Coming Together to Raise Achievement

New Assessments for the Common Core State Standards

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Prepared by the
Center for K–12 Assessment & Performance Management at ETS

K-12 Center at ETS

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Dear Colleague:

This is certainly a dynamic moment in the history of large scale K-12 assessment with five state-led and state-governed assessment development efforts underway. The policy goal in these efforts is to respond to the demands for more comprehensive, high-quality, useful and timely next-generation assessment systems. This updated Guide, the third in our series, is intended to be a resource that describes and illustrates the assessment designs and related activities being launched by the five federally funded State Assessment Consortia, namely:

- Two Comprehensive Assessment Consortia: the **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers** (PARCC) and the **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium** (Smarter Balanced);
- Two Alternate Assessment Consortia: the **Dynamic Learning Maps** (DLM) Consortium and the **National Center and State Collaborative** (NCSC) Consortium; and
- An English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment Consortium: the **Assessment Services Supporting English learners through Technology Systems** (ASSETS).

The Center for K-12 Assessment & Performance Management at ETS (or "the K-12 Center") has created this updated guide, *Coming Together to Raise Achievement*, to stimulate discussions about the opportunity before us. We open with two short articles by prominent educators in the English language arts, mathematics and professional development fields who offer guidance on the important work underway to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and to prepare for the transition to the aligned common assessments.

Next, we provide updated descriptions and illustrations of the five assessment development initiatives underway by the individual Consortia. They are currently in the second year of their work, with implementation for the two comprehensive and two alternate assessment systems in school year 2014-15. We have updated the Consortia membership lists and included new information on recent development work by PARCC and Smarter Balanced. The new summaries and illustrations of DLM, NCSC and ASSETS provide the first complete profile of the breadth of assessment development work underway across the country. These Consortia of states are committed to advancing thinking on how we should accurately measure the status and progress of our nation's special populations. This will ensure that our K-12 assessment systems do comprehensively and adequately address the measurement and assessment needs of all of our students.

Finally, we identify a set of significant forces that are emerging in K-12 education as the five Assessment Consortia push forward to create much more useful, timely and engaging assessments that measure and support student learning. Four forces have the potential to create for the field of education, what Tom Friedman in his important book, *The World is Flat*, calls "inflection points," which allow large numbers of people to access one another's ideas and to collaborate. The CCSS, aligned common assessments, and the open-source platforms being developed to collect and share resources are presenting such an opportunity for an inflection point in American public education.

The K-12 Center is pleased to be a resource and a catalyst to stimulate innovative and bold thinking that will advance the field of K-12 assessment and measurement to benefit high-quality teaching and student learning for all our children.

Pascal D. Forgione, Jr.

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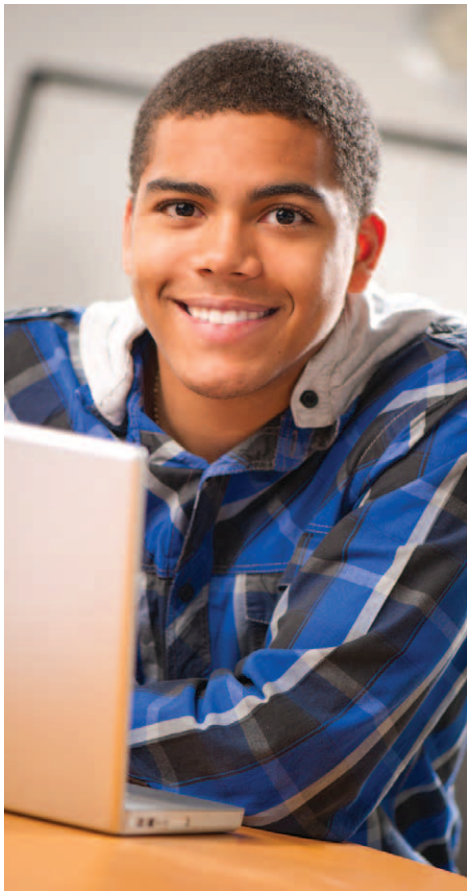
What Do States Gain and Give Up?

The Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) formally began in June 2009 as a collaborative effort among nearly all of the U.S. states and territories. Most have since adopted these standards in mathematics and English language arts (ELA) and joined a Consortium of states to develop and implement common assessments. Why are so many states transitioning to shared standards and assessments? What do they hope to gain? And how much flexibility will they retain to customize these shared standards and assessments for their constituencies? A review of the CCSSI publications provided the following answers.



Creation of the Common Core State Standards Initiative

In response to growing demand among their members, the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) agreed in 2009 to coordinate a state-led, voluntary effort to develop core academic standards in ELA and mathematics. Initial publications cited the following problems as drivers of the initiative[1]:

- Disparate standards across states (there is strong evidence of significant differences in academic expectations set by states);
- Student mobility, which exacerbates the problem of disparate standards across states;
- Changes in the set of skills required for current and emerging jobs; and
- Increasing global competition for existing jobs.

One year later, after public comment, reviews and revisions, the final Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were released. Since then, 45 states[2], the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands have formally adopted these voluntary standards. However, it may prove challenging to sustain the connections and collaboration among states over time.

[1] National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers. "Common Core State Standards Initiative.. www.corestandards.org/assets/Common-Core-State-Standards-March-2010.ppt. March 2010.

[2] This count includes Minnesota, which adopted the CCSS in ELA only.

The CCSSI did not call for, nor does it support, a "national curriculum." The common standards were designed to identify the most essential skills and knowledge students need, but not how students acquire them.

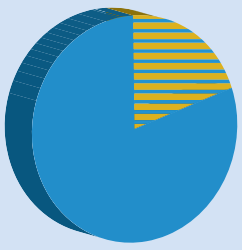
As required by the CCSSI, these states agreed to adopt the complete set of the CCSS in ELA and mathematics and may augment them with state-specific standards, provided that the CCSS comprise at least 85 percent of the total *(see Figure 1)*.

The CCSSI recognized that common standards were a critical – but insufficient – lever for achieving its goal of preparing all students to graduate from high school with the skills needed in college and the workforce. Therefore, the CCSSI also called for development of [3]:

- tools and resources for educators to adjust their classroom practices;
- instructional materials aligned to the standards;
- assessments to measure and report on student progress against these standards; and
- the pursuit of federal, state and district policies to ensure alignment.

The CCSSI did not call for, nor does it support, a "national curriculum." The common standards were designed to identify the most essential skills and knowledge students need, but not *how* students acquire them. Oversight of curricular matters will continue to be the prerogative of the individual states.

Standards Within Adopting States



State-specific Standards
15% maximum

Common Core Standards
85% minimum

States' Initiative to Create Multi-State Assessment Consortia

In March 2010, the U.S. Department of Education announced a competitive grant program to develop new assessment systems by Consortia of 15 or more states. The grant criteria reflected demands policymakers, parents and educators have cited for several years, including[4]:

- prompt return of student-level results;
- information that helps teachers refine instruction;
- results that measure student performance and growth over time (to enable evaluation of teacher and principal effectiveness); and
- the incorporation of fair and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and English language learners.

Two Consortia were funded, and 45 states, along with the District of Columbia, joined one or both of the Consortia as ongoing voluntary members. *(See the section on "Comprehensive Assessment Consortia" for more information.)*

Obligations, Benefits and Flexibilities for States in an Assessment Consortium

Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, member states commit to implement the common assessments as their federally required No Child Left Behind (NCLB) assessments for Grades 3-8 and high school in ELA and mathematics. While the Race to the Top Assessment Program funds will pay for the design, development, and piloting of the assessment systems and related tools and supports, the subsequent implementation costs are assumed by the member states. Each state will determine how it will administer the assessments, within parameters set by the Consortium for security and comparability. But states may choose to partner on numerous procurements related to implementation in order to share costs.

[3] Ibid.

[4] USED. Race to the Top Assessment Program Notice Inviting Applications. U.S. Federal Register, April 9, 2010.

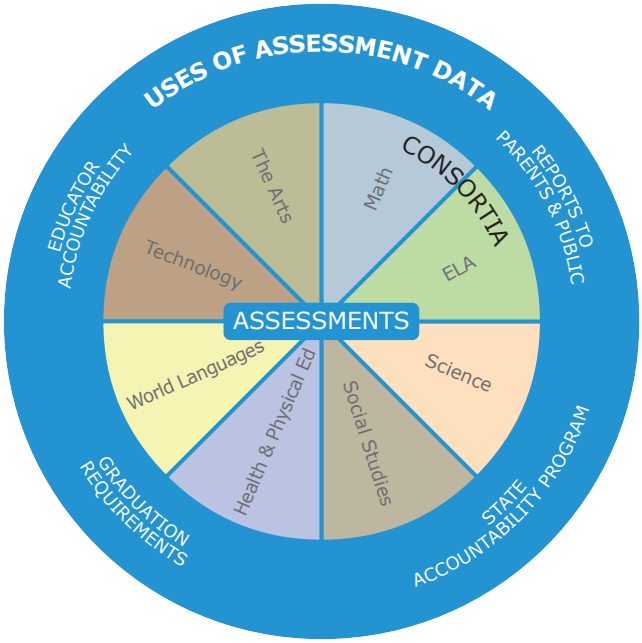


Figure 2

One significant cost for some states will be the increased level of technology infrastructure required to support these online assessment and reporting systems. The Consortia are working together to assist states and districts in this transition and in securing the needed delivery requirements.

Through participation in a Consortium, states will benefit by:

- realizing potential economies of scale in their assessments, reporting systems, instructional resources and professional development resources, although the cost for any state could be higher than the state's current system;
- identifying and sharing successful strategies for accelerating student learning of these priority skills and competencies; and
- providing a more comprehensive picture of how their students are performing against consistent, internationally benchmarked standards for college- and career-readiness to their states and the public.

With the exception of a four-state assessment Compact in New England, each state currently holds full decision-making authority for its assessment system. Those that join the Consortia will forfeit much of that autonomy – for those portions of the ELA and mathematics assessments developed by the Consortia – and instead will have a seat on the Consortium's Governance Board. In the broader arena of educational policy and accountability, however, member states will continue to retain the independence, flexibility and authority to respond to local needs and priorities. Consider the following:

- States will retain the right to augment the tests with items that assess state-specific standards *(see Figure 1)*, as well as to report NCLB results and results that include the state-specific items to the public.
- The common assessments are in mathematics and ELA only; states may administer assessments in additional subjects and at the conclusion of any set of courses. Additionally, the uses of the assessment data within each state are at the purview of the state *(see Figure 2)*.
- In addition to the Consortia's agreed-upon cut score for college readiness in ELA and math, states may establish and report against their own requirements for high school graduation.
- Member states can use state as well as Consortium assessments, as desired, for local accountability requirements.
- States will continue to determine whether and how assessment data are used within educator evaluations and professional advancement systems.

Governance

The NGA and CCSSO are developing a governance structure to provide oversight for future activities related to the CCSS to ensure that the CCSSI remains a state-led, state-controlled effort. The assessment Consortia are independent bodies that are governed by boards composed of representatives of member states. All Consortia are in the process of planning for their future sustainability.

TRANSITIONING TO THE COMMON CORE

Minor Tweaks or Major Shifts?

Many educators and content experts who are deeply knowledgeable about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are also deeply concerned. Why? All too often they hear colleagues express the belief that the CCSS are very similar to their current state standards and will require only minor changes to their existing curricula and instructional programs. They believe the colleagues expressing such beliefs are, simply put, failing to understand how tough these new standards are and, in many cases, how large the instructional shifts are that they necessitate.

The assessment consortia will be developing teacher leadership cadres in each state, as well as professional development resources and model instructional units, to help teachers and other educators gain a deep understanding of the standards and the types of student work these standards and the new assessments will require. These resources won't be ready for broad use until 2013, which leaves little time for local implementation and transition activities before the new assessments come online, with high stakes consequences, in the 2014-15 school year.

So what can schools and districts begin to do now to help their teachers and other school staffs prepare to align their programming and instruction with the CCSS? How can they strategically use their limited professional development time? We asked two exceptional educators – each of whom spent many years in the classroom and subsequently has led professional development programs across a variety of states and districts – to provide their advice. On the following pages, Cheryl Krehbiel addresses the transition to the CCSS in English language arts and Diane J. Briars discusses the CCSS transition in mathematics.

THE COMMON CORE TRANSITION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

What Districts, Schools and Teachers Can Do Now

By Cheryl Krehbiel

Many states and districts will begin using the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) this fall as the guiding document for what students should know and be able to do. For the purposes of planning for schools, this is just around the corner. There are things districts and schools should be doing now to prepare for this dramatic change.

Study the Standards

A necessary first step is a careful analysis of the new standards. Many states have completed and posted on websites a "crosswalk" of their current state standards to the new Common Core standards. Additionally, many districts have conducted a gap analysis of their current curriculum in relation to the new standards. These basic steps toward transitioning to the Common Core standards are fine, but alone are insufficient. The Common Core standards are not just "fewer, clearer and harder." They are fundamentally different and require closer examination.

Support Teachers to Expand their Skills and Knowledge

Central to the Common Core State Standards in English langauge arts is the requirement that students analyze a variety of complex texts (text complexity), conduct frequent research, use academic vocabulary in speaking and writing, and create eloquent arguments with clear evidence. State standards have never addressed text complexity, i.e., the variety of texts students should read and the rigor of those texts. This inclusion of text complexity in the Common Core standards will change what districts, schools, or teachers use in their classrooms with different grades or courses. This means districts or schools should be reviewing what texts are read at various grades, and within courses, to determine if changes need to be made. A vertical review from K-12 should be undertaken to determine the range of texts students will engage with throughout their academic career. The Common Core standards definitively put to rest the debate about text complexity. The variety and rigor of *what* students read does matter.

Engage in Real Job-Embedded Professional Development

Professional development is key to ensuring the Common Core standards are implemented with care and fidelity. The high demands of the new standards require educators to teach with an expanded repertoire of skills. The development of these new skills in the current teaching force means that professional development now, this summer, and in the foreseeable future must focus on the Common Core standards in order to build the capacity of teachers to effectively execute this important work.

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Most importantly, professional development should focus on three key areas that are at the heart of the English Language Arts standards:

- Reading and writing grounded in evidence from text;
- Practice with complex texts and their academic vocabulary; and
- Building knowledge through content rich nonfiction and informational texts.

For many teachers, these shifts remain abstract in the absence of student work. To clarify these expanded practices inherent in the Common Core standards, the standards writers have created Appendices to illustrate the practical application of the standards at the classroom level. It is in these documents where the standards come to life.

Collaborate for Shared Learning

Appendix A of the CCSS for ELA provides the research supporting key elements of the standards and defines key terms used throughout the standards documents. This is the place to begin the study of the standards in depth.

Appendix B provides guidance about suggested texts at each grade level, with sample student tasks. Schools and teachers can use the sample tasks as models of what rigorous assignments look like. Compare these samples with typical assignments or tasks currently being asked of students. How are they the same? How are the different?

One of the most powerful ways to support teacher planning and delivery of instruction is to engage teachers in collaborative work. In this kind of professional learning, teachers themselves should read a common text and complete the aligned sample tasks provided in the Appendix. In doing so, teachers begin to wrap their heads around the cognitive demands of the prompt. This simple but very important step helps teachers clarify expectations of proficient work, and builds a common understanding of proficient work within a team and across a building. Additionally, it supports the teacher in creating a coherent plan that delivers content instruction clearly. Teachers, working in collaborative teams, talk about instruction, and sometimes these poignant moments unearth content or pedagogy deficiencies that can be quickly addressed.

One of the most powerful ways to support teacher planning and delivery of instruction is to engage teachers in collaborative work.

Appendix C is another gold mine for professional learning. This resource is filled with annotated examples of student writing. Again, in learning teams, teachers should be examining these documents alongside the work currently being done in their classrooms. Teachers should conduct a gap analysis to determine what changes need to occur in their own practice to ensure students are prepared to produce such high-quality work. Careful examination in collaborative teams allows for shared understanding of the new expectations demanded with the Common Core.

Another important aspect of the Common Core standards is the focus on academic vocabulary. This attention to academic vocabulary can be seen throughout the standards. The standards demand that students read and understand demanding texts, engage in collaborative, purposeful discussions, and respond appropriately in writing. Teachers need to build capacity about explicit academic vocabulary instruction. Isabel Beck refers to these key words as “traveling words” that move across content areas and are central to understanding complex texts. Districts and schools will benefit from explicitly studying academic vocabulary instruction through collaborative planning where key vocabulary is discussed, and through book study.

Create Time for Collaboration

Just as vocabulary must travel across content areas, professional learning must travel across all levels. Central office administrators, principals, and teachers must work side-by-side in a collaborative learning journey to bring the Common Core standards to every student in every classroom. The collaborative learning process is a non-negotiable vehicle for change in this transition process. A priority for districts and schools will be to make time for this collaborative work as implementation of the standards begins and as development for the new high-stakes assessments moves toward going online in 2015. Regardless of where you are in your journey with the Common Core standards, the resources found on the list of reviewed Helpful Websites found in this publication will be useful to you.

