MEASURING FORWARD

EMERGING TRENDS IN K-12 ASSESSMENT INNOVATION

A significant movement is underway across the nation to design K-12 assessment systems that better equip stakeholders to provide an equitable and excellent education to each child. While some of these innovations emerged before the pandemic, the massive disruption to instruction fueled a new urgency to rethink the potential of assessments to drive better teaching and learning. States and communities are working together to create more balanced systems of assessment that better support instruction while still providing the information necessary to inform policy and resource decisions.

There is much to learn from the ideas emerging across the nation - particularly where states are trying to innovate despite limitations of federal policy. The insights and innovations emerging from this work have the potential to cast a new vision for K-12 assessment in this country.

KEY THEMES DRIVING ASSESSMENT INNOVATION

NEED FOR CHANGE *What are the most common concerns about today's assessment systems?*	**VISION FOR CHANGE** *What are the most common aspirations for future assessment systems?*
Curriculum has narrowed toward rigid test preparation	Ensure equitable teaching of foundational skills while also supporting deeper, more personalized learning
State testing data is not actionable for instruction and data from the classroom is not valued	Balance a small state assessment footprint with richer assessments that provide actionable data for students, teachers and caregivers
Instructional time lost to test preparation and testing time	Embedded into instruction to support teaching and learning
Students experience testing stress	Students engage with meaningful challenges to gauge where they are in their learning
Standardized test results are used without additional and broader indicators to evaluate schools, which can often stigmatize communities	Assessment systems are designed to be culturally responsive/sustaining to ensure that every student can see themselves in the assessment experience

EMERGING ASSESSMENT DESIGNS

To build assessment systems of the future, states are exploring the following key design elements. In many cases, states are incorporating several of these elements.

- **Curriculum and instructionally-embedded assessments** – Assessments that are embedded in high-quality curriculum and administered as part of the flow of instruction.

  KEY EXAMPLES: State Performance Assessment Learning Community (SPA-LC), Hawaii, Louisiana, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, SIPS Network (Stackable, Instructionally-Embedded, Portable Science Assessments)

- **Performance assessment** – Assessments that require a student to demonstrate a skill or conceptual understanding in a new or novel context.

  KEY EXAMPLES: SIPS Network, SPA-LC, Alabama, Colorado, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Oregon, Virginia, Vermