

MEMORANDUM



SCAN OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS (SY 2014–2015)

December 9, 2014

“What assessments are states administering as part of their state assessment systems in the 2014–2015 school year?”

This memorandum presents results from CSAI's most recent scan of state assessment systems, with attention to changes from the previous school year to the 2014–2015 school year.

States that have implemented the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English language arts (ELA) this school year will administer new assessments aligned to the CCSS. Seventeen states and the U.S. Virgin Islands will administer tests offered by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. Eleven states and the District of Columbia have joined the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), which offers performance-based and end-of-year assessments. Massachusetts plans to administer its state system in addition to the PARCC assessments.

States with unique standards, whether new or established, are administering their own assessments. Some states have pared down their systems by reducing the number of tests required. For example, Virginia has dropped testing requirements in history and science in grade 3, writing in grade 5, and U.S. History.

The parallel adoption of alternative achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities also requires the implementation of new assessments for accountability. Eleven states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands will administer alternate assessments developed by the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC). Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) will supply 13 states with alternate assessments, and it plans to pilot an alternate test in science in spring 2015.

While many states have retired the mathematics and ELA tests from their assessment systems, nearly all of the states will administer their existing science assessments. Some states have chosen to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and are preparing for implementation starting in fall 2016. The Illinois State Board of Education, according to a representative, has petitioned the U.S. Department of Education for permission to delay implementation of a science assessment until teachers have gained experience working with the NGSS. All other states are planning to implement science assessments in the 2014–2015 school year.

Additionally, 21 states are administering assessments in social studies. Tennessee will field test state assessments in social studies and an end-of-course examination in U.S. History. American Samoa is also developing social studies tests.

For the assessment of English language learners (ELLs), 33 states are administering the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) consortium's Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs). Sixteen states are using their own assessments, and two are testing with Language Assessment Scales (LAS) Links. New Jersey will conduct an ACCESS for ELLs field test in spring 2015. Washington and Ohio are administering state tests, but will also field test the English Language Proficiency for the 21st Century (ELPA21) assessments, aligned to the new English Language Proficiency Standards.

Ten states require students to pass graduation exit examinations, and 31 states are administering end-of-course (EOC) assessments. Alabama, New Jersey, and Texas are phasing out their graduation examinations, and New Mexico has replaced its New Mexico High School Competency Exam with a graduation assessment based on new standards. For EOC assessments, six states will end courses with PARCC end-of-year assessments, 21 states will administer their own EOC assessments, and six states will test with a combination of PARCC end-of-year assessments and state EOC assessments.

Assessments of school readiness and early childhood development are widely administered, but states often omit these from the rosters and schedules on their assessment websites. CSAI has confirmed that at least 21 states administer some kind of school readiness assessment to measure student development.

CSAI derived the information reported in this memorandum from websites maintained by state, district, and territory departments of education; thus, the accuracy of this report is commensurate with the accuracy of those sources. The reported data is intended to be used as a general summation of states' current systems, and not as a definitive report on any individual state.

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