THE COMMON CORE TRANSITION IN MATHEMATICS

What States, Districts and Schools Can Do Now

By Diane J. Briars

These Standards are not intended to be new names for old ways of doing business. They are a call to take the next step. It is time for states to work together to build on lessons learned from two decades of standards based reforms. It is time to recognize that standards are not just promises to our children, but promises we intend to keep. (CCSSO, 2010, p. 5)

The Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSS-M) call for significant changes in mathematics curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment. If enacted faithfully, these changes have the potential to significantly increase the mathematics achievement of students throughout the United States.

Given the magnitude of the changes, implementation efforts need to begin immediately, even though the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) assessment systems are not yet in place and teachers may be accountable for student performance on current state assessments for the next few years. In light of these factors, what are the most important and strategic things state, district and school and leaders can do now to begin the transition to the CCSS-M?

Communicate that CCSS-M Requires Significant Shifts

First, leaders need to help teachers, administrators and also parents understand that CCSS-M is not "business as usual." Implementing CCSS-M requires more than minor adjustments in grade levels at which particular content is taught. CCSS's focus and rigor, emphasis on conceptual understanding as well as procedural fluency and the mathematical practices, are significant departures from current practice in most districts and schools. Consequently, faithful implementation requires significant changes in instruction and assessment, as well as curriculum. Unfortunately, a typical implementation starting point is "aligning" CCSS-M to state or district standards, grade by grade, standard by standard. Too often, such alignments focus on grades at which topics are taught (e.g., fractions), omitting details like increased emphasis on understanding and differences in topic treatment (e.g., emphasis on unit fractions and number line models). Such alignments can also obscure CCSS-M's careful development of topics across grades. As a result, such studies give the impression that CCSS-M differs only slightly from current standards – which is not the case! What's needed are structured experiences, over time, in which cross-grade/course and within-grade/course teams analyze CCSS-M's development of particular content across grades. The first step in this is giving a strong, consistent message that the CCSS-M differ significantly from previous standards.

Faithful implementation requires significant changes in instruction and assessment, as well as curriculum.

Promote Understanding and Implementation of the Standards

In addition to content standards, CCSS-M includes Standards for Mathematical Practice, which describe ways of thinking and habits of mind that proficient users of mathematics possess. Because students' development of these practices can occur within existing content standards and curricula, they are a strong starting point for CCSS-M implementation. First, teachers and administrators need to recognize that the mathematical practices are *standards*, i.e., students are expected to develop proficiency in them, and practices will be assessed along with the content standards. Second, teachers need to understand what the practices mean and what they look like at their grade level. Then, they need to develop proficiency in instructional approaches that promote students' development of the practices, e.g., engaging students in challenging tasks on a regular basis, providing opportunities for students to explain their reasoning and critique the reasoning of others, etc. Because development of both students' proficiencies in the practices and teachers' proficiency in instruction that promotes development of the practices will take considerable time, attending to the mathematical practices now is essential for faithful implementation of CCSS-M by 2014-15.

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Provide Professional Development on Instructional Practices

Another major shift in CCSS-M is the emphasis on conceptual understanding as well as procedural fluency. As with the mathematical practices, teachers and administrators will need to learn and develop proficiency in instructional practices that promote students' conceptual understanding, such as engaging students in rich, challenging tasks that require them make sense of mathematics and explicitly connecting facts, procedures and ideas. Fortunately, these instructional practices provide opportunities to engage students in the mathematical practices as well develop conceptual understanding. In fact, the CCSS-M describe the standards that begin with the word "understand" as particularly good opportunities to integrate development of the mathematical practices with content instruction.

Develop a Plan to Phase-in Curricular Content Changes

The content changes called for in CCSS-M involve *what* students should understand and be able to do regarding particular mathematical topics as well as *when* they should develop proficiency in particular content. Consequently, some content changes can be implemented immediately, even with current assessments in place. Thoroughly analyzing CCSS-M content progressions across grades in light of current assessments, then developing a plan or model for phasing in content changes, is another strategic current activity. Key questions are: What CCSS-M content standards can be implemented with current assessments in place? What current content can be eliminated or minimized? How can instructional time after administration of accountability assessments be used to address content that is changing grades under CCSS-M?

Some content changes can be implemented immediately, even with current assessments in place.

The Grade 3-5 Number and Operations in Base Ten standards are examples of standards that could be implemented with current assessments in place. They call for students to fluently add, subtract, multiply and divide "using strategies and algorithms based on place value and properties of operations," but delay expected proficiency with the standard algorithm for these operations until Grades 4, 5 and 6, respectively. Since most tests assess computation without specifying the algorithm, implementation of these standards could begin immediately. And, of course, K-2 CCSS-M implementation can begin immediately since they are not assessed under No Child Left Behind.

Assess Conceptual Understanding and Mathematical Practices

Faithful assessments of CCSS-M will assess students' conceptual understanding and proficiency with the mathematical practices in addition to skills. Incorporating items that assess conceptual understanding and the practices into current state, district, school, and classroom assessments is another powerful strategy to support the transition to CCSS-M. It doesn't matter whether the tasks are similar to those being developed by the assessment consortia. What matters is that students have regular opportunities to engage in such tasks and receive feedback on their performance, and that teachers regularly get information about their students' conceptual understanding and strategic competence to inform their instruction. For example, states, districts, and schools that give quarterly benchmark assessments could add one or two performance tasks to each test for each grade. This could be done using high quality performance tasks available on various websites for little or no cost, such as Balanced Assessment tasks and released state assessment tasks.

Center Comprehensive PD Around Teacher Collaboration

Clearly, districts and schools need comprehensive professional development (PD) programs to transition to CCSS-M. While typical PD events – presentations, workshops, courses, conferences, webinars – can be valuable, they alone are insufficient. Teachers need ongoing professional learning with colleagues around CCSS-M implementation, i.e., participating in grade-level or course collaborative learning teams as part of a larger professional learning community. For districts and schools that do not have collaborative teams in place, now is the time to start. If teachers are regularly working in collaborative teams, now is the time to focus their work on CCSS-M transition activities, such as those described above.

Finally, one of the most powerful aspects of CCSS-M is that they are *common* – to date, 45 states have adopted them. As a result, a number of national organizations and other entities are developing resources to support the interpretation and implementation of CCSS-M *(see Table 1).* Regularly monitoring these sites for new tools and resources, and widely disseminating information about them to teachers and administrators, will facilitate the transition to CCSS-M.

Helpful Websites

The following is a small sampling of the rapidly growing number of websites and resources that provide information about and support for implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and new assessments.

Common Core State Standards

Achieve the Core
http://achievethecore.org
Developed by lead writers of the CCSS, this site provides free, carefully vetted resources to support ongoing implementation efforts and selected research and reports. (Assembled by Student Achievement Partners)

Apps for Viewing and Searching the Standards
Several apps are available for viewing and searching the CCSS, as well as locating and organizing related resources. For iPhone and iPad, search "Common Core State Standards" at www.apple.com/iTunes or go to the iTunes Store. For Droid devices, search "Common Core State Standards" https://play.google.com/store.

The Common Core Video Implementation Series
www.youtube.com/user/TheHuntinstitute#g/u
This site features short video segments by the standards authors about different aspects of the standards. (Sponsored by the Hunt Institute)

The Common Core State Standards Initiative
www.corestandards.org
This is the home site of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI). The standards documents are found here, as well as state adoption status, key points in each set of standards, and background and FAQ documents.

EngageNY
www.engageny.org/common-core
This is the central site for educators in New York working to implement the CCSS. It contains guides for teachers, principals, network teams and administrators, including exemplar lessons and the materials needed for network team professional development sessions. In 2012 the site will add Common Core-aligned curriculum modules and tools, along with professional development resources to help educators learn how the modules meet the demands of teaching the Common Core. It will also add a series of videos that illustrate highly effective teaching strategies in real classrooms, with a particular focus on high-need schools and under-served students.

PTA Parents Guide to Student Success
www.pta.org/4996.htm
The National Parent Teacher Association has produced grade-by-grade overviews of the CCSS, describing what students should be learning in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Free, and available in English and Spanish.

Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards
www.corestandards.org/assets/Publishers_Criteria_for_3-12.pdf
Developed by authors of the CCSS, these documents underscore what matters most in the standards and illustrate the shifts that must take place in the next generation of curricula, including those elements that may be part of current curricula and should be dropped.

CCSS – Mathematics

Designing High School Math Courses Based on the CCSS-M
CCSSI_Mathematics_Appendix_A.pdf
Guidance from the authors of the CCSS.

Illustrative Mathematics Project
illustrativemathematics.org
This site provides guidance to states, assessment consortia, testing companies, and curriculum developers by illustrating "the range and types of mathematical work that students will experience in a faithful implementation" of the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics (CCSS-M). It will also display the standards in multiple views and provide easy access to tasks associated with individual standards and tasks associated with higher order structures in the standards. (An initiative of the Institute for Mathematics & Education, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)

The Mathematics Assessment Project (MAP)
map.mathshell.org
This site contains formative and summative assessment tasks and lessons for Grades 7-12 specifically designed to support CCSS-M implementation. (Developed by the Shell Center/MARS, University of Nottingham and University of California, Berkeley through funding from the Gates Foundation)

The Math Common Core Coalition – MC^3
www.mathccc.org
Four major mathematics education groups have joined with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the National Governors Association (NGA), the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, and the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) to:

- Provide a means to review, research, nurture, and communicate common messages throughout the implementation and assessment of the CCSS-M.

- Provide expertise and advice from the communities of mathematics education content and assessment experts for the development of the content frameworks of the assessment consortia for the CCSS-M.
- Collect information about the implementation and assessment processes of the CCSS-M that will inform future revisions of the CCSS-M.

NCSM
www.mathedleadership.org/ccss/
This site contains the latest news and project reports about CCSS-M and downloadable resources, including a set of tools to assist K-12 textbook selection committees, school administrators, and teachers in analyzing and selecting curriculum materials that support faithful implementation of the CCSS-M; a set of ready-to-use professional development modules designed to help teachers understand the CCSS-M and implement them in their classrooms; and archived National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NCSM) webinars addressing CCSS-M implementation.

Tools for the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics
www.commoncoretools.me
This is Bill McCallum's blog on tools that are being developed to support the CCSS-M, as well as other CCSS-M news, including the latest information about Illustrative Mathematics and links to the most recent Standards Progression documents, which are narrative documents describing the progression of topics within a CCSS-M domain across a number of grade levels, informed both by research on children's cognitive development and by the logical structure of mathematics. Progressions documents are available directly at http://math.arizona.edu/~ime/progressions/.

CCSS – English Language Arts

The CCSS-ELA Appendices:

Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards and Glossary of Terms
www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf

Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks
www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

Samples of Student Writing
www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_C.pd.

Achieve the Core
http://achievethecore.org
This site, developed by lead writers of the ELA standards, provides free, carefully vetted resources to support ongoing implementation efforts. Exemplars for Grades 6-12 feature "readings tasks in which students are asked to read and reread passages and respond to a series of text-dependent questions; vocabulary and syntax tasks, which linger over noteworthy or challenging words and phrases; discussion tasks in which students are prompted to use text evidence and refine their thinking; and writing tasks that assess student understanding of the text."

The Common Core Curriculum Mapping Project
www.commoncore.org
This organization, which has been in existence for decades, has produced curriculum maps based on the Common Core State Standards. Each one is regularly enhanced through teacher feedback. The maps are structured as a sequence of roughly six thematic units per grade level, K-12. Each includes an overview, essential question, focus standards selected from the CCSS, suggested texts and art or music, sample activities, links to additional resources, a list of terminology, and a standards checklist. Similar maps for mathematics are under development. A small number of maps are available for free, but access to all requires a $20 membership fee, which supports further work on the maps by this not-for-profit.

Common Core Resources from Kansas DOE
www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4778
The Kansas State Department of Education has organized a variety of useful resources, including Powerpoint presentations, videos, document maps of the CCSS, text complexity resources, and examples of text complexity analyses.

National Council of Teachers of English Resources for the CCSS
www.ncte.org/standards/commoncore
The council has developed a Book Series and Virtual Conference Recordings that are "focused on helping teachers and schools interpret the CCSS and plan units of instruction, "keeping students at the center and teachers as decision-makers."

The Assessment Consortia

A Video Log of the Development of the Comprehensive Consortia
www.k12center.org/events/webinars.html
This page contains links to a series of webinar discussions with the leaders from each of the two comprehensive assessment consortia: Sue Gendron of Smarter Balanced and Laura Slover of PARCC. They discuss the progress of their work and respond to questions sent in by viewers.

Summaries, Slides, and Other Communication Tools
www.k12center.org/publications.html
This site contains each edition of *Coming Together to Raise Achievement* produced to date, as well as summaries and slide illustrations of the five assessment consortia designs and other free, ready-to-use materials to support understanding and discussion of these important initiatives.

Supporting Professional Learning

Learning Forward
www.learningforward.org
The website of this international membership association of learning educators contains standards for professional learning, new reports, webinars, e-learning series, examples of collective bargaining policies that support professional learning and other resources to support effective professional learning within schools and across other professional networks of educators.

State Memberships in Assessment Consortia

Table 1

	Comprehensive Assessment Consortia		Alternate Assessment Consortia		English Language Proficiency Consortium
State	**PARCC (24)**	**Smarter Balanced (27)**	**DLM (13)**	**NCSC (19)**	**ASSETS (29)**
Alabama	Participating	Advisory			Member
Alaska				Member	
Arizona	Governing			Member	
Arkansas	Governing				
California		Governing			
Colorado	Participating	Advisory			
Connecticut		Governing		Member	
Delaware		Governing			Member
District of Columbia	Governing			Member	Member
Florida	Governing			Member	
Georgia	Governing			Member	
Hawaii		Governing			
Idaho		Governing			Member
Illinois	Governing				Member
Indiana	Governing			Member	
Iowa		Governing	Member		
Kansas		Governing	Member		
Kentucky	Participating				
Louisiana	Governing			Member	
Maine		Governing			Member
Maryland	Governing				Member
Massachusetts	Governing			Member	Member
Michigan		Governing	Member		
Minnesota					Member
Mississippi	Governing		Member		Member
Missouri		Governing	Member		Member
Montana		Governing			Member
Nebraska					
Nevada		Governing		Member	Member
New Hampshire		Governing			Member
New Jersey	Governing		Member		Member
New Mexico	Governing				Member
New York	Governing			Member	
North Carolina		Governing	Member		Member
North Dakota	Participating	Advisory		Member	Member
Ohio	Governing				
Oklahoma	Governing		Member		Member
Oregon		Governing			
Pennsylvania	Participating	Advisory		Member	Member
Rhode Island	Governing			Member	Member
South Carolina	Participating	Advisory		Member	Member
South Dakota		Governing		Member	Member
Tennessee	Governing			Member	Member
Texas					
Utah		Governing	Member		Member
Vermont		Governing			Member
Virginia			Member		Member
Washington		Governing	Member		
West Virginia		Governing	Member		
Wisconsin		Governing	Member		Member
Wyoming		Advisory		Member	Member
PAC-6*				Member	

PARCC – Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

Smarter Balanced – Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

DLM – Dynamic Learning Maps Assessment Consortium

NCSC – National Center and State Collaborative

ASSETS – Assessment Services Supporting English learners through Technology Systems

* PAC-6 consists of six entities: American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Palau, and Republic of the Marshall Islands

SYSTEM DESIGNS, WORK TO DATE AND FUTURE PLANS

Comprehensive Assessment Consortia

As part of the historic economic stimulus package approved by Congress in 2009, the federal Race to the Top Assessment Program provided funding to develop a new generation of assessments intended to yield timely data to support and inform instruction, provide accurate information about what students know and can do, and measure achievement against standards that reflect the skills and knowledge required for success in college and the workforce[1].

Two Consortia of states were awarded grants to develop Comprehensive Assessment Systems in September 2010. Each Consortium was given more than $175 million to push the frontiers of the assessment field and build new testing and instructional support systems within four years. Currently, 45 states and the District of Columbia have joined the Consortia. The new summative assessments in English language arts and mathematics will replace those currently used by member states in 2014-15.

Each Consortium committed to build an assessment system for Grades 3-8 and high school that meets the following criteria[2]:

- Builds upon **shared standards** in mathematics and English language arts (ELA) for college- and career-readiness;
- Measures **individual growth** as well as proficiency;
- Measures the extent to which each student is on track, at each grade level tested, toward **college or career readiness** by the time of high school completion and;
- Provides **information that is useful** in informing:
  - Teaching, learning, and program improvement;
  - Determinations of school effectiveness;
  - Determinations of principal and teacher effectiveness for use in evaluations and the provision of support to teachers and principals; and
  - Determinations of individual student college- and career-readiness, such as determinations made for high school exit decisions, college course placement to credit-bearing classes, or college entrance.

