testing materials will be securely handled and secured. There should also be guidance for appropriate student and adult behaviors during testing time (e.g., students are not allowed to talk to one another, students may only ask questions of the test proctor, test proctors are limited in their responses, students cannot remove testing materials) to guide appropriate, standardized administration practices.

State Examples

- » [Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program Test Administration Manual](#)—Arkansas’s manual provides information for administering the Iowa Assessments. Administration instructions include information on administering these assessments and the appropriate assistance that teachers can provide during the testing period. This manual also provides a checklist of the actions school staff will need to take before, during, and after the testing period.
- » [District of Columbia Coordinating 2018/19 Statewide Assessments](#)—This assessment administration guide includes instructions for monitoring assessment administration, with specification for school test coordinator responsibilities during testing. This guide also specifies that Office of the State Superintendent of Education auditors will conduct school monitoring to observe compliance with test security and administration policies.
- » [New York State Testing Program 2019 Teacher’s Directions](#)—The New York Office of Student Assessment developed guides for administration of state paper-based assessments in English language arts and mathematics. These guides provide instructions for teachers when preparing the testing environment and checking testing materials for administration. This includes instructions broken down by testing day and session.

Monitoring (accommodation selection, assessment selection, accommodation use) (CE 2.4)

Overview

- » To participate in statewide testing, some students may require accessibility supports or accommodations (e.g., linguistic support, modified testing environment). When students are provided access to accessibility supports or accommodations, guidance must be provided to ensure staff understand how to properly administer and monitor these supports and accommodations. If alternate assessments are administered, policies and protocols must include guidance for proper administration of these assessments, with security measures for proper handling of testing materials and administration to the correct students. States should also provide clear guidance to assessment administrators for how to correctly provide assessment supports or accommodations so staff can identify what proper assessment administration looks like in practice.

State Examples

- » [Tools and Accommodations for the Kansas Assessment Program \(KAP\)](#)—Kansas provides a list of tools that are available to students as they take the state summative assessments. This document specifies the different tools and their functions, and specifies which tools are available to different student groups.
- » [Maryland Assessment, Accessibility, and Accommodations Policy Manual](#)—This document provides an overview of assessment accommodations in Maryland, including the decision-making process school staff are expected to use when identifying and selecting both instructional and assessment accommodations for students. State forms for requesting assessment accommodations are also included and may be illustrative for other states.
- » [North Carolina Plan for Monitoring the Use of State Testing Accommodations](#)—This document provides guidelines for which students may receive assessment accommodations and how accommodations are to be used with North Carolina assessments. This includes stipulations for identifying students who qualify for accommodations. Instructions are provided for proper monitoring of assessment accommodations, which includes the completion of state monitoring forms to identify which accommodations were administered to which students.

Resources

- » [NCEO Tools and Techniques for Improving Accommodations Outcomes \(PowerPoint\)](#)—This presentation covered the processes for understanding and selecting assessment accommodations. Guidance on federal accommodations regulations are included, as well as best practices for documenting decision-making regarding accommodation selections. This presentation also discusses proper documentation of assessment accommodations and monitoring accommodations for their appropriateness as needed for peer review.
- » [CASAS Training & Support, Testing Guidelines](#)—In this brief overview of assessment accommodations, there is a brief description of legislation related to assessment accommodations and local agency responsibilities for providing accommodations. This includes a one-page handout that can be disseminated for training purposes.

Test security (CE 2.5)

Overview

- » Securing testing materials and the testing environment is paramount for ensuring the validity of test results. For the peer review process, states must provide evidence of policies and practices that ensure testing materials are secured before, during, and after assessment administration. While students are taking assessments, proctors must ensure that testing materials are securely handled, with only designated staff allowed to access and handle materials. While assessments are administered, state policies and protocols should specify protocols for preventing unauthorized handling of test materials, including protocols to ensure that test materials are not copied or removed from the test environment. While students are taking assessments, state policies and protocols should identify how test materials will be securely handled.

