Peer Review of State Assessment Systems

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Overview of Peer Review Process

- The assessment peer review process, mandated by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), aims to ensure that states **implement rigorous academic standards and high-quality assessments**.

- The peer review process is:

  - **Evidence-based**, focusing on documentation of the process used to develop and administer the assessments, and data to confirm the quality of the assessment system

  - Conducted by **external assessment** experts

Overview cont'd.

- Since the U.S. Department of Education paused peer review in 2012, almost every state has developed new academic content standards and assessments.

- As a result, all states will need to submit documents for peer review for reading/language arts, mathematics, and science.

- Documentation will need to be provided for general assessments, alternate assessments, and other assessments (e.g., native language translations).
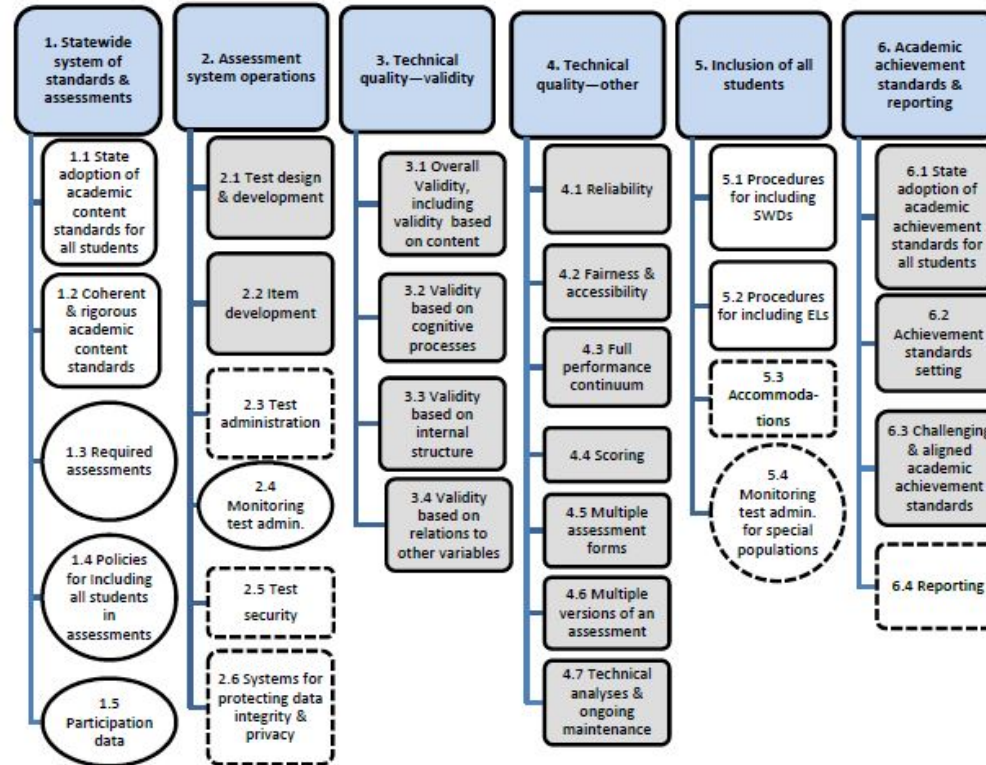
What's Different About the Process?

- Formation of multi-state assessment consortia

    - States can **coordinate work** to reduce burden and ensure consistency in the review and evaluation of state assessment systems

- Lessons learned from previous review process

    - Greater **transparency, consistency, and clarity** about what is required to address the critical elements

What's Different About the Assessments?

- Improvements in educational assessment
  - Prevalence of **technology** in developing and administering assessments,
  - Updated **test security** practices
  - Enhanced **automated scoring**
  - New **accessibility** requirements and updates

- Revisions to nationally recognized professional and technical standards
  - Emphasis on **technical quality** of assessments, fairness and accessibility
  - Focus on role of **technology**