The pages that follow provide illustrations of the two comprehensive Consortia – **the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers** (PARCC) and the **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium** (Smarter Balanced) – as well as summaries of their work to date and plans for the future[3]. These materials and other information about the Consortia can also be found at www.k12center.org/publications/assessment_consortia.html.

[1] In school year 2010-11 there were an estimated 49,306,000 students served in K-12 public schools in the U.S. (The Condition of Education 2011, NCES). Approximately, 34.6 million students were being served in Grades K-8 and nearly 14.7 million in public high schools.

[2] US Department of Education Race to the Top Assessment Program Application for New Grants: Comprehensive Assessment Systems. CFDA Number 84.395B. 2009

[3] The summaries and illustrations of the two comprehensive assessment consortia have been approved by Consortia leadership.

For further information about the work of these consortia, visit:

Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers:
http://parcconline.org

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium:
www.smarterbalanced.org

Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

The purpose of the PARCC system is to increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for success in college and the workplace. To reach this goal, PARCC intends the assessments to help educators increase student learning by providing data throughout the school year to inform instruction, interventions, and professional development as well as to improve teacher, school, and system effectiveness. The assessments will be designed to provide valid, reliable, and timely data; provide feedback on student performance; help determine whether students are college- and career-ready or on track; support the needs of educators in the classroom; and provide data for accountability, including measures of growth.

PARCC At a Glance

- MEMBERSHIP: 23 states[1] and the District of Columbia, educating about 25 million K–12 students
- GOVERNING STATES*: Arizona, Arkansas, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee
- PARTICIPATING STATES**: Alabama, Colorado, Kentucky, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina
- PROCUREMENT STATE***: Florida
- PROJECT MANAGEMENT PARTNER: Achieve
- HIGHER ED PARTNERSHIPS: More than 200 two- and four-year institutions, which typically receive 90 percent of all students across the PARCC Consortium states who enter college within two years of graduating from high school, will use the assessments as an indicator of readiness for credit-bearing entry-level courses.
- AWARD: $186 million total (assessment and supplemental grants), Race to the Top Assessment Program grants awarded September and October, 2010

This information is accurate as of March 21, 2011.

This summary of the PARCC assessment system has been approved by the PARCC Consortium for its accuracy. It describes the revised PARCC design approved by USED in February 2012.

* GOVERNING STATES cast decision-making votes on test design and policy.

** PARTICIPATING STATES consult on test design and policy, but have no decision-making authority and must participate in pilot and field testing.

*** PROCUREMENT STATE is the fiscal agent.

**** For this option, assessments will be delivered online with students responding via pencil and paper.

SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Summative Assessments For Accountability

Assessments will be developed in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for Grades 3-8 and high school that assess the full range of standards within the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The assessments are to be delivered on computer and utilize technology to increase access and student engagement. A paper-and-pencil format will be available as an accommodation and for Grades 3-5**** until studies confirm that students in these grades are ready for computer-based assessments. The PARCC summative assessment system will be composed of two summative/accountability components – performance-based assessments (PBAs) and end-of-year (EOY) assessments – given as close to the end of the school year as possible.

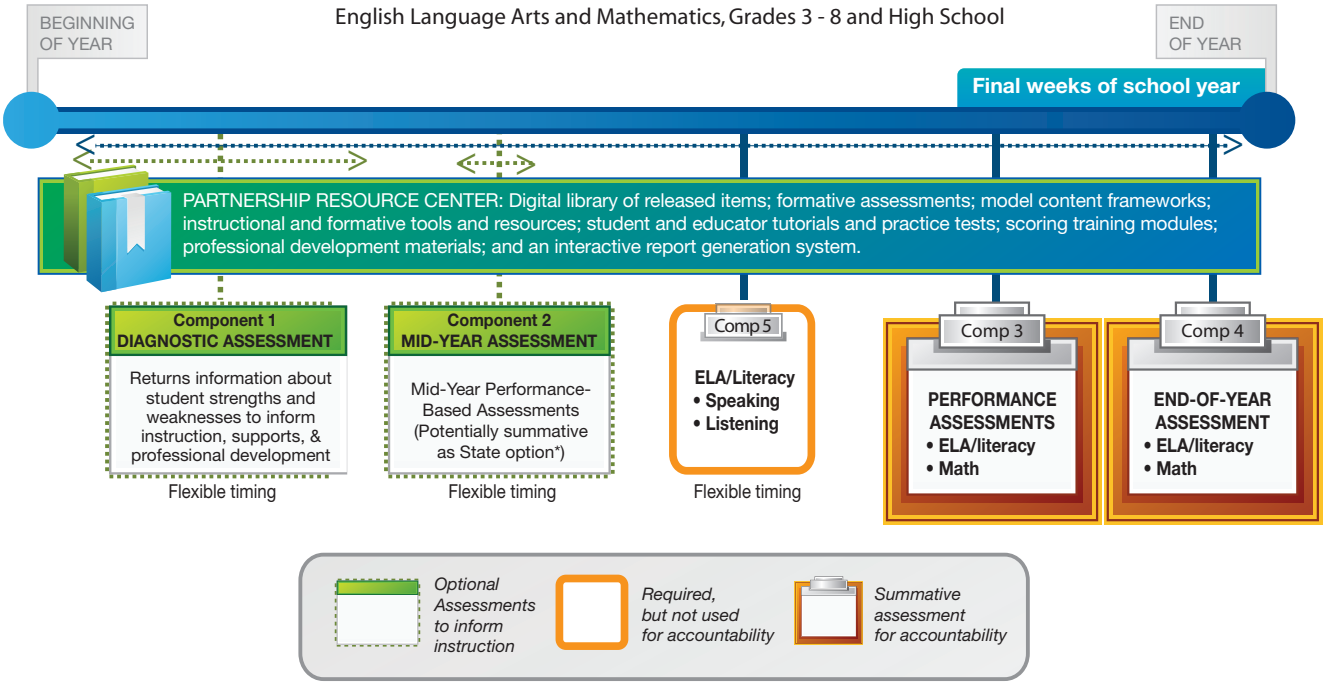
PARCC has developed Model Content Frameworks[2] which include descriptions of the major content and skills to be emphasized in each grade/course. A draft assessment blueprint aligned to the Model Content Frameworks outlines a preliminary set of claims to be made about student knowledge, skills and abilities, sample forms of evidence accepted, and examples of the types of tasks to be utilized[3].

[1] Five states currently belong to both Consortia (AL, CO, ND, PA, SC) and five states (AK, MN, NE, TX, VA) belong to neither.

[2] See the PARCC Model Content Frameworks and webinars that discuss them at http://parcconline.org/parcc-content-frameworks.

[3] See article on pages 48-49 concerning the Evidence-Centered Design process, which PARCC is utilizing.

PARCC Assessment System



*After study, individual states may consider including this as a summative component.

Performance-Based Assessments (PBA)
Component 3

For each grade/course tested, the PBAs will focus on the hard-to-measure standards and will utilize short, medium and extended tasks, including computer-enhanced simulations. These assessments will be given primarily on computers or other digital devices as close to the end of the school year as possible (approximately after 75-80 percent of instructional time). A mix of human and computer scoring will be used and results are expected to be reported within two weeks of completion. This component will not itself generate a scale score, but will be used in conjunction with the EOY assessment in the determination of the summative score.

For ELA, the PBAs for each grade will be comprised of two types of tasks, one research simulation task based on informational texts and one literature task based on pieces of literary text. These tasks will focus on writing effectively when analyzing text and using evidence drawn from the texts to support their claims and will include both short assessment items and prose responses. Students may be required to conduct electronic searches (within a predefined set of digital sources), evaluate the quality of the sources, and compose an essay or research paper using evidence from them. At each grade level, the sources will represent a range of reading/text complexity levels to enable students at higher and lower ranges of performance to demonstrate their skills. In the January 2012 PARCC Item Development procurement documents, it is projected that the PBAs in ELA will be comprised of three testing sessions over the course of two days, totaling 3 to 6 hours, with higher grades requiring more time. However, final decisions concerning the number and length of the testing sessions and the weighting of components will not be made until more of the development work has been completed.

For each grade/course tested, the PBAs will focus on the hard-to-measure standards and will utilize short, medium and extended tasks, including computer-enhanced simulations.

The mathematics PBAs will focus entirely on the major content of the grade/course, as defined in the PARCC Model Content Frameworks. The two types of tasks in mathematics will require students to express their mathematical reasoning and to apply key mathematical skills, concepts, and processes to solve complex problems of the types encountered in everyday life, work, and decision making. Focus will be placed on the math practices in the CCSS and on multistep problems that require abstract reasoning, precision, perseverance, and strategic use of tools. After scoring, the points from the mathematics PBAs will count for 40-50 percent of the student's summative score for mathematics.

End-of-Year (EOY) Comprehensive Assessment ***Component 4***

For each grade/course tested, the EOY assessments in ELA and mathematics will, in combination with the PBAs, assess all of the standards for the grade level/course. This component will be taken online during the last few weeks of the school year, utilize a range of innovative item types and technological tools, and be entirely computer scored.

The ELA assessments will focus on reading and comprehending complex texts, including vocabulary interpretation and use. Informational passages from history/social studies, science, and technical subjects will be included on these assessments.

The mathematics assessments will focus on the major, additional, and supporting content of the grade/course as defined in the PARCC Model Content Frameworks. They will leverage technology within items to enable students to, for example, create equations, graph functions, draw lines of symmetry, or create bar graphs.

The mathematics assessments for the high school level will be designed as end-of-course assessments and states will have the option of selecting a traditional course sequence (algebra I, geometry, algebra II) or an integrated mathematics sequence. Each option will measure the full range of high school mathematics standards in the CCSS.

It is expected that scale scores from the EOY assessment will be reported within one week of administration so that they may be included on student report cards.

PARCC will release a portion of the items and tasks from the EOY component to support deeper understanding of expectations.

Although not part of the current design and to be decided only after further study, PARCC will investigate the possible addition of an adaptive add-on to the EOY component which would be given only to students at the extremes of the performance spectrum in order to provide supplemental performance information. If added to the system design, these would not, however, be used in the determination of grade-level proficiency.

Item and Task Development

PARCC is contracting with two universities for the development of prototype items in mathematics and ELA. These prototype items will include both assessment and classroom-based tasks. Educators will be involved throughout the development of the prototypes[4], including in content review, piloting, and data reviews. For the summative assessment items, which will be informed by these prototypes, PARCC will utilize multiple contractors to develop the assessment items and has divided the item development into two phases. In the first phase, half of the items will be developed and reviewed. In the second phase, the remaining items will be developed by the contractor/s that demonstrated their ability to produce high quality items in the first phase.

Scoring

Annual combined results from the summative components will be reported back to states, districts, and schools in time for information about each student's progress toward college- and career-readiness to be included their report card. PARCC states will adopt a common set of performance standards and scoring rubrics so results will be comparable across states.

In PBA *Component 3*, a combination of computer and distributed human scoring (either teacher or vendor) will be used. PARCC's initial plans for monitoring the quality and reliability of scoring, which are subject to refinement as the development phase progresses, are to have 10-20 percent of randomly selected items for Grade 3 through high school scored a second time by humans. In addition, in high school (due to the higher stakes when used

PARCC states will adopt a common set of performance standards and scoring rubrics so results will be comparable across states.

[4] To learn about opportunities to get involved, go to http://parcconline.org/K12-educators.

to determine college course placement), an additional 10-20 percent are to be scored again.

The EOY *Component 4* will utilize 100 percent computer scoring. PARCC plans to press for advances in automated scoring, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI).

When paper forms are used for younger students or students with disabilities, responses will be scanned for electronic or human scoring.

PARCC will develop a technology platform to support efficient, distributed human scoring. Member states will have the option of utilizing trained teachers (who will not score their own students' work), contractor services, or a combination thereof. In all states, all teachers will have access to the online training modules for scoring so they can more deeply understand the assessments and score classroom assignments in a consistent manner. These scoring and administration plans may change as a result of the research conducted during the development phase.

Measuring Growth

Because scores will be combined for *Components 3 and 4* for accountability purposes, PARCC anticipates having nearly twice as many score points in its summative tests than are typically found in current state tests. This will provide room to measure all or most of the performance spectrum well enough to measure student growth.

Accountability

PARCC plans to use the results from *Components 3 and 4* to calculate the annual accountability scores for each student. Proficiency, on-track to college, and growth data will be produced by the system for use, as needed, in accountability systems. Scores from *Component 2* do not contribute to summative scores. However, after study, states may choose to include them in the summative results if doing so does not affect comparability across states.

Reporting System

An online Interactive Data Tool will provide teachers, parents, and administrators with access to results after each assessment and include various tools for displaying data, creating customized reports, and comparing the performance of similar schools. In addition, parents will be mailed printed reports after each assessment. For administrators, the system will include tools to help identify the individual professional development needs of teachers, as well as grade-level and school-level needs.

Projected Costs

As of November, 2011, PARCC projects that the cost per student, per test (ELA test or mathematics test) will be $9.54 if 50 percent of the scoring is done by computers and 50 percent by humans, or $11.01 if fully scored by humans[5].

[5] See slide 7 of the PARCC Presentation to the Colorado State Board of Education, November 10, 2011. www.ednewscolorado.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/PARCCSlides11011.pdf

OTHER ASSESSMENTS, RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Optional Diagnostic and Mid-Year Assessments

In addition to the two summative assessment components described above, PARCC will develop diagnostic and mid-year assessments for each grade level, 3-8 and high school.

Diagnostic Assessment
Component 1
Diagnostic assessments in ELA and mathematics will be designed to pinpoint students' strengths and weaknesses relative to particular standards for each grade/course. Starting in September 2014, these assessments will be available throughout the school year and will provide an indicator of student knowledge and skills so that instruction, supports, and professional development can be tailored to address student needs.

The diagnostic assessment component will include:

- A computer-based component that utilizes machine-scorable items;
- A bank of performance tasks for hard-to-measure standards and accompanying scored student responses to assist teachers in scoring them; and
- An online professional development module to assist teachers in the effective use of the data from the diagnostic assessments.

Mid-Year Assessment
Component 2
Mid-year assessments will be composed primarily of rich performance tasks and designed to inform curriculum, instruction, and professional development. The tasks will preview the types of tasks included in the summative PBAs (*Component 3*). States and/or districts may locally choose to administer – even to require – portions of the Mid-Year Assessment or the full assessment. Scores from *Component 2* do not contribute to summative scores; however, states may choose to include them in the summative results if doing so does not affect comparability across states. If comparability is affected, states may report two sets of summative results: one based only on *Components 3 and 4* and the other based on *Component 2, 3 and 4*.

Mid-year assessments will be composed primarily of rich performance tasks and designed to inform curriculum, instruction, and professional development.

Speaking/Listening Assessment
Component 5

To assess the speaking and listening standards within the CCSS, an assessment will be required, but will not be used in the determination of the summative score (*Component 5*). This component may be administered at any time during the academic year. Teachers will score the student's speaking and listening skills using a standardized rubric and may use the scores as part of student grades.

Partnership Resource Center

This web-based platform, to be launched in **spring 2013**, will be a continually expanding collection of resources for teachers, students, administrators, and parents. Some resources will be available prior to that time to allow users to gain familiarity with the PARCC system. The resources to be provided include the following:

Model Content Frameworks
PARCC has developed Model Content Frameworks in ELA and mathematics that identify the "big ideas" in the CCSS for each grade level and the priorities and areas of emphasis within the PARCC assessments. These frameworks are voluntary and not intended to be curricula, but rather to serve as a resource for districts and states as they engage in curriculum development efforts. They also provide a foundation for the PARCC test specifications and blueprints.

Prototype and Released Test Items and Performance Tasks
Teachers will be able to use these within the flow of instruction to check student understanding. Prototype items and tasks are expected to be available in **summer 2012**. Within a few years, all performance tasks used in the summative assessments will be added to the Partnership Resource Center, along with student performance data, scoring rubrics, and sample responses for each item. States may also contribute existing state-owned items or tasks aligned to the CCSS. The item bank will include capabilities for sharing, improving, analyzing, comparing, ranking, and accrediting items, as well as formative and interim assessments.

Online Professional Learning Modules
PARCC had initially planned to develop a set of 38 voluntary model instructional units, across grades and subjects. However, in March 2012 the PARCC Leadership Team decided to shift the focus of this work away from developing instructional units and instead produce online professional learning modules that use existing state materials. The purposes of these modules will be to show educators and other instructional leaders a process they can use to a) evaluate and align existing materials to the CCSS and PARCC frameworks and b) create their own materials aligned to the CCSS and PARCC frameworks. The shift is intended to help build state and local capacity. The modules are to be available in **spring 2013.**

Professional Development Modules
These are designed to help teachers, counselors, school leaders and school and district testing coordinators understand the assessment system, implement the assessments, and interpret and use the results. The modules will be administered and available online, and will target the level of expertise needed for the individual's specific role in the system. The modules are anticipated being available in **spring/summer 2013.**

Online Practice Tests for Educators and Students
These will allow teachers, students, and parents to become familiar with the assessments.