State Examples

- » [Delaware System of Student Assessments Test Security Manual](#)—This handbook outlines the protocols, procedures, and responsibilities for security of state assessment administration. Responsibilities for state, district, and school staff are delineated. These protocols and procedures include securing the test environment before, during, and after testing. It also includes instructions for identifying and reporting testing irregularities. Each district and charter school is required to submit a test security plan that includes the stipulations identified in this guide.
- » [California CAASPP Security Incidents and Appeals Procedure Guide](#)—Instructions for reporting test security incidents are outlined in this guide. This guide includes distinctions between test security incidents (impropriety vs. irregularity vs. breach) and what the different action steps are for each type of security incident. California’s guide includes links to the appropriate forms for reporting test security incidents and specifies that they must be reported within 24 hours of occurring. The guide also includes suggestions for avoiding test security issues (e.g., appropriate scheduling of testing to avoid overlap, verifying correct test settings prior to administration).
- » [Indiana Assessment Program Manual](#)—Section 9 of this manual describes what constitutes unethical practices related to the security of assessment materials, including those related to computer-based and paper-based administrations before, during, and after test administration. Indiana’s manual also specifies that every school that administers Indiana Assessment System assessments must develop a local test security policy which outlines when secure test materials are delivered, who is allowed to access test materials and when, and how test materials will be securely stored throughout the testing period.
- » [Kansas State Department of Education Test Security Guidelines](#)—This document provides an overview of the state’s test security plan, which includes specification of roles and responsibilities and the security trainings that personnel must complete. A sample quality assurance checklist is included in this document. This document also provides instructions for reporting potential test security violations to the Kansas State Department of Education.
- » [North Carolina Testing Security: Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel](#)—The security protocols in this guide include instructions for how testing materials are handled. These protocols address which staff are allowed to have access to test materials and which are responsible for overseeing where test materials are stored. This guide also includes for recognizing and reporting test violations or irregularities, outlining the reporting that must occur for each potential violation.

- » [Oklahoma Test Security and Assessment Monitoring](#)—This site includes the responsibilities for each district test coordinator, building test coordinator, test administrator, and test proctor during assessment administration. Additional materials, including key documents such as a monitoring list and the state's Academic Assessment Monitoring System FAQs, are also included here.

Resources

- » [USED/IES/NCES Testing Integrity Symposium: Issues and Recommendations for Best Practice](#)—For states looking to develop a comprehensive plan for securing assessments, the insights in this paper can be illustrative. There is a section focused on detecting test irregularities, which includes establishing monitoring processes for test irregularities, as well as analyzing irregularities after the administration process. Section 4 may be of particular interest for states that are transitioning from paper-based to computer-based assessments, as it provides security considerations for computer-based assessments.
- » [NCES Panel: Prevention of Irregularities in Academic Testing \(PowerPoint\)](#)—During this panel discussion, researchers and state education officials discussed policies and protocols for preventing test security issues. During this discussion, an education official from Louisiana discussed state protocols for monitoring assessment administration and post-test analyses of student responses, including the procedures that the state put in place to deal with breaches of test security.

Missing materials (CE 2.5)

Overview

- » Missing materials constitute a breach in test security. If testing materials are found missing during administration, a protocol for the documentation of these materials should be in place. This documentation will help to create a paper trail that may be utilized for an investigation to take place, should that become necessary.

State Examples

- » [New Mexico Public Education Department Missing Test Materials Reporting Form](#)—This is an example of a state form for test administrators to complete upon the occurrence of missing testing materials. The form requires description of the chain of custody for missing materials and description of sign-out and sign-in procedures for testing materials.
- » [New Jersey District Receipt Form for Paper-Based Testing Materials](#)—This form is to be completed by the LEA Test Coordinator to account for delivered secure test materials from the contractor for students who are taking the paper-based tests. Districts are required to maintain a copy of this form for at least four consecutive assessment cycles.

Identifying, reporting, and documenting testing irregularities (CE 2.5)

Overview

- » Part of overarching test security is identifying, reporting, and documenting test irregularities. During testing, proctors may notice issues that adversely impact assessment administration or deviate from standard administration practice. In these instances (whether intentionally or unintentionally), proctors and staff will need guidance on how to correctly proceed to ensure that potential irregularities are properly reported and documented. These protocols should inform what constitutes a test irregularity, providing a clear understanding of what behaviors or outcomes should be reported as irregularities. Protocol regarding test irregularities should also include instructions for what to do when students break security protocol during assessment administration. If students deviate from assessment administration protocol, proctors will need to report these instances as a potential security breach. For any observed test irregularity, state policies and protocol should provide clear guidance on what information to collect and report, as well as to who test irregularities are to be reported. As testing proctors and staff identify potential testing irregularities, protocols will need to provide guidance for how to determine and report irregularities for documentation and possible investigation.

