The state supports the development and implementation of balanced systems of formative, benchmark, interim and summative assessments at the state and district levels that empower educators; deepen student learning; and validate student mastery of complex knowledge, skills and social-emotional competencies. These systems empower educators to focus instruction where it is needed most while providing important information to help states and districts better target resources to close achievement gaps and improve student success.

**EXPLORATION**

**THE GOAL**
The state has developed a vision for balanced assessment systems that aligns to the state’s vision for student success and has begun to build these systems by adjusting state policies, investing in educator assessment capacity and partnering with districts to pilot innovative assessment designs.

**SUPPORTING ACTIONS**
» A state leadership team comprised of diverse stakeholders, district leaders and educators studies examples of local balanced assessment systems that align to personalized and competency-based learning environments and develops a plan to support the creation or adoption of high-quality balanced assessment systems that align to the state’s vision for student success.

» The state invests significant state and federal resources to deepen educators’ assessment literacy so educators have the skills to leverage student work and assessment data to close achievement gaps and begins to pilot innovative assessment designs in districts that demonstrate readiness.

**STRATEGIC QUESTION**
*How does the state’s current assessment system empower or impede personalized teaching and learning models?*

**REPLICATION**

**THE GOAL**
The state has evaluated the impact of balanced assessment pilots and has invested in learning networks to replicate high-quality practices and systems to additional cohorts of demographically and geographically diverse districts.
SUPPORTING ACTIONS
» A leadership team convened by the state evaluates the progress of district pilot sites; makes necessary improvements to manage the quality of district implementation; and creates a process to enable additional demographically and geographically diverse districts to implement balanced assessment systems that support personalized, competency-based learning environments.

» The state has established professional learning networks to support district implementation of balanced assessment systems, integrating best practices into professional development opportunities for all districts in the state, particularly practices from districts that have demonstrated success in addressing the needs of diverse student populations.

STRATEGIC QUESTION
What insights are emerging from district leaders, educators and parents participating in the innovative assessment pilot, and how can those lessons inform improvements for future cohorts of districts?

STATEWIDE TRANSFORMATION

THE GOAL
The state has aligned policies and resources to scale balanced assessment practices to every district in the state, ensuring educators are essential partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of these systems.

SUPPORTING ACTIONS
» State and district resources and policies are aligned to support statewide implementation of balanced assessment systems, ensuring that under-resourced districts have the capacity to implement new assessments with fidelity. A state-level sustainability plan ensures ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement of the state assessment system including strategies for incorporating student, parent and educator feedback.

» Educator preparation programs focus on assessment literacy, ensuring graduates can design and interpret assessment results for diverse student populations and make necessary changes to curriculum and instruction.

STRATEGIC QUESTION
How has the state’s balanced assessment system enabled improvements in teaching and learning, and what further refinements are necessary to sustain high-quality implementation?

EARLY ADOPTER
After adopting the Next Generation Science Standards in 2013, the Delaware Department of Education aspired to create a system of science assessments that emphasizes real-world application of the standards. Delaware’s Next Generation Science Assessment spans grades 3 to 10 and consists of multiple distinct types of assessment. Students will apply their knowledge in science through writing or performance tasks where they solve unique, real-life problems. In addition to the assessment, educators have the option of using end-of-unit tests that help identify student strengths and areas for improvement as well as short course quizzes that can be administered in real-time throughout the year to support student learning.