Item Development Portal and Tools
Teachers can develop their own innovative, computer-scored assessment items and share them with others via the item bank.

Formative Performance Tasks for Grades K-2
Teachers and schools can use these "ready-to-use" formative tasks to monitor students' performance and progress. The tasks will consist of developmentally appropriate measures such as observations, checklists, running records, and on-demand performance events and may include the use of technology innovations, such as touch screens. The tasks are to be available by **February 2014**.

College Readiness Tools
A set of tools will be developed collaboratively by K-12 and higher education educators to help students who have gaps in their college- and career-readiness academic preparation. This may include online tools to help diagnose the gaps and model Grade 12 bridge courses to address them. The resources are expected to be available by **spring 2014**.

Interactive Data Tool
See "Reporting System" above.

Sharing State-Developed Tools
Formative and diagnostic tools being developed by member states and districts may be added to the Partnership Resource Center. In addition, the PARCC supplemental grant provides support for a short-term planning process for the 10 states in PARCC that won RTTT state grants to enable them to coordinate their investments toward a "coherent and complete set of tools" from which all states can benefit. These state grants also contain funding for the development of formative assessments and instructional tools

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is a critical component for all aspects of the PARCC assessment system, from test delivery, administration, scoring, and reporting to delivery of professional development and model lesson plans. The Partnership will require that all of the technology created with the support of federal Race to the Top (RTTT) resources be open source and any pre-existing technology employed in the system be either open source or documented in a fully transparent way. PARCC received a supplementary $10 million award to support development of a highly robust and stable system and to accelerate advances in technology-enhanced items and scoring engines.

CAPACITY BUILDING

PARCC is supporting states and districts in the transition to the CCSS through three major activities:

- **State Leadership Teams**
- **Educator Leadership Cadres**
- **Technical Working Groups**

State Leadership Teams

PARCC has been working with its member states to develop and monitor their transition plans. State teams that include state leaders, district/local leaders, and other critical stakeholders, as determined by each state, meet twice annually to learn from one another and advance their planning and implementation work. PARCC provides summaries of each gathering and distributes them to all member states. The entire implementation workbook, designed for states and districts, can be found on the PARCC website[6].

Educator Leadership Cadres

To support the activities being organized by states, PARCC will begin in the summer of 2012 to convene 24-member teams of K-16 educators from PARCC states at annual regional meetings to build expertise in the CCSS and PARCC and help them become leaders in their states and among their peers. Each state's cadre will be chosen by a state-developed process and will include K-12 teachers, school and district leaders, local and state curriculum directors, and postsecondary representatives. Cadre members will discuss the effective use of the PARCC Model Content Frameworks and PARCC prototype items; collaborate on the development of additional PARCC resources, including sample tasks and model instructional units; and identify ways in which PARCC resources can be disseminated to classroom teachers. In addition to the annual meetings, online modules, webinars and/or conference calls will be utilized to provide support. Using a "train-the-trainers" model, states and districts will be able to deploy these educators as leaders in their capacity-building efforts.

[6] http://parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/Common_Core_Workbook.pdf

PARCC will begin in the summer of 2012 to convene 24-member teams of K-16 educators from PARCC states at annual regional meetings to build expertise in the CCSS and PARCC and help them become leaders in their states and among their peers.

Technical Working Groups

As states transition to the CCSS and PARCC assessments, they will face a number of technical issues. PARCC will support three multistate technical working group gatherings per year that will focus on priority issues related to transition and implementation. Based on early conversations, PARCC anticipates that these working groups may address challenges states will confront in modifying their test blueprints, transitioning to computer-based assessments, using PARCC assessment results in teacher evaluations and/or aligning instructional tools to the CCSS, PARCC tools, and PARCC assessments. At the gatherings, PARCC states will have access to the advice of contracted assessment and measurement experts and the opportunity to problem solve collectively. While it is envisioned that only six to eight member states will participate in any given meeting, the products and lessons will be shared with all PARCC states. Over the four-year project, every PARCC state will be invited to participate in at least one of these gatherings.

PARCC TIMELINE

2011-2012	Item and task development, piloting of prototypes Release of Model Content Frameworks, as well as prototype items and tasks (November 2011) Educator Leadership Cadres begin to meet (summer 2012)
2012-2013	Release of prototype items and tasks (summer 2012) Release of online professional learning modules (spring 2013) Field testing (spring 2013)
2013-2014	Full-scale pilot/field testing (spring 2014) Partnership Resource Center launches (spring 2013) Optional performance tasks for K-2 available (February 2014) College readiness tools available (spring 2014)
2014-2015	Diagnostic assessments release (September 2014) Full operational administration of PARCC assessments (spring 2015) Setting of achievement levels, including college-ready performance levels (late spring 2015, post-administration)

Timeline should be considered a draft as of March 2012 and is subject to change.

For more information about PARCC, visit **http://parcconline.org**

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

The design of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) is intended to strategically "balance" summative, interim, and formative assessment through an integrated system of standards, curriculum, assessment, instruction, and teacher development, while providing accurate year-to-year indicators of students' progress toward college- and career-readiness.

The assessments and formative resources for teachers will draw upon the Common Core State Standards and research-based learning progressions that further define how students acquire the knowledge and skills called for in the standards.

Smarter Balanced At a Glance

- MEMBERSHIP: 27 states[1] serving approximately 21 million K–12 students
- GOVERNING STATES*: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin
- ADVISORY STATES**: Alabama, Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Wyoming
- PROCUREMENT STATE***: Washington
- PROJECT MANAGEMENT PARTNER: WestEd
- HIGHER ED PARTNERSHIPS: 175 public and 13 private systems/institutions of higher education have committed to participate in the Consortium, help design the new assessments, and use the assessments as an indicator of readiness for credit-bearing entry-level courses in lieu of existing placement tests. These participating institutions typically receive 74 percent of all students in Smarter Balanced Consortium states who begin college within two years of graduating from high school.
- AWARD: $176 million total (assessment and supplemental grants), Race to the Top Assessment Program grants awarded September and October 2010

This information is accurate as of March 9, 2012.

The following summary of the Smarter Balanced assessment system has been approved for accuracy by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.

The end-of-year (EOY) summative assessments will be delivered adaptively by computer and be comprised of a variety of item types – including selected response, constructed response, technology enhanced items and complex performance tasks – to assess the full range of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). In addition, Smarter Balanced will provide a suite of optional interim and formative tools and resources. These include: computer-adaptive interim assessments using nonsecure item types and performance tasks, similar to those used in the summative assessments, that will provide teachers with instructionally useful information about each student's progress during the year; formative tools and strategies for more regular classroom use; and professional development resources on the formative assessment process and use of assessment data of all types to adjust and improve instruction.

This design leverages technology in several ways:

- adaptive testing will be used to support accountability purposes by providing precise scores across the full spectrum of student achievement;
- technology-enhanced test items will be used to engage students and provide evidence of college- and career-ready skills;
- teachers will have online access to resources and instructional tools to help them provide high-quality instruction through formative, classroom-based assessment tools and activities; and,
- through use of an interactive electronic platform, the Consortium will support both standardized and customized reports that can be targeted to a range of audiences for tracking and analyzing progress.

A guiding principle for the Smarter Balanced is "responsible flexibility." Smarter Balanced will make it possible for states to customize system components, while also ensuring comparability of student scores across all participating states on the summative assessments.

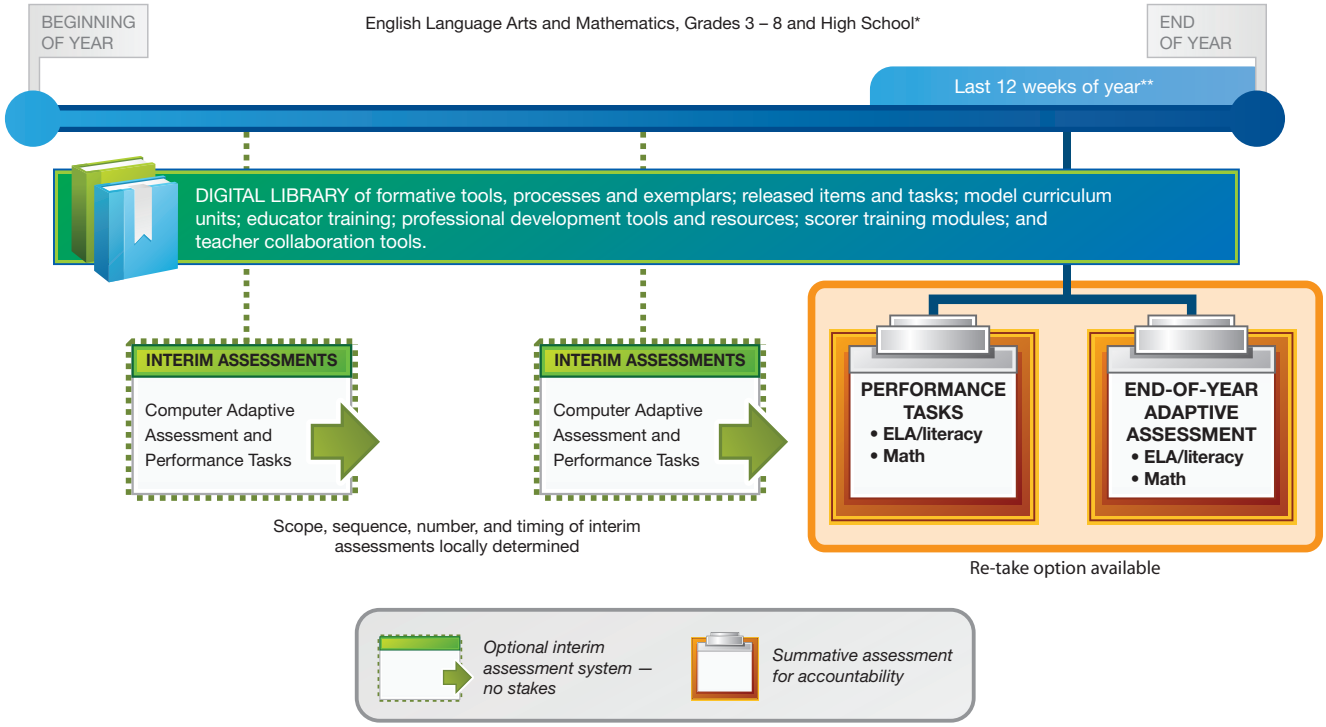
[1] Five states currently belong to both Consortia (AL, CO, ND, PA, SC) and five states (AK, MN, NE, TX, VA) belong to neither.

* GOVERNING STATES cast decision-making votes on test design and policy.

** ADVISORY STATES consult on test design and policy, but have no decision-making authority.

*** PROCUREMENT STATE is the fiscal agent.

Smarter Balanced Assessment System



*Summative assessments for grades 3 – 8 and 11; Interim assessments available for grades 3 – 12.
**Time windows may be adjusted based on results from the research agenda and final implementation decisions.

SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Summative Assessments for Accountability

Smarter Balanced is developing required accountability assessments for English language arts/literacy and mathematics for Grades 3-8 and 11; with additional supporting assessments for Grades 9 and 10. While the assessments are designed to be delivered via computer, the Consortium will offer a paper-and-pencil option for three years to supplement technology infrastructure in schools that are not able to make a complete transition immediately to online assessments.

Taken during the final 12 weeks of the school year[2], the summative assessments for each grade and subject will have two major components: Performance Tasks, and a comprehensive end-of-year (EOY) Computer Adaptive Assessment, both described below. All of these assessments will provide students with information regarding their achievement, growth, and progress toward college- and career-readiness by the end of high school.

Performance Tasks component

The Performance Tasks (PTs) component will be delivered via computer and will generally require 90-120 minutes per content area to complete, with high school PTs taking longer. These tasks, evaluating aspects of the CCSS that are difficult to assess through more traditional items, will be organized around real-world scenarios and complex tasks. PTs will involve student-initiated planning, management of information and ideas, interaction with other materials, and production of an extended response such as an oral presentation, exhibit, product development, or an extended written piece. A combination of machine and teacher/human scoring will be used. The Consortium expects results to be available within two weeks after a student completes a test.

[2] Time windows may be adjusted based on results from the research agenda and final implementation decisions.

Computer Adaptive Assessment component
The Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) component will consist of approximately 40-65 questions per content area. CAT will include selected-response, constructed-response, and technology-enhanced items. Most CAT items and tasks will be immediately scored, though some teacher/human scored tasks may be included – these tasks will be adaptively selected, with scores on these tasks being added at a later time. The CAT component includes a retake option, as locally determined. Students who are approved to do so may take the assessment a second time, using a new set of items.

Teachers will have online access to resources and instructional tools to help them provide high-quality instruction through formative, classroom-based assessment tools and activities.

Item and Task Development

Smarter Balanced has worked with member states, leading researchers, content experts and the authors of the CCSS to develop Content Specifications in ELA and mathematics. These documents provide the basis of the Smarter Balanced system of summative and interim assessments and formative assessment supports for teachers. The Content Specifications:

- delineate the claims that will be made about what students know and can do;
- describe the sufficient relevant evidence from which conclusions will be drawn about learning; and
- include assessment targets – descriptions of the prioritized content and depth of knowledge required for the summative assessments[2]. From this foundation, Smarter Balanced will develop item/task specifications and test blueprints. (See "Teacher Involvement in Summative and Interim Item Development" below for more information.)

[2] The Smarter Balanced Content Specifications can be found a www.smarterbalanced.org/?s=content+specifications, along with videos of webinars in which Smarter Balanced leaders discussed them.

Scoring

Performance Tasks (PTs) will have some components that are scored by computer and others that require human scoring. A Smarter Balanced priority is the strategic involvement of teachers in the development of items and scoring guides, and in the scoring of constructed-response items (10 percent of which will be back-read by teachers for validity purposes) and PTs (one-third of which is teacher scored, with 10 percent back-reads). No teacher would score his/her students' responses. An online system will be developed to allow efficient distributed human scoring and monitoring of the accuracy of each reader.

For the Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) component, selected-response and technology-enhanced items will be computer-scored, and extended-response items/tasks that can be reliably scored using artificial intelligence engines will be electronically scored, with 10 percent back-read by humans to verify the accuracy of the engine. Some complex tasks in the CAT may be adaptively chosen for the student but may require teacher/human scoring.

Final scores that merge PTs and CAT scores, combining computer-scored and teacher/human scored items/tasks, are expected to be delivered within two weeks. The Consortium plans to leverage advances in both electronic item types and electronic scoring to support its design and will invest in the development of a training system for human scorers.

Measuring Growth

The Consortium intends to build vertical scales across the Grade 3-11 span in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, which can then be used as the basis for growth measures evaluating the individual's progress toward college- and career-readiness across the years. Both the summative assessment results and the interim assessment results will be reportable on this vertical scale. The Consortium will conduct studies of the characteristics of different models for measuring growth when used in conjunction with the data from the summative assessments to inform subsequent decisions.

Accountability

Student scores from both the Performance Task component and the Computer Adaptive Test component will be combined for the annual summative score. Research will be conducted to inform decisions concerning the aggregation and weighting of the results from these two components.

Reporting System

A web-based Consortium platform will be developed to manage assessment data and provide sophisticated data reporting and analysis tools for customized reports. Students, teachers, parents, and administrators will be given security settings to access appropriate data only. Student scores on the Performance Tasks will be reported separately, as well as in combination with the Computer Adaptive Testing component. Student performance levels will be explained with examples to aid interpretation. Reports will provide item-level information for clusters of items, provided that this is found to yield valid and reliable information. In addition to summative results, scores from the interim assessments throughout the school year will be available in the same reporting suite and provide more detailed information concerning progress toward that grade level's standards. This system also will include links to model curriculum and instruction resources and assessment professional development resources. Individual states will retain jurisdiction over access to the suite within their state and the reporting tool will be customizable, allowing each state to "brand" the reporting in a manner consistent with other state-level reports.

A web-based Consortium platform will be developed to manage assessment data and provide sophisticated data reporting and analysis tools for customized reports.

Projected Costs

Smarter Balanced currently projects that the per pupil costs for the new assessment system, including both the ELA and mathematics assessments, will be $19.81 per year for the summative assessments and an additional $7.50 per year for those states that choose to use the interim assessments. Smarter Balanced will provide updated cost projections as the development work continues.

OTHER ASSESSMENTS, RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Optional Interim Assessments

These optional computer adaptive assessments will be available for Grades 3-8 and 11 in ELA and mathematics. The item types will mirror those on the summative comprehensive assessment and the item bank will be open to educators so that it can be used for instructional and professional development purposes.