State Examples

- » [District of Columbia 2019 Test Security Training Supplemental Workbook](#)—This training supplement includes instructions for developing individual school test security plans. This includes instructions for reporting test irregularities (either through the Office of the State Superintendent of Education website, in-person by paper, or over the phone) and examples of possible testing irregularities.
- » [Idaho Department of Education Test Incident Log Application User Manual](#)—The purpose of this manual is to provide guidance for proper use of the state’s test incident log application, which is used to securely track test-related incidents that may affect the integrity of the test or student scores. The log may be used to identify training needs and validate test results. Similar to the Florida example, this can be guidance for development of user resources to help ensure proper system use.
- » [Ohio Test Incident Guidance Document](#)—Ohio provides an overview of common testing irregularities (e.g., electrical outage during testing, student becoming ill during testing period), as well as occurrences that do not constitute testing irregularities. For each of the identified testing irregularities, there is also associated guidance for how staff should respond, including which state departments should be contacted (as needed).
- » [Testing Irregularities from A to Z \(PowerPoint\)](#)—A PowerPoint presentation created by the Texas Education Agency that addresses irregularity types, how to address and investigate discrepancies, the reporting process, and final steps. Examples of different types of testing irregularities are included. The process for addressing irregularities is outlined, with steps for reporting and investigating testing irregularities.

Resources

- » [CCSSO TILSA Test Security Guidebook](#) (includes guidelines for prevention, identification, and follow-up investigation)—This guide on assessment security includes sections for detecting and investigating test irregularities. The section on test irregularities detection includes discussion of methods used for data forensics and how each should be applied. Guidance for investigating test irregularities is also included in this guide.

- » [CCSSO Recommendations for Addressing the Impact of Test Administration Interruptions and Irregularities](#)—This guide focuses on irregularities during administration of computer-based assessments and how these interruptions impact reporting and accountability. Guidance is provided for analyzing, scoring, and reporting assessments that have experienced a technological interruption.

After Test Administration

State documentation pertaining to policies and procedures for handling assessment materials and products are required for peer review. This documentation includes information regarding test security, specifically on how a state investigates documented test irregularities and the consequences of these investigations. During the assessment process, monitors may notice issues with how students take the assessment, how administrative procedures were delivered, or how assessment materials might have been handled or stored. Once a test irregularity is identified, states must have a concrete plan for documenting and investigating irregularities. These processes must be clearly communicated to district and school staff to ensure staff understand the proper ways to handle any test irregularity. Documentation should also be clear about how each reported test irregularity will be examined and what will occur when investigations have been completed.

The following resources and state examples can be used as guidance for states to ensure that post-administration security policies and procedures include secure handling of test materials and student data at the conclusion of testing. As states review or develop policies for handling testing materials and preparing materials for analyses, these resources can be used to understand how best to secure assessment materials to ensure valid results. These resources may also be instructive as states determine how best to investigate testing irregularities and establish consequences for different types of irregularities.

Investigation into test irregularities/security breaches (CE 2.5)

Overview

- » As testing irregularities are confirmed and reported, staff will need guidance on what takes place after reporting and how potential irregularities will be handled. States should have a clear process for what happens when irregularities are reported, including who is responsible for handling each component of the investigation process. Policies and protocols need to identify the progression of the investigation, with an overview of what steps are included and what investigation processes are applied. For each identified potential testing irregularity, state policies and protocols should specify how each will be investigated and the possible consequences for each irregularity. Irregularities will require action to mitigate irregularities; these actions may include removing student responses or retesting students. For each type of test irregularity, state protocols must identify an appropriate response that supports data validity.