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Critical Elements

Map of the Critical Elements for the State Assessment System Peer Review

1. Statewide system of standards & assessments	2. Assessment system operations	3. Technical quality—validity	4. Technical quality—other	5. Inclusion of all students	6. Academic achievement standards & reporting
1.1 State adoption of academic content standards for all students	2.1 Test design & development	3.1 Overall Validity, including validity based on content	4.1 Reliability	5.1 Procedures for including SWDs	6.1 State adoption of academic achievement standards for all students
1.2 Coherent & rigorous academic content standards	2.2 Item development	3.2 Validity based on cognitive processes	4.2 Fairness & accessibility	5.2 Procedures for including ELs	6.2 Achievement standards setting
1.3 Required assessments	2.3 Test administration	3.3 Validity based on internal structure	4.3 Full performance continuum	5.3 Accommodations	6.3 Challenging & aligned academic achievement standards
1.4 Policies for Including all students in assessments	2.4 Monitoring test admin.	3.4 Validity based on relations to other variables	4.4 Scoring	5.4 Monitoring test admin. for special populations	6.4 Reporting
1.5 Participation data	2.5 Test security		4.5 Multiple assessment forms		
	2.6 Systems for protecting data integrity & privacy		4.6 Multiple versions of an assessment		
			4.7 Technical analyses & ongoing maintenance		

KEY

○ Critical elements in ovals will be checked for completeness by Department staff; if necessary, they may also be reviewed by assessment peer reviewers (e.g., Critical Element 1.3). All other critical elements will be reviewed by assessment peer reviewers.

▨ Critical elements in shaded boxes likely will be addressed by coordinated evidence for all States administering the same assessments (e.g., Critical Element 2.1).

▢ Critical elements in clear boxes with solid outlines likely will be addressed with State-specific evidence, even if a State administers the same assessments administered by other States (e.g., Critical Element 5.1).

⬚/◌ Critical elements in ovals or clear boxes with dashed outlines likely will be addressed by both State-specific evidence and coordinated evidence for States administering the same assessments (e.g., Critical Element 2.3, 5.4).

Critical Elements

Statewide system of standards & assessments	• Is there a single state-wide system that reflects coherent standards for ALL students?
Assessment system operations	• Is there a technical sound process applied from test design, item development through test administration and data protection?
Validity	• Is it a valid assessment based on: content, cognitive processes, internal structure, and relations to other variables?
Other technical quality	• Are other components of technical quality addressed: Reliability; Fairness/Accessibility; Performance continuum; Scoring; Multiple forms and assessments; Technical Analyses and maintenance
Inclusion of all students	• Are all students validly included with appropriate accommodations?
Academic achievement standards and reporting	• Do the standards and assessments measure academic achievement appropriately?

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CSAI Guidance for States

Critical Element	Required Contents of Element (Evidence)	Example(s) of Evidence	Where to Find Evidence
1. Statewide system of standards & assessments			
1.1 State adoption of academic content standards for all students The State formally adopted challenging academic content standards for all students in reading/language arts, mathematics and science and applies its academic content standards to all public elementary and secondary schools and students in the State.	Documentation showing the adoption of academic content standards (or indication of Requirement Previously Met) Documentation stating that the standards apply to all public elementary and secondary schools and students in the State	Language in State Board/Department of Education key documents stating the adoption or formal approval of challenging academic content standards in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science For Requirement Previously Met: ESEA flexibility request approval letter stating that the State has adopted or in place challenging standards[1]; document from a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs) stating IHEs' certification of the State's standards; language indicating that current standards have not changed significantly since the previous peer review Language or text prefacing the State's standards, policy memoranda, newsletters, or other key documents explicitly stating that the standards apply to all public schools and public school students	• State Board of Education/Department of Education memoranda, meeting minutes, newsletters, press release, ESEA waiver, other key documents • State standards • Higher education institution endorsement/certificate • U.S. Department of Education ESEA flexibility request approval letter

[1] This only applies if State has not adopted supplemental State-specific standards.

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What the Testing Action Plan Means for States

Principles for Fewer & Smarter Tests

States to review assessment systems and ensure that assessments are:

- Rigorous and of high quality
- Fair and accessible to all students
- Tied to improved teaching & learning
- Transparent for students and parents
- Non-redundant and efficient

These are just guidelines…

But there will be resources available to support state initiatives

Support for States

- FY 2016 budget includes funding for assessment support
- EAG expansion includes focus on assessment review

- Use-of-funds guidance for federal funds
- Collaborative technical support from TA centers, including the **CSAI**

- Clarified flexibility for accountability – esp educator evaluations
- Further clarification of Peer Review