Two modes of test administration will be available, both of which can be given multiple times per year at the discretion of the state, district, or school. One version mirrors the length and scope of the end-of-year computer adaptive assessment and yields a score on the same scale as the summative assessment that can be used as a growth or achievement metric. A shorter "cluster assessment" mode also will be available that assesses, at a deeper level, a smaller set of standards based on defined learning progressions, thereby providing more detailed feedback. The items will be stored in a nonsecure item bank and can be grouped into customized clusters based on state or local curricula and can be administered before, during, or near the end of instruction. Reports of student results will link teachers to appropriate formative tools and strategies for their students, and professional development resources.

Digital Library and Comprehensive Electronic Platform

The Smarter Balanced Assessment System will be built around a secure, credential-based comprehensive electronic platform that contains an expanding collection of resources for teachers, administrators, students, and parents. This platform is to be launched by **fall 2014** and include the following:

System Portal
This portal will serve as the single point of entry for educators, students, parents, and policymakers to all components of the system. In addition to the features described below, the portal will provide access to the assessment delivery platform, the distributed hand-scoring platform, and issue-focused chat rooms.

Educator Dashboard
A secure online portal will allow educators to access model curricula that are aligned to the CCSS; research-based instructional strategies and interventions; strategies for cross-classroom collaboration and vetted instructional units; formative tools; and sample performance tasks at each grade level. This portal will also help teachers network with other teachers across the Consortium to share information and resources and discuss curricula, instruction, and assessment. Teachers will be able to download, view, and analyze assessment reports, scoring rubrics, and longitudinal data and generate custom reports (see "Reporting System," above).

Formative Tools, Processes, and Practices Digital Library
To be developed for Grades 3-8 and high school, this bank of resources will include:

- formative assessment tools and strategies, including the use of performance tasks to solicit formative information, and rubrics that can be used by teachers on-demand to support teaching and learning; and
- research-based instructional tools and processes.

Item Development/Scoring Application
Online training modules will be available for both development of assessment items and tasks and for scoring of items and tasks. For those educators who successfully complete the training, item authoring and scoring software will become accessible.

Reporting Suite
See "Reporting System," above.

Feedback/Evaluation Tools
These tools will support regular surveying of system users (teachers, administrators, students, and parents) and vetting of submitted materials.

Validity studies will be conducted to establish the connection between indicators of college- and career-readiness from the Consortium's assessment system and evidence of success in college or a career.

Alignment of Assessments to College- and Career-Readiness

Three additional activities are designed to support the overarching goal of Smarter Balanced, which is to ensure that "all students leave high school prepared for postsecondary success in college or a career."[3] First, an enhancement to the interim assessment system will make it possible for states to build high school end-of-course assessments aligned to the CCSS in ELA and mathematics.[4] Second, development of common achievement standards for Smarter Balanced and the PARCC will create the foundation for comparability of student scores both within the Consortium and across the two Consortia. Finally, validity studies will be conducted to establish the connection between indicators of college- and career-readiness from the Consortium's assessment system and evidence of success in college or a career.

TECHNOLOGY

Smarter Balanced will accelerate the development of technological solutions that support improved teaching and learning. The assessment system will combine both state-of-the-art existing software and newly developed, open-source technology that advances the field in the delivery, scoring, and reporting of the assessments. Upon completion of the system development, a public license defining this as free, open-source software will be created.

Smarter Balanced will accelerate the development of technological solutions that support improved teaching and learning.

In February 2012, Smarter Balanced released the information technology (IT) systems architecture report which defines how each of the technology components will work together so that the entire assessment system meets the needs of its various members and user groups. This report will guide the development of the item authoring, item banking, test design, test administration, scoring and reporting systems, as well as the digital library of formative tools and resources for teachers. In addition, the IT systems architecture requires interoperability (the ability to exchange data and information) across states and consortia, through established standards; promotes strong data security; and ensures economies of scale to reduce operational costs for states.

Smarter Balanced TIMELINE

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT	
Feb.–July 2012	Conduct item/task writing and editing, including vetting of state-submitted items and tasks for inclusion in SBAC item pool Conduct gap analysis to determine procurement needs Conduct small-scale trials and cognitive labs
July 2012–Feb. 2013	Conduct pilot test in a sample of schools
Feb. 2013	Conduct pilot test in a sample of schools
March 2013–March 2014	Conduct additional item/task writing, editing, review, and pilot testing Prepare items for field testing
March 2014	Conduct field test of items and tasks
August 2014	Conduct preliminary standard setting
Fall 2014	Comprehensive Electronic Platform, including the Digital Library of resources, launched
2015	Administer fully operational summative assessments Verify and adopt final achievement level standards
FORMATIVE TOOLS, PROCESSES, SUPPORTS	
2011–2012	Develop, procure, and review materials to populate the digital library
2012–2013	Develop exemplar modules of formative assessment tasks and tools and professional development training modules Conduct teacher training on the use of formative and professional development modules across the Consortium
2013–2014	Plan and execute communication of formative and professional development modules and use of the digital library

Timeline should be considered a draft as of March 2012 and is subject to change.

[3] Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Race to the Top Assessment Program Application, June 24, 2010, p. 31.

[4] End-of-course assessments are currently being used by several Smarter Balanced states. The application warns states that these assessments will be appropriate only for state-defined purposes, not federal accountability purposes.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Smarter Balanced will provide both direct support to member states and their districts and engage teachers, school leaders and other educators in the development of the assessments and formative support resources. The primary forms of support and engagement are as follows.

Multistate Collaborative Supporting Implementation of Common Core Systems

The Council of Chief State School Officers established a multistate collaborative, Implementing the Common Core System (ICCS), to support states' efforts to transition to the CCSS. Members of this collaborative will meet three times per year to share and discuss policies and practices that connect the sub-systems of the K-12 educational delivery system (curriculum, instruction, professional development, accommodations, assessment, etc.). Smarter Balanced is supporting the membership fees in ICCS for each Governing state for two years (winter 2011 – winter 2013) and for each Advisory state for one year. It will seek to secure additional funding to support all states for a total of four years. A portion of the membership fees will support an additional one-day meeting for the Smarter Balanced delegates, on a day that is adjacent to each ICCS meeting.

Pilot Item Development

In March 2012, Smarter Balanced awarded a contract for the development of 10,000 pilot items and tasks in mathematics and ELA. The winning vendors will be required to hire and train educators from Smarter Balanced states to write items; review them for alignment with the CCSS; and check for bias/sensitivity. The evidence-centered design process will be used throughout the development work to ensure coordination throughout the process and strong validity. This activity, running from **late spring 2012 through summer 2013**, includes close inspection of item/task performance through cognitive labs and limited field trials, a small scale pilot of items and tasks where initial calibration occurs, and analysis and data review of items and tasks that are piloted. The pilot items are to be completed and ready for pilot testing in a sample of schools during the 2012-13 school year. A broad field test of the approved items will be conducted in the **2013-14 school year**.

A second item/task development contract will be awarded in spring 2012 for the production and field testing of the remaining 32,300 items and tasks. These items and tasks will be field tested in schools across the Consortium in **spring 2014**.

Curriculum Materials

Smarter Balanced context experts are collaborating with professional organizations, universities and non-profits to develop curriculum materials and identify existing efforts and materials that align to the Smarter Balanced learning progressions. The developers of selected existing materials will be contracted to "adapt or extend" their materials as needed for alignment with Smarter Balanced learning progressions. These materials will provide examples of new approaches and effective lessons to teach the CCSS, and will provide a foundation for professional development.

In **summer/fall 2013,** two Smarter Balanced content experts – one in mathematics and one in ELA – will lead groups of teachers from member states in the review of these materials (see below) prior to Smarter Balanced approval and placement in the Digital Library for voluntary use by teachers, districts and states as they develop their curricula.

Formative Processes and Tools/Professional Development

The Smarter Balanced plan states, *"The most effective professional development to build assessment literacy and improve the rigor and relevance of the curriculum occurs when teachers participate in identifying and evaluating the quality of formative processes, tasks, and tools with accompanying scoring guides, examples of student work, and suggested next steps in instruction based on student responses."*

Smarter Balanced will contract with a national panel of experts in **fall 2012** to develop exemplar modules of formative assessment tasks and tools in ELA and mathematics for Grades 3-8 and 11. Six exemplar instructional modules will be developed for each grade level, three in mathematics and three in ELA. Each module will address one or two learning progressions and will include formative tasks, scoring rubrics and samples of student work at multiple performance levels.

Professional development modules will be developed by a vendor, working with the panel of national experts and the Smarter Balanced content experts, to train teachers a) in the use of these materials and b) to identify and select other quality formative assessments tasks and tools for placement in the Digital Library. These training modules are to be ready by summer 2013 and will support both web-based and face-to-face delivery.

In **summer/fall 2013**, Smarter Balanced will convene cadres averaging 90 teachers from each member state and train them in the use of the professional development modules, exemplar instructional modules, formative tasks and tools, and in identifying and selecting quality formative tasks and tools for the Digital Library. The training sessions will be facilitated by the Smarter Balanced content-area experts in collaboration with state and regional chapters of content-area professional organizations.

State Roll-Out Plans and Communications Tools

Smarter Balanced content experts will assist states in the development of state-specific plans and communications tools to roll out training to their teachers in the use of the Digital Library resources. Teacher cadre members (described above) can be tapped by states and districts to lead such activities.

Support for Technology Transitions

Many states and districts in each consortium are concerned that they will not have adequate technology infrastructure to implement the new online Consortia assessment systems in 2014-15. The two Consortia have collaborated on the development of an online interactive tool to help states and local districts evaluate their current level of technology readiness, identify strategies to address gaps, and monitor progress. That tool was expected to be launched in **March 2012**.

In addition, because the assessment system designs of both Consortia rely heavily on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) scoring engines to score complex items quickly and cost efficiently, the two Comprehensive Consortia will collaborate on the development of standardized AI scoring protocols. The Consortia also will explore a possible collaboration on the procurement of an AI engine.

Key Similarities and Differences of the Comprehensive Assessment Consortia

Table 2

Key Similarities

Summative Assessments:

- Online assessments for Grades 3-8 and high school in ELA and mathematics.
- Use of a mix of item types, including selected response, constructed response, technology-enhanced and complex performance tasks.
- Two components, both given during final weeks of the school year.
- Use of both electronic and human scoring, with results expected within two weeks.

Other Assessments, Resources, and Tools:

- Optional interim assessments
- Professional development modules
- Formative items/tasks for classroom use
- Model curricular/instructional units
- Online reporting suite
- Digital library for sharing vetted resources and tools.

Cost Estimates:

- Approximately $20 per pupil per year for all summative assessment components

Key Differences

PARCC	Smarter Balanced
Summative Assessments	
• Fixed-form delivery (students take one of several fixed, equated sets of items and tasks)	• Adaptive delivery (students see an individually tailored set of items and tasks) • A retake option is available for the end-of-year component
Other Assessments, Resources and Tools	
• Optional – One Diagnostic and one Mid-year assessment, with the latter made up primarily of tasks similar to the summative performance-based tasks. Available for Grades 3-8 and high school. • Optional – K-2 formative performance tasks. • Required – Non-summative speaking and listening assessment for Grades 3-8 and high school, locally scored.	• Optional – Interim assessments for Grades 3-12 will be computer adaptive and have multiple item types, including performance tasks. The number, timing and scope (all standards or clusters of standards) can be locally determined.

SYSTEM DESIGNS, WORK TO DATE AND FUTURE PLANS

The Alternate Assessment Consortia

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 placed strong emphasis on the inclusion of all students in statewide assessments based on the premise that doing so is essential to ensuring each student has equal opportunity to achieve the state's academic standards. But general assessments are not accessible to or valid for all students. For those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, who are unable to participate in general state assessments even with appropriate accommodations, states were required to develop alternate assessments linked to the state's grade level content standards in mathematics and reading.

Alternate assessments are those developed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

By the 2005-06 school year, all states had alternate assessments in place, but the quality varied and the costs per pupil were high, particularly in small states[1]. There are approximately a half-million students (or 1 percent of the public school population) who will be eligible to be served under the alternate assessment provision. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education offered competitive grants to spur the development of a new generation of alternate assessments to be jointly developed and used by groups of states.

Grants were awarded to two consortia — the **Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment Consortium** (DLM) and the **National Center and State Collaborative** (NCSC). Summaries and illustrations of the designs of these two Alternate Assessment Consortia[2] can be found on the following pages and at www.k12center.org/publications.html.

These new alternate assessments will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and are expected to fit cohesively within the comprehensive assessment systems under development by the federal grant recipients: the Partnership for Assessment Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced). Both DLM and NCSC are to be ready for use by the 2014-15 school year, the same year in which the comprehensive assessment systems will be operational.

[1]State and Local Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. Volume IX – Accountability Under NCLB: Final Report. U.S. Department of Education, 2010.

[2]These summaries and illustrations of the two alternate assessment consortia have been approved by Consortia leadership.

For further information about the work of these consortia, visit:

Dynamic Learning Maps:
www.dynamiclearningmaps.org

National Center and State Collaborative:
www.ncscpartners.org

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)

The purpose of the DLM assessment system is to significantly improve the academic outcomes of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, thereby improving their preparedness for postsecondary options and the world of work. The assessment system will be designed to provide useful, timely diagnostic information and strong instructional support to teachers through a highly customizable system of instructionally embedded and end-of-year assessments.

In addition, professional development resources will be developed by DLM to provide Individualized Education Program (IEP)[1] teams with clear, consistent guidelines for the identification of students for the alternate assessment and to train teachers in the use of the assessment system.

DLM At a Glance

- MEMBERSHIP: 13 states (Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin) serving approximately 60,000 students who require an alternate assessment
- GOVERNANCE: Two representatives from each member state (one assessment and one special education representative), Neal Kingston of the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation (CETE), and four external members: Brian Gong of the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment; Jim Pellegrino of the University of Illinois at Chicago; Ed Roeber of Michigan State University; and Jim Ysseldyke of the University of Minnesota
- PROJECT MANAGEMENT PARTNER: CETE at the University of Kansas serves as the host, fiscal agent, and project management lead in partnership with member states and three additional partner organizations: the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on professional development and support materials; Edvantia, Inc., on alternate standards definitions and project evaluation; and The Arc on the reporting system and dissemination
- AWARD: $22 million from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education

This information is accurate as of January 6, 2012.

The following summary of the DLM assessment system has been approved by the DLM.

SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Summative Assessments for Accountability

A unique proposed aspect of the DLM system, which will be implemented only if upcoming research supports it, is that states will be given two options for the administration of the summative assessments.

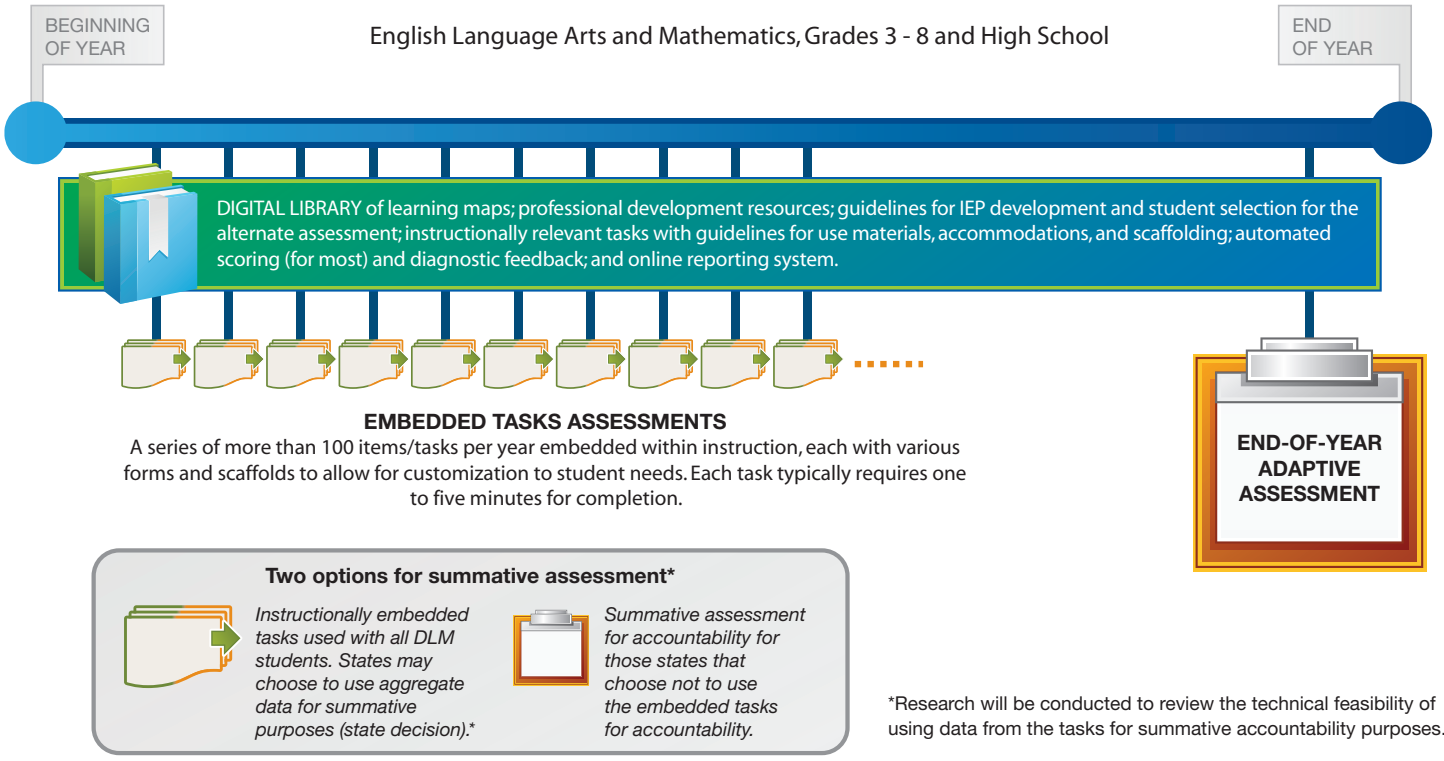
- The first option utilizes the DLM items and tasks that will be given to all alternate assessment students as part of their day-to-day instructional activities so that teachers can use the results to tailor instruction to meet student needs. Under this option, 100 or more items or tasks will be given to a student over the course of the school year and the results will be used to make summative decisions.[2]
- The second option is a stand-alone summative assessment that will branch or adapt based on mastery of concepts in the learning map and will be given in the spring of the school year.