State Examples

- » [CAASPP Security Incidents and Appeals Procedure Guide](#)—This guide outlines state policy and procedure with regard to testing irregularities and security breaches. For each type of possible testing violation (e.g., impropriety, irregularity, or breach), the guide details the different steps that school and district staff must take to report and document these occurrences. It also provides details on possible California Department of Education actions to investigate possible violations.

- » [New Hampshire Test Security Guide](#) (includes instructions for reporting test irregularities)—This guide differentiates the types of testing irregularities (improprieties, irregularities, and breaches) and provides a brief timeline for the investigation process for each. For security breaches, the guide also identifies the actions that will take place at the local, district, and state levels during the investigation process.
- » [Indiana Protocol for Reporting and Investigating Alleged Assessment Breaches](#)—This document outlines the state’s protocol that is in place for the reporting and investigation of alleged cheating, a security breach, testing administration breach, intellectual property right infringement, or any other breach that undermines the integrity and/or inhibits the effectiveness of Indiana’s assessments. In this document, steps are outlined for possible testing violations to be submitted to the Indiana Department of Education, who will then review the occurrence and determine if an investigation is needed.
- » [New York State Testing Program: School Administrator’s Manual](#)—New York’s guide includes instructions for handling assessments after administration. This includes instruction for mandatory reporting of testing improprieties.
- » [Texas Test Security](#) —This webpage includes instructions for testing staff regarding the reporting of testing incidents, including a link to an online incident report form. After testing incidents are reported, district test coordinators must contact the Texas Education Agency Student Assessment Division for investigation. Texas also stipulates that after a testing incident, districts must outline the steps they will take to ensure that the irregularity does not occur. Steps to be taken after a testing incident are clearly listed out.

Resources

- » [NCES Testing Integrity Symposium: Issues and Recommendations for Best Practice](#)—This report draws information from three sources: the opinions of experts and practitioners, comments and discussions from an associated symposium, and policy manuals or professional standards published by SEAs and professional associations. Section III of this report deals with the response and investigation of alleged and/or actual testing irregularities.

Independent review for test irregularities (CE 2.5)

Overview

- » As states fully examine test irregularities, some may find that existing state capacity is insufficient to conduct investigations or determine appropriate consequences. If this is the case, states may need to hire an external organization to conduct investigations. States should look for organizations with extensive experience in providing test monitoring and investigation services. When working with external organizations, states will have to determine what information must be collected and shared for analyses. States will also have to consider what permissions might be needed to allow an external organization to conduct in-person monitoring of assessment administration. When selecting an external organization to conduct irregularity investigations, states will need to consider their testing contexts and investigation needs.

Resources

- » [TILSA Test Security Guidebook](#)—Section V of this guidebook addresses follow-up investigations on state assessments. Areas that are covered include the level of evidence needed to initiate an investigation, roles for state-level staff, districts, and possible outside agencies, a model investigations kit, timelines for planning and carrying out investigations, and features of follow-up investigations for state assessments.

Results analysis/data forensics (CE 2.5)

Overview

- » After assessments have been administered, states will need protocols that guide how assessment data are processed and prepared for reporting. These protocols should identify which staff will handle testing materials, where testing materials will be sent for analyses, and who will handle data reporting. For data analyses and reporting, protocols should identify what analytic methods will be applied to different assessments, including the methods that will be used to further check for irregularities and ensure data accuracy and validity. Analytic processes will also identify what type of results will be produced for sharing, and what formats will be used to share data.

State Examples

- » [Indiana 2019–2020 Indiana Assessments Policy Manual](#)—For each of the state’s assessments, this guide describes scoring procedures used and when student scores must be made available. As part of the description of scoring procedures, this guide also includes specifications for minimum qualifications that scorers must possess.
- » [Missouri End-of-Course Data Forensics Procedure](#)—This manual, prepared by Questar for Missouri, outlines their plan to conduct analyses using four analytic procedures. These procedures include aberration (identification of response patterns that are inconsistent with a student’s ability level), similarity (checking for similar or identical student response patterns beyond probability of occurrence), answer change (detection of large amounts of right-to-wrong and wrong-to-right answer changes), and response time (detection of abnormally fast responses to items).