Both options are based on the DLM learning maps, described below, and will provide many options for customizing the assessment to the individual abilities and needs of students. In addition, both will be designed to provide teachers, students, and parents detailed information to guide and support learning.

[1] IEP, mandated by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, is a written plan for a student with disabilities that describes how the student learns, how the student best demonstrates that learning, and the services, supports, and special instruction that the student requires to learn more effectively.

[2] Research will be conducted to determine the technical feasibility of using assessment data collected through the year as the basis for summative decisions and use in state accountability systems.

DLM Assessment System



*Research will be conducted to review the technical feasibility of using data from the tasks for summative accountability purposes.

Common Core Essential Elements (CCEE) and Learning Maps

DLM began its development work by defining links to the grade-level Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and mathematics through statements of essential elements and achievement descriptors for students who take the alternate assessment.[3] Simultaneously, learning map development has been proceeding for about a year. DLM describes a learning map as being similar to a superhighway with multiple pathways to common destinations. In the DLM maps, the "destination" for all students will be based on the CCEE.

A fundamental feature of learning maps is that they do not assume a single, linear route for all students, but seek to allow and provide support for multiple pathways.

A fundamental feature of learning maps is that they do not assume a single, linear route for all students, but seek to allow and provide support for multiple pathways.

Another important aspect of learning maps is that they not only include the definitions of the subject-specific skills that students will acquire – such as being able to add a series of three-digit numbers or define a vocabulary word – but also provide useful delineation of the:

- precursor academic skills needed to master the tested skill;
- communication skills required to communicate answers through speech, pointing, or other means; and
- attention skills needed to focus on the task or item.

As the skills in the learning maps are defined, universal design principles will be used to ensure that the description of the skill does not disadvantage some populations. Each skill will be written so it can be accessed through multiple cognitive pathways, where appropriate, and measured appropriately.

Throughout the school year, as a student completes instructionally embedded tasks and the responses are entered into the DLM system, the student's learning will be mapped and the teacher will be given diagnostic feedback and instructional guidance.

[3] View the linked standards and achievement level descriptors at **www.dynamiclearningmaps.org**.

DLM TIMELINE

January/February 2012	Essential elements based on the CCSS developed Achievement-level descriptors developed
March 2012	Test blueprints developed Development of tasks for learning maps begins
June 2012	Pilot testing begins
September 2012	Learning maps delivered
2012–13	Field test professional development modules and make revisions
2013–2014	Professional development modules ready for use Test delivery software ready for use
2014–15 school year	The DLM Alternate Assessment System is operational (operational field test) Instructionally embedded tasks and stand-alone summative test available for use and field tested
August/September 2015	Professional development program validated Assessment system evaluated

Timeline should be considered a draft as of March 2012 and is subject to change.

Dynamic Adaptive Delivery

The DLM system will utilize dynamic delivery, which is a variant of adaptive delivery. Under traditional, item-by-item adaptive delivery, items are selected based on their difficulty. A correct response results in the selection of a more difficult item to follow and an incorrect response leads to a less difficult item. In contrast, dynamic delivery relies on several pieces of information – the student's level of success with the previous item/task and the position in the learning map of the skills tapped by the task (and thus the amount of support or prompting required) – to select the next item. In addition, it provides immediate corrective feedback to the student, when needed. Dynamic delivery, therefore, integrates assessment and instruction. Dynamic delivery will be used for both the instructionally embedded items and the end-of-year assessment. All students using the DLM assessments will utilize these tasks throughout the school year and, pending the results of a research activity, states may opt to use the results from these embedded tasks for summative and accountability purposes.

Types of Items and Tasks

A variety of item types will be utilized, all of which will adhere to universal design and evidence-centered design principles to ensure the assessments are accessible to the broadest range of students and produce valid results. Items will be designed to be instructionally relevant. For each grade and subject slated to be assessed, the Consortium will convene a panel of master teachers which will review the extended content standards and develop activities that teachers could use to teach the skills. Task developers will use these activities to guide the development of items and tasks. For each item or task in the assessment system, lists of materials or manipulatives needed, and allowed and prohibited accommodations, levels of scaffolding will be provided. Multiple tasks will be developed for each skill being assessed to allow for differentiation based on student needs and disabilities. Most tasks are expected to require 1-5 minutes for a student to complete.

Presentation of Items and Tasks

The presentation of items will vary based on the abilities and needs of the student and the skill being assessed. Students who can complete the assessments on a computer, with or without the use of assistive technologies, will be allowed to do so. The system will be designed to be accessible to students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or have low vision, along with those with neuromuscular, orthopedic, or other motor disabilities. Students will be able to enter responses through keyboards, switch systems, a computer mouse, or touch-screen technology when available. The system also will be compatible with a variety of common assistive technologies and allow for varying levels of teacher assistance. For students unable to use computers without assistance, teachers will administer items offline and enter responses into the system.

Scoring

The majority of items and tasks, representing varying types, will be designed to be scored via computer. In some cases, the teacher may observe the student performing a task and then enter a score based on a rubric that defines levels of accuracy and quality of student performance. In both cases, the system will be able to identify missing precursor skills that interfere with student learning and to propose the next task in the learning map.

Measuring Growth

In order to provide consistency between the comprehensive assessment systems being developed by the Partnership for Assessment

Readiness for College and Careers, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, and DLM, the growth modeling methods used by those Consortia will be studied to determine compatible adaptations appropriate for both the embedded and end-of-year summative assessments. Measures of growth unique to a learning map-based system also will be studied.

Accountability

Subject to research and technical approval of both delivery options for use as the summative assessment (see footnote 2 on first page of DLM section), states will be able to choose between using an end-of-year stand-alone assessment for accountability purposes or using the data from the embedded items and tasks given throughout the school year.

Reporting

The reporting system will produce online as well as printable student and group-level results. A combination of existing best practices in reporting and an iterative series of focus groups will be used to ensure clear, useful reports for each major audience (teachers, students, parents). These reports and accompanying interpretive guides will be designed to communicate each student's current performance position, as well as growth within the learning maps. Each audience will be provided information that can be readily used to make better decisions that support the academic needs and progress of the student. In addition, the online versions for teachers will include links to professional development that will help teachers interpret the score reports in order to adjust instruction.

RESOURCES, TOOLS, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Professional Development Resources

The Center for Literacy and Disability Studies of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will lead professional development activities for the DLM. Representatives of member states will identify the range of topics, modes of delivery, and types of support most important for their states.

Professional development modules will be developed and offered through the Consortium's digital library for at least three modes of delivery: independent study, train-the-trainers, and online training. The DLM online system will allow educators to view online materials, download written materials, register for professional development classes that states or districts might offer, and access online professional development.

In order to support teachers' efforts to meet the wide range of needs in this student population, DLM will utilize a research-based framework, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), during the development of professional development resources. This approach includes and exceeds the factors considered under universal design and leads to flexible instructional materials, techniques, and strategies that help teachers differentiate instruction to meet students' varied needs. The UDL methodology does this by incorporating options for: a) the presentation of information and content; b) the types of responses students can give to express what they know; and c) the engagement of students.[4]

The professional development modules will incorporate materials and work samples. The content of the modules will be guided by the Consortium members, but it will likely include:

- implementation of the CCEE identified by DLM;
- explanation of how the standards, learning maps, and assessments were developed;
- UDL and its use;
- how the standards, assessments, and instruction are integrated; and
- goal setting, IEP development, and selection of students to participate in the alternate assessment.

TECHNOLOGY

DLM plans to utilize proven open-source technology platforms to ensure that the system is affordable and can accommodate additional state partners over time. The system will include four major components: Content Builder, Test Delivery, Management and Reporting, and Learning Map Software. These systems provide for task development, local management of administration options, professional development resource delivery, test/task administration including support for various assistive technologies, a reporting suite, and learning map software.

[4] Visit **www.cast.org** for more information about UDL.

National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC)

The NCSC is developing a comprehensive system that addresses the curriculum, instruction, and assessment needs of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities by:

1) producing technically defensible summative assessments;

2) incorporating evidence-based instruction and curriculum models; and

3) developing comprehensive approaches to professional development delivered through state-level Communities of Practice.

These resources will support educators and Individualized Education Program (IEP)[1] teams as they design and implement appropriate instruction that addresses content and skill expectations aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), as well as help prepare students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for postsecondary life. When complete, the assessment system and accompanying resources will be made available to all states, regardless of their participation in the original grant.

NCSC At a Glance

- MEMBERSHIP: 19 states* (Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Pacific Assessment Consortium (PAC-6**), Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Wyoming) serving approximately 90,000 students who participate in an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards
- GOVERNANCE: A Project Management Team oversees development of the system and consists of one to two state representatives from each of four NCSC Work Groups, Project Principal Investigators from the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO), and six individuals from four partner organizations: the University of Kentucky (UKY); the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (NCIEA); the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC); and edCount, LLC
- PROJECT MANAGEMENT PARTNER: NCEO at the University of Minnesota is the host fiscal agent and leads the Project Management Team. Four additional organizations also provide leadership: UKY on professional development; NCIEA on assessment design; UNCC on curriculum and instruction; and edCount, LLC, on evaluation
- AWARD: $45 million from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education

This information is accurate as of January 6, 2012.

The following summary of the NCSC assessment system has been approved by the NCSC Consortium.

SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Summative Assessments for Accountability

NCSC will use a summative assessment design that coordinates with the general assessment used by each member state and produces scores that can be used for accountability purposes. NCSC will develop a technology-based management system to facilitate assessment administration, documentation, and reporting.

Curricular Sequencing and Grade-Level Content Targets

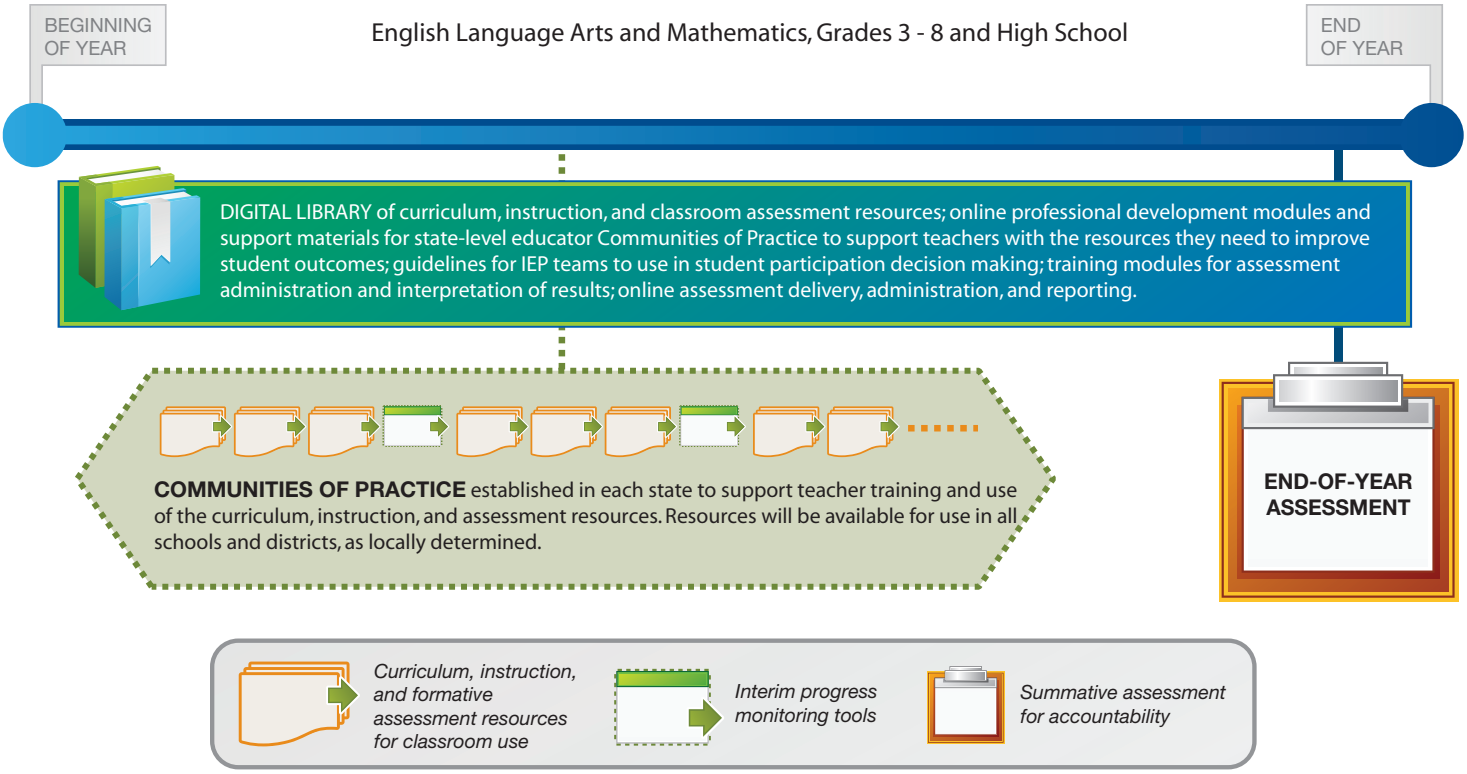
NCSC began its development work in 2011 by convening partners from member states and project research staff to create a vision of college- and career-readiness (CCR) for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This CCR definition then informed the use of research-based learning progression frameworks (LPFs)

* In this context, “states” refer to any U.S. state or jurisdiction authorized to participate in NCSC as a state education agency.

** PAC-6 consists of six entities: American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands.

[1] IEP, mandated by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, is a written plan for a student with disabilities that describes how the student learns, how the student best demonstrates that learning, and the services, supports, and special instruction that the student requires to learn more effectively.

NCSC Assessment System



that describe a curricular sequence for how typical students develop and demonstrate more sophisticated understanding in each content area over time. From these LPFs for mathematics and English language arts (ELA), NCSC is developing grade-level assessment content targets and alternate achievement standards, linked to the CCSS for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The system of assessments, curricular materials, and professional development materials will address these grade-level learning targets in the context of the broader curriculum for all students.

Assessment Delivery

Teachers will use an online NCSC assessment delivery system to administer an annual assessment for each student in ELA and mathematics.

To balance the need for test standardization with the need to provide full access for each student, NCSC will develop a mechanism to determine the appropriate parameters for each student's assessment participation and teachers will then be given flexibility to select appropriate items within those parameters. NCSC will create online accommodations and administration manuals, and teachers will certify their training prior to test administration.

Types of Items and Tasks

A variety of item types will be developed, such as multiple choice, short-constructed response, and performance tasks. For each standard to be measured, an evidence-centered design approach will be used to determine the appropriate item type. Multiple items will then be developed for each standard at differing levels of complexity, along with accommodations. These pre-established variations will ensure multiple ways for students to access and respond to the assessment based on their communication, sensory, and motor needs.

Presentation of Items and Tasks

Because the population of students with significant cognitive disabilities has varying communication modes and a wide range of skill levels, teachers have generally adapted assessment tasks to meet each student's needs at the time of testing.

This flexibility is a strength in terms of accessibility, but poses a challenge for score interpretation because some adaptations may inadvertently change the knowledge and skills being measured. Through the use of cognitive laboratories and other methodologies, NCSC will research test formats that balance the need for flexibility with the need for standardization. This process will involve teachers who work with students eligible to take an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards, assessment design experts, and content experts.

Scoring

Students who are able to interact with the computer will enter their own responses directly into the online system. For other students, teachers will enter data into the online system based on their interactions with the students as part of the assessment administration process. Many items will be automatically scored by the system. NCSC will investigate the accuracy, efficiency, and costs associated with scoring processes that may be used for complex or performance-based responses, including human scoring and automated scoring options.

Measuring Growth

NCSC assessments will be designed to support valid inferences about student achievement on the assessed domains. NCSC will develop methods to evaluate student growth based on studies involving students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Accountability

The system will be designed to produce aggregate scores that can be used to meet all of the uses and requirements of Race to the Top and pending Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization.

Reporting

The reporting system will allow scores and interpretive information to be disseminated electronically and will include both teacher and parent guides to help them interpret reports and determine next steps. Accompanying curriculum and professional development resources will help educators use the data to improve student learning. In addition, NCSC will create a comprehensive system of resources to support educators in delivering high-quality, academic instruction for all students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

RESOURCES, TOOLS, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Formative and Interim Assessment Tools

In addition to developing the system of summative assessments, NCSC will develop formative and interim tools as part of comprehensive curriculum, instruction, and assessment resources that can be used by teachers throughout the school year to monitor student progress. NCSC will offer a wide range of professional development resources through individual state Communities of Practice. These resources will be available online to the public.

Curriculum and Instruction Tools

To help teachers translate the CCSS into effective instruction, NCSC is developing curriculum resource guides for the concepts in math and ELA that are considered to be “big ideas” within the academic content. These guides will provide information on instruction within the general education setting (e.g., how the area can be taught to typically developing students); teaching and applying skills in meaningful contexts; linking skills to other content areas; differentiation of instruction through Universal Design for Learning; considerations for providing instruction of more basic skills to some students as embedded within instruction of grade level content; and tools for tiered interventions.

State Transition Planning

NCSC is providing assistance to member states in the development of state-specific transition plans that address state needs.

Professional Development Resources and Activities

Implementation of the Common Core State Standards

NCSC will develop online professional development modules to help special educators gain an

NCSC will offer a wide range of professional development resources through individual state Communities of Practice. These resources will be available online to the public.

understanding of the prioritized academic content within the learning progressions. Using a train-the-trainers model, NCSC also will support the formation of Communities of Practice within each member state by training 10–40 teachers from each state (based on state size). These teams will lead the implementation of the NCSC-developed curriculum and assessment materials.

Assessment Administration and Use of Assessment Accommodations
NCSC will develop online training modules to ensure readily accessible and consistent training in the proper administration of the assessments and use of accommodations. Teachers will be required to complete an accompanying certifying exam before administering the assessments.

Assessment Results Interpretation
NCSC will work closely with state teams in the development of training modules designed to help teachers use both formative and summative assessment results to improve instruction and instructional programs.

Communication Triage
Most students who participate in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards are able to use some form of symbolic communication, such as spoken words, printed text, sign language, or pictures. For students who do not use any form of symbolic language, research suggests that most can still communicate through the use of augmentative communication strategies. NCSC will develop materials to build capacity in each state for teachers to effectively use augmentative communication strategies with these students. The goal is to ensure that each student is given the opportunity to develop communicative competence to allow for access to instruction and assessments.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation Tools
NCSC will develop, field test, and validate tools for evaluating teacher and principal effectiveness that rely on multiple measures. Professional development modules will be created to support appropriate use of the tools.

TECHNOLOGY

NSCS will use technology to deliver, score, and report on the assessments; to deliver curriculum and instruction tools; and to deliver online and on-demand professional development. The assessment delivery system will support numerous assistive technologies and communication modalities.

NCSC TIMELINE

October 2010–June 2012	Develop common definition of college and career-readiness for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities Develop content frameworks based on the hypothesized curricular framework in the CCSS Develop draft assessment blueprint through evidence-centered design approach and conduct cognitive labs on model items Implement Communities of Practice in each state and conduct initial training and orientation
July–December 2012	Produce classroom curriculum, instruction, assessment (C-I-A), as well as progress monitoring tools Produce content support for special education teachers and begin training Begin sample field test of model items
January–June 2013	Complete sample field test of model items and revise assessment components based on results Integrate C-I-A resource training into each state rollout of CCSS Produce participation and accommodations training manual
July–December 2013	Develop final test blueprint, items, and reporting system
January–September 2014	Field test all alternate assessment students Set cut scores Complete validation studies and technical report
2014–15 school year	The NCSC Alternate Assessment System is operational

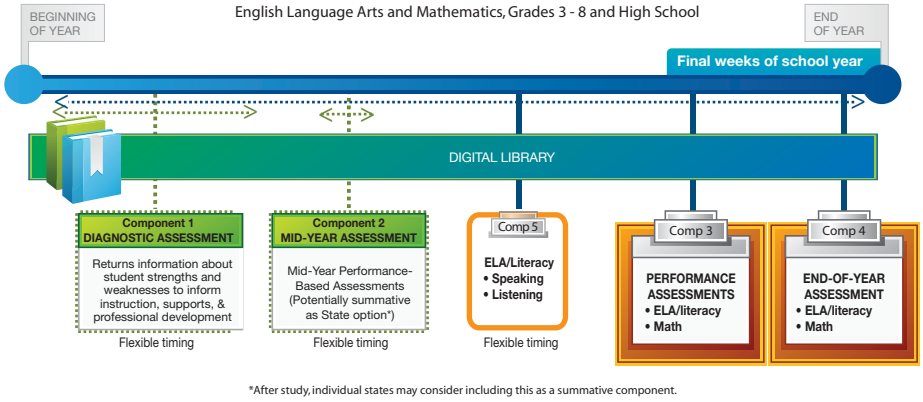
Timeline should be considered a draft as of March 2012 and is subject to change.

For more information about NCSC, visit **www.ncscpartners.org**

Side-by-side Comparison of Assessment Systems

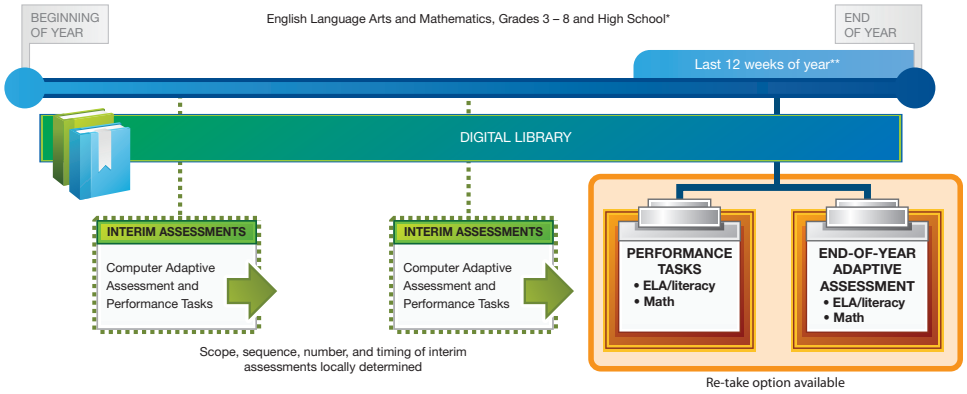
Table 3

PARCC Assessment System



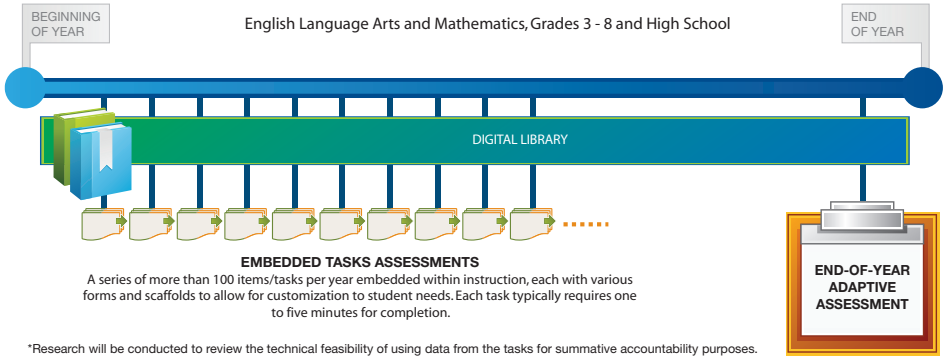
*After study, individual states may consider including this as a summative component.

Smarter Balanced Assessment System



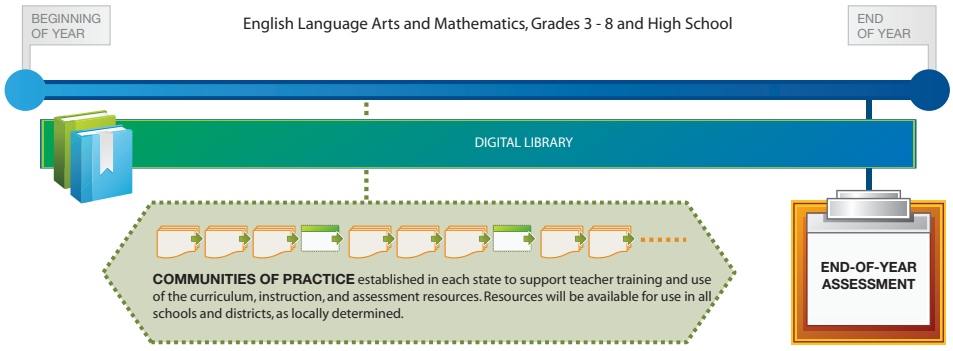
*Summative assessments for grades 3 – 8 and 11; Interim assessments available for grades 3 – 12.
**Time windows may be adjusted based on results from the research agenda and final implementation decisions.

DLM Assessment System



*Research will be conducted to review the technical feasibility of using data from the tasks for summative accountability purposes.

NCSC Assessment System



SYSTEM DESIGN, WORK TO DATE AND FUTURE PLANS

English Language Proficiency Assessment Consortium

Approximately one in five U.S. public school students, or nearly 9.9 million, speak a language other than English at home. This English language learner subgroup is now the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. K-12 student population.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 augmented the longstanding federal requirements for instructional supports for English language learners (ELLs) by also requiring annual testing of English proficiency. Currently, all states assess ELL students in Grades K-12 annually until they are determined to be proficient in English. ELL students – also known as limited-English proficient (LEP) students and English as a second language (ESL) students – must also participate in the state academic assessments in English language Arts and mathematics, with accommodations as appropriate.

To support the development of next generation assessments of English proficiency, the U.S. Department of Education's 2011 competitive Enhanced Assessment Grant provided funding for the development of new assessments by consortia of 15 or more states. In addition to producing results that are valid, reliable and fair for the intended purpose, the new assessment system had to meet additional criteria, including:

- Be based on a common definition of English learner adopted by all Consortium states;
- Include diagnostic (e.g. screener or placement) and summative assessments;
- Assess English language proficiency across the four language domains of reading, writing, speaking and listening for each grade level from kindergarten through Grade 12;
- Produce results that indicate whether individual students have attained a level and complexity of English proficiency that is necessary to participate fully in academic instruction in English;
- Be accessible to all English learners with the one exception of those who are eligible for alternate assessments based on alternate academic standards; and
- Use technology to the maximum extent appropriate to develop, administer, and score assessments.

The sole award was given to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, in collaboration with the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. The assessment system under development, called **Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems** (ASSETS) is to be ready for use by the 2015-16 school year. A summary and illustration of the design of ASSETS can be found on the following pages and at www.k12center.org/publications.html.

To download this document or for more information about the Consortia, visit
www.k12center.org

For more information about ASSETS, visit
http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/assets.html

Assessment Services Supporting ELs through Technology Systems (ASSETS)

The ASSETS* Consortium will develop a next generation, technology-based language assessment system for students in grades K–12 who are learning English. The system will include a summative language assessment, an on-demand diagnostic screener, classroom interim assessments, and formative assessment tools for use in instruction, as well as accompanying professional development materials. All of these components will be grounded in English development standards linked to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and mathematics. This Consortium will leverage the work of WIDA, a Consortium formed in 2002 under another Enhanced Assessment Grant that included many of the same member states. ASSETS member states will govern the development of ASSETS. The assessments and tools developed by this Consortium will be available to all states. New states can join pending USED approval.

ASSETS At a Glance

- MEMBERSHIP: 29 states** (Alabama, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming)
- GOVERNANCE: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is the lead agency in collaboration with World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Member states will establish policies for the Consortium. A steering committee comprised of representatives of a subset of member states will provide additional advice to ensure the products and services meet state needs. During the four-year grant period, a long-term governance structure will be developed to sustain the Consortium.
- PROJECT MANAGEMENT PARTNER: WIDA at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research serves as the project management partner. Other organizations have major responsibilities. They include: the Center for Applied Linguistics for item and test development; WestEd for accommodations, validation, and interoperability; the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) for language learning progressions development and validation research; Data Recognition Corporation for field testing; and MetriTech for scoring.
- AWARD: $10.5 million four-year, Enhanced Assessment Grant from the U.S. Department of Education (USED), September 2011

This information is accurate as of February 10, 2012.

The following summary of the ASSETS assessment system has been approved by the ASSETS managing partners.

SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Summative Assessment for Accountability

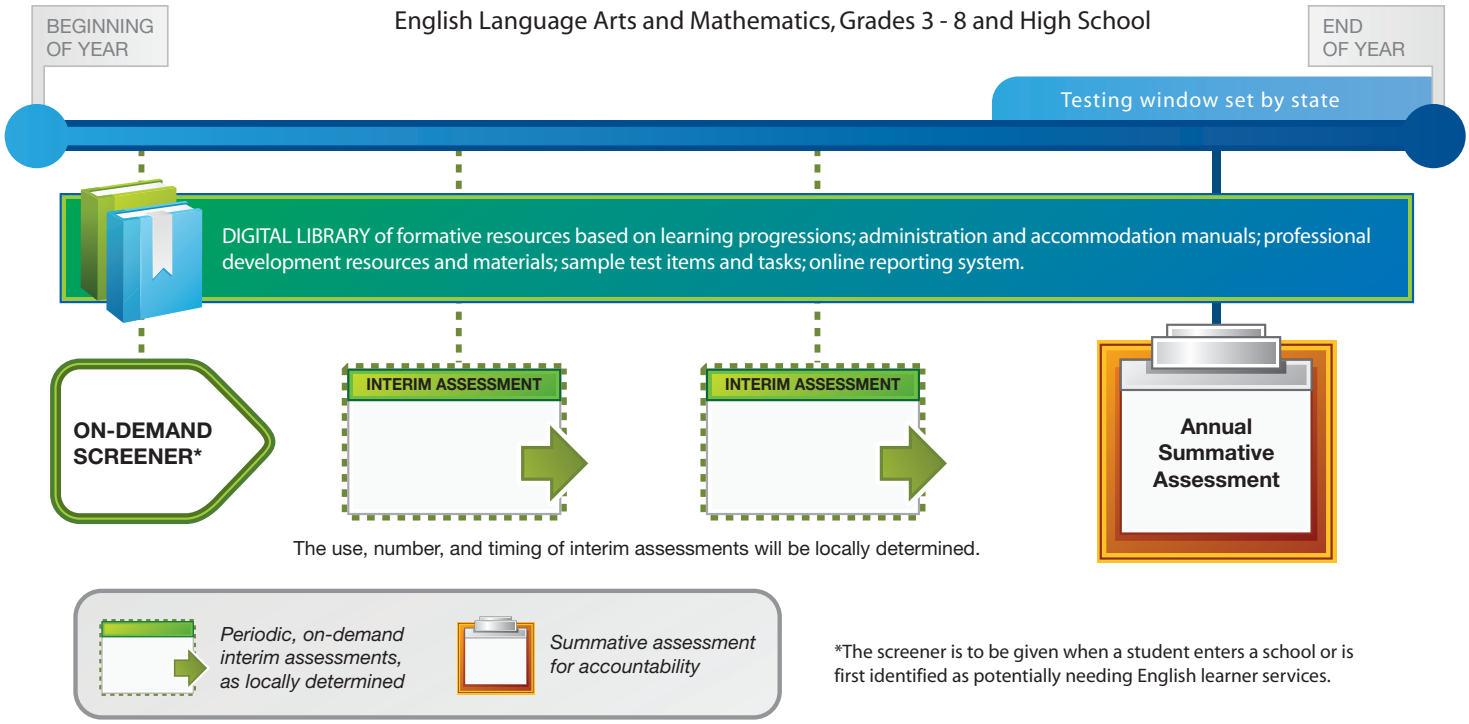
ASSETS will utilize a summative annual assessment design to be administered in Grades K-12 for accountability and program improvement purposes. The system's English proficiency assessments will cover the language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing as used in the academic content areas as well as social and instructional language. They will be based on the 2012 WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards.[1] ASSETS will incorporate technology into assessing authentic language development more precisely than can be done with paper-based tests through features such as the recording of spoken English or use of online manipulatives. It also will include accommodations for English language learners (ELLs) with disabilities.