Resources

- » [TILSA Test Security Guidebook](#)—Appendix E of this guidebook provides an example of language that could be used in requests for proposals (RFPs) to encourage vendors to propose the use of data forensics analyses in state assessment programs.

Data reporting (CE 6.4)

Overview

- » After assessment results have been processed, data will have to be prepared for dissemination to various stakeholders. Before data can be reported, states should ensure that all data have been properly reviewed for accuracy. Results from all assessments should be properly analyzed and de-identified as needed before data are shared. Each stakeholder group will have different data needs, necessitating consideration of the different data presentations that may be needed. Some stakeholders may need to use all available data points, while other stakeholders may only need selected data points, requiring adjustment.

State Examples

- » [Illinois Professional Testing Practices for Educators](#)—Page 11 of this document includes essential guidelines for reporting test results, along with a list of prohibitions that testing administrators must avoid when reporting. Included are required steps that school staff must take when sharing and reporting assessment results, including explanation of what the tests are designed for and what should not be inferred from assessment results.
- » [California Reporting Science Assessment Results Timeline](#)—This timeline provides an approximation of when results are delivered to LEAs, parents/guardians, and the public. California also includes sample parent/guardian letters that can be revised and shared to communicate regarding score reports.
- » [New Jersey Parent Guide: English Language Arts/Literacy Student Score Report](#)—This resource provides guidance for explaining the state’s PARCC student score reports. This includes an explanation of the performance levels used in the score report. New Jersey also created a companion document for the state mathematics assessment.
- » [North Carolina Interpretive Guide to the Score Reports for the North Carolina End-of-Grade Assessments](#)—This guide is designed to help educators read and interpret the state’s end-of-grade assessments, as well as understand how to communicate assessment results to the public. Annotated examples of student score reports are included, with notes for how student achievement is specified in these reports.

Resources

- » [National Council on Measurement in Education Resources for Reporting Test Scores: A Bibliography for the Assessment Community](#)—This annotated bibliography identifies professional guidelines for reporting and interpreting assessment scores. Prior research and resources on test scoring reports are identified and summarized. Links to sample test score reports are also included in this review.
- » [Communicating Performance: A Best Practices Resource for Developing State Report Cards](#)—This document from CCSSO proposes key questions to ask and considerations for state education leaders in building state report cards, along with emerging research and best practices that can inform the answers.
- » [NCES Issue Brief on Data Quality: Striking a Balance](#)—This resource provides information on defining the quality of data and assessing its completeness within a statewide longitudinal data system.

Documentation

Overview

- » After assessment results have been properly reviewed and reported, states will need to maintain comprehensive documentation of administered assessments. This documentation should include tracking of students and assessments, with accurate notes of which assessments are administered to different student groups. Accurate documentation is necessary to maintain longitudinal data systems that allow for tracking performance over time. For state and federal reporting, it is also important to ensure that assessments and their results are recorded properly. Documentation of administered assessments and results is critical for maintaining accurate records of testing and student performance.

State Examples

- » [Ohio's State Tests Rules Book](#)—Page 60 of the Rules Book outlines the state testing information to be documented in either the student's record or transcript for each assessment taken.

Remediation (CE 2.5)

Overview

- » Major decisions regarding student placement and promotion may be contingent upon student assessment performance. When students do not meet performance requirements on assessments, states might require students to retake assessments until performance benchmarks are met. If this occurs, states must establish and communicate performance benchmarks so all stakeholders understand when students might be remediated. States will also have to determine what must occur if students do not meet performance benchmarks, and whether there are differences in requirements according to differences in performance.

State Examples

- » [Virginia Criteria for Determining Student Eligibility for Assessment Retakes](#)—This document outlines the state's policy that is to be used in determining the eligibility of students for an expedited retake of either a state assessment for grades 3–8 or an end-of-course assessment administered to meet federal accountability requirements only. This document includes considerations that district and school staff must take, including documentation and parental permission for retakes.
- » [New Jersey FAQ for Students Who Need to Retake the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers \(PARCC\) Algebra I Assessment to Meet Their High School Graduation Assessments Requirement](#)—This memo provides frequently asked questions and answers pertaining to students who need to retake the PARCC Algebra I assessment in order to graduate from high school. This includes stipulations about which students can retake the assessment.



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