* ASSETS Consortium was the name chosen for the Enhanced Assessment Grant. However, the Consortium may choose to modify the name.

** In this context, "states" refers to any U.S. state or jurisdiction authorized to participate in ASSETS.

[1] The 2012 ELD Standards can be found at **www.wida.us/standards/elp.aspx**. This new edition of the standards includes grade-level examples to connect the standards to the CCSS, topically and linguistically.

ASSETS Assessment System



Assessment Delivery

The annual summative assessment will be delivered on computers, although a version of the current paper-based test will continue to be available for students requiring accommodations and in other circumstances to be determined by the ASSETS Consortium. Each state will determine its own testing window in accordance with state and local needs.

During this four-year grant period, tests representing the full range of proficiency levels will be developed for K-12 students. All four portions of the summative assessment (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are expected to require a total of approximately two hours to complete for Grades 1-12 and 40 minutes for kindergarten. Initially, all students taking a test form will see the same set of items, but eventually the Consortium may seek to transition to adaptive delivery of the summative assessment.

Types of Items and Tasks

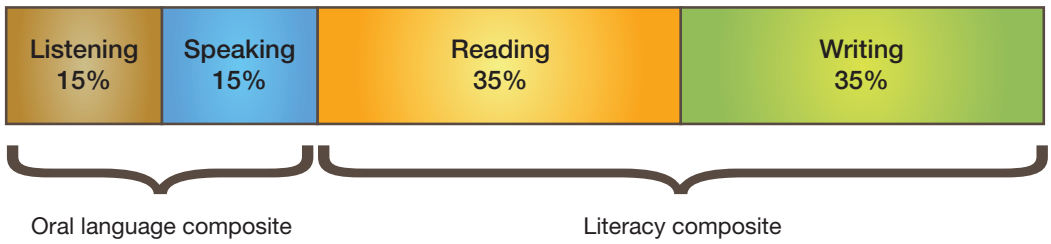
The principles of both evidence-centered design and universal design will be adhered to during item development to support technical quality and accessibility. The test forms will include both selected response and extended constructed response items. The exact number of each type will vary based on the grade level and the proficiency levels included in the test form. The kindergarten assessments will be individually administered and technology-mediated. Screen displays of materials and audio recordings will be used to ease the burden on the test administrator and improve the consistency of administration. The Consortium will seek to add innovative item types to the summative assessments over time.

Scoring

The annual summative assessment will be centrally scored. The selected response items used in the reading and listening sections will be scored by computer. Student responses for the writing and speaking tasks will be digitally recorded and subsequently scored by trained raters using an online scoring system that includes built-in safeguards for scoring consistency. It is anticipated that final scores will be returned within two to four weeks.

A total of eight scores will be reported for English learners: sub-scores for the domains of listening,

Annual Summative Assessment's English Language Proficiency Score



speaking, reading, and writing; an oral language composite score; a literacy composite score; a comprehension score for listening and reading; and an overall score across the four domains. The English Language Proficiency (ELP) scores will be calculated based on the weighted sub-scores *as shown above.* The scores will be reported both as scale scores and as one of the six proficiency levels for the student's current grade level.

Measuring Growth

The ASSETS annual assessments will yield scores on a vertical K–12 scale that educators, students, and parents can use to chart student language acquisition over time. The interim assessments, described below, will allow for charting student progress on an ongoing basis in small increments and with more precision.

Accountability

The assessment system will be designed to produce composite ELP scores that can be used to inform decisions about whether an individual student should exit from English language instruction educational programs, as well as to inform decisions about district and state performance for accountability purposes. In addition, the scores may be used as one of multiple measures to inform principal and teacher effectiveness evaluations.

Reporting

The member states of the ASSETS Consortium, particularly through the steering committee, will provide guidance for the development of a reporting system that meets the needs of multiple stakeholders and can be integrated with other state assessment reporting systems.

RESOURCES, TOOLS, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Additional Assessment Tools

On-demand Screener

This is the first component of the comprehensive ASSETS assessment system that English learners will encounter when they enter a school in an ASSETS member state. The screener will be technology-based and used to determine student eligibility and appropriate placement for English learner program services. The listening and reading portions will be computer-scored, while the writing and speaking portions will be scored on-site by educators. Scores will be readily available and, for those qualifying as English learners, reported as comprehensive ELP scores based on the WIDA Proficiency Levels. A computer-based training program will be developed to prepare educators to score the screener consistently.

Technology-based Classroom Interim Assessments

A series of shorter, targeted interim assessments will be developed to enable schools to chart student progress in finer increments and with more precision

than the annual summative assessment, as well as to help guide instruction. These assessments will include items and tasks that provide concrete examples of the ELD Standards and proficiency levels. Computer delivery will enable immediate scoring and feedback to teachers and students. Partial-credit scoring and analysis of patterns across responses will be used to enhance the diagnostic value of the feedback.

The interim assessments also may be used to conduct research on innovative item types to be considered for use in the summative assessment. Complex, technology-enhanced item types will be piloted within the interim assessments and, as appropriate, transitioned into the summative assessment.

Academic English Language Learning Progressions
WIDA will work with researchers at UCLA to develop English language learning progressions for both the academic and social English associated with school success and career readiness.

Resources to Support Formative Assessment
The language learning progressions described above will provide a foundation for the development of formative assessment processes and resources to help educators monitor student understanding during instruction.

Professional Development Resources and Activities
ASSETS will develop a comprehensive set of professional development tools and resources to help educators administer the ASSETS tests and interpret the results. Emphasis will be placed on professional development resources related to the interim assessments, as their purpose is to support improvements in instruction.

Materials and resources also will be developed to help teachers utilize the standards and the language learning progressions to set individual learning targets for students, as well as to mine data from the ASSETS assessments to inform and improve their educational practice.

The training materials will be available in electronic format and online to support both group and individual self-paced use. In addition, ASSETS will partner with State Education Agencies to deliver state-based, face-to-face trainings.

The online ASSETS system also will include administration manuals, interpretation guides, and sample practice items.

ASSETS TIMELINE

2011–2012	Create initial test design
2012–2013	Create item specifications, items, and pilot forms Begin pilot testing Create initial professional development materials and pilot them
2013–2014	Conduct and score field test Complete accommodations materials Continue development of professional development materials
2014–2015	Conduct reliability and validity studies, and finalize design of system Develop score reports, administrator training materials, and reporting system
2015–2016	ASSETS assessment system is operational

Timeline should be considered a draft as of March 2012 and is subject to change.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology will be incorporated into the development, administration, scoring, and reporting of the assessments within a comprehensive and interactive system. Strategies are being developed to ensure the system can be utilized in educational environments with a range of technology capabilities, as well as to minimize the need for extensive upgrades. All items will be developed to an open-license interoperability standard to support:

- consistent delivery of the assessments across multiple delivery platforms;
- consistent application of accessibility features; and
- coordination with the systems being developed by the Comprehensive Assessment Consortia — the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium.

For more information about ASSETS, visit **http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/assets.html**

The Case for Evidence-Centered Design

By Andrew S. Latham

Evidence-centered design (ECD) continues to grow in popularity as a conceptual framework for designing and developing assessments for a variety of different uses. In keeping with this movement, both the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) have pledged to employ ECD to guide the development of all their assessments. To understand why the Consortia have made ECD a central element of their respective solutions, one must first understand the principles and practice underlying ECD.

All assessments use a relatively small sample of evidence to make claims about a person's knowledge, skills, and/or abilities (KSAs). An ECD model starts by defining these claims. What is it we wish to say about students' KSAs based on their assessment results? Answering this question is a non-trivial task given limited testing time and budget, and the myriad things we would wish to know about students' KSAs in an ideal world. To be sure, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have provided a common blueprint that nearly all states have pledged to follow, but it would be unrealistically grandiose to try to design an assessment that would measure every student's mastery of the learning objectives espoused by every one of those standards. Therefore, the first major step in the consortia's ECD process is to work with a diverse cross-section of experts and stakeholders to distill the CCSS down into the specific claims they wish to be able to make about students who take their assessments.

Once the claims have been established, committees of experts will need to determine what evidence will enable them to substantiate those claims. This evidence, which students must produce within the strictures of an assessment environment, must be relevant and sufficient to support each claim made. The challenge, then, will be to identify the scenarios for the assessment tasks and questions that will maximize the likelihood that students will produce such evidence. In this way, ECD does not impose a rigid set of assessment development procedures, but rather lays out a logical framework for advancing an assessment argument: First identify the claims you want to make about students, next determine what evidence could be used to support these claims, and then develop assessment tasks which will optimize all students' opportunity to provide such evidence.

By employing ECD throughout the assessment design and development process, the consortia will be compelling themselves to define their assessment claims explicitly and specifically up front. In so doing, they will likely identify some claims they wish to make, but for which there is as yet no practical, established way to gather the evidence necessary to support these claims. These evidence gaps can serve as the basis for pilot testing new types of assessment tasks, and for future research to advance the capabilities of assessment. At the same time, by identifying these gaps up front, the consortia will not attempt to make any claims about students that aren't substantiated by the assessment evidence.

ECD also provides a framework within which experts can discuss and share their ideas for how best to capture evidence, which in turn leads to long-term efficiencies in assessment development. To be sure, defining the claims and evidence at the start front-loads a significant amount of the development effort, but once that work is completed, the ECD model will ensure that experts designing and

By employing ECD throughout the assessment design and development process, the consortia will be compelling themselves to define their assessment claims explicitly and specifically up front.

Andrew S. Latham is a Senior Advisor to the Center for K-12 Assessment & Performance Management at ETS

The PARCC and Smarter Balanced examples are illustrative of one of ECD's core strengths: It is a conceptual framework that allows significant flexibility in its implementation, not a rote framework that must be diligently followed to a predetermined destination.

developing the assessment will share a clear and common framework against which they can judge the quality of their assessment tasks and questions. This means that over time, the ECD process will result in design tools and models that can be used to replicate assessment tasks and questions more efficiently than in more traditional development models.

While the PARCC and Smarter Balanced assessments will ultimately differ in a number of critical ways, both propose to implement ECD in a similar manner. After identifying the claims to be made, PARCC will develop evidence statements to support these claims. These evidence statements will be used to: define what types of responses the assessment tasks and questions should elicit from students; integrate the CCSS in a rigorous, thoughtful way; distinguish among levels of mastery for specific KSAs; and develop learning and interpretation tools for educators to employ. Smarter Balanced plans to develop item specifications for all tasks and questions, where each task must be explicitly linked to evidence for one or more claims. This will hold true for all tasks, be they selected responses or extended constructed responses.

The PARCC and Smarter Balanced examples are illustrative of one of ECD's core strengths: It is a conceptual framework that allows significant flexibility in its implementation, not a rote framework that must be diligently followed to a predetermined destination. For this reason, the two consortia can apply ECD in equally valid ways to produce two assessment models for the same purpose, yet the two models that emerge will be clearly independent and distinct. Once the primary tenet of moving from claims to evidence is adhered to, ECD offers significant flexibility.

Indeed, while the model is meant to be linear in the sense that you cannot begin to identify evidence without first establishing claims, ECD can also thought of as a cyclical model that allows for constant refinement and improvement as data are collected. After the assessment is ultimately delivered, it is important to then revisit, and refine as necessary, the claims and evidence and task models to build upon the lessons learned from the most recent round of testing. In this way ECD encourages continuous improvement and refinement of the assessments. Through rigorous and detailed interactions among stakeholders and experts, both consortia plan to apply ECD tenets to define what their assessments hope to accomplish, and how they will achieve these goals in a valid and fair way.

Perhaps most importantly, ECD has the potential to help teachers improve and target their instructional practices. By identifying focal KSAs, making claims explicit, and specifying acceptable forms of evidence, ECD-based frameworks can provide classroom teachers with a deeper, clearer picture of the types of work their students can do to demonstrate their mastery of standards like those in the CCSS. Ideally, the ECD frameworks can help teachers think through what types of tasks their students should complete, and identify the features they should be looking for when evaluating their students' work. Both consortia have pledged to provide rich information and tools for teachers, and presumably these will be grounded in their respective ECD frameworks. Thus, not only does ECD strengthen assessment claims, it can also provide developers of instructional resources with a clearer foundation on which to build aligned tools, thereby helping all students learn.

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The Light Ahead

By Nancy A. Doorey

Nearly three years ago, the CEO of ETS decided to create a small "center" charged with driving advances in K-12 assessment. He was convinced that the field at large could – and needed to – create much more useful, timely and engaging assessments to both measure and support student learning. He must have seen what few of us saw at the time: that we are at the beginning of what is almost certain to be the most important, turbulent and exciting decade in the last century for innovations in assessment. Why?

Four forces are converging to create this inflection point:

- **Technological, social and economic trends are changing the skills needed for citizenship and employment.** The transition from reliance on printed sources of information within physical reach to digital resources located around the globe has fundamentally redefined the skills needed to engage as a citizen, to access, sort, create and communicate ideas, and to be a valued employee or successful employer. And the pace of change demands that adults be able to figure out what they need to learn next and find the tools needed to do so.

- **The power of personal digital and computing devices and the number of people with daily access to them are increasing exponentially.** The first Apple personal computers in the early 1980s sold for roughly $3,000 and had less computing power than many of the apps that now sell for $0.99 and run on cell phones. With sales in third world countries beginning to explode, the prices of digital devices are expected to drop as their capabilities continue to expand. These devices will allow us to deliver high-quality, engaging educational content that both instructs and gathers important, just-in-time data about learning at reasonable prices.

- **Cognitive science, a fairly young field, is creating new and powerful insights into how people learn.** Cognitive science is bringing together understandings from multiple research disciplines, including psychology, artificial intelligence, neuroscience, linguistics, computer science, and education, to shed new light on how the brain works – such as how young children develop increasingly sophisticated understandings of complex concepts over time and what motivates persistence on challenging tasks.

- **In the U.S., the demand for K-12 education learning and assessment tools has exploded and is reaching levels that will spur greater investment and innovation.** For U.S. education, this dynamic has been an essential element in the creation of a current inflection point. Where we once had 50 state silos of content and performance standards and accompanying state assessments, the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics delineate the expectations and content that U.S. schools in 45 participating states and DC will be targeting. Producers of educational content will compete to produce the best resources to support teachers, students, and parents, and exciting new providers, such as developers of virtual reality games, are entering this new market. In addition, two new state-led and state-governed Assessment Consortia will be consolidating the assessment buying power of their member states into two very powerful purchasing agents, which will allow the consortia of states to push for greater innovation and higher quality in much more powerful ways.

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For the five assessment consortia that are hard at work developing next-generation assessments, it will be challenging indeed to develop these new systems such that they can take advantage of the technological and learning advances over the course of the coming decade. The challenge is complicated by the fact that these new assessment systems must be implemented in school year 2014-15 and must meet the high-stakes uses, including replacing the tests currently used for No Child Left Behind reporting. In practical terms, it means that they will be able to move the ball only a short distance down the field, as development of items will need to begin next school year to meet that deadline. That means that they will be able to bring forward innovations that are well into development, but are very unlikely to be able to utilize any of the ones just emerging. The goal, then, is to ensure that the assessment systems of 2014-15 are the best possible starting point for this new generation of richer, more useful and engaging assessments that are designed to facilitate the addition of new advances over time.

Living in a time of great change in one's field is both exciting and stressful. And the work will likely get harder before it gets any easier as we adapt to increased expectations – for students, for educators, and for those who work in organizations serving the education sector. We at the K-12 Center are confident, however, that the bright light ahead is not a train coming toward us, but rather the radiance of e-learning and e-assessment tools that will help our teachers continually improve instruction and help each student leave high school well prepared for the post secondary pursuit of his or her choice.

Other Resources from the K-12 Center

Information About the Assessment Consortia

- This guide as a PDF file – available either in full of with just the subset of assessment consortia to which your state belongs
- Powerpoint slides of the graphical illustrations of each of the consortia, which you may download and use in your presentations
- Videos of a series of webinars with leaders of the Comprehensive Assessment Consortia, discussing their progress and responding to questions from viewers

Assessment Research Papers and Presentations

- A collection of several dozen research papers written since December 2009 by prominent U.S. experts on topics of importance to the development of next generation assessments
- COMING IN MAY. Ten newly commissioned papers concerning new developments in technology-enhanced assessments

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K-12 Center at ETS

Driving Advances in K-12 Assessment

The Center will work with nationally recognized measurement experts from across the country to explore possible solutions to the measurement challenges inherent in the designs of the new assessments and will share the resulting ideas and recommendations through webinars and our website.

For more helpful resources about the assessment Consortia and next generation assessments, go to

www.k12center.org

To sign up for notices as these resources are made available, go to

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Created by Educational Testing Service (ETS) to forward a larger social mission, the Center for K–12 Assessment & Performance Management at ETS has been given the directive to serve as a catalyst and resource for the improvement of measurement and data systems to enhance student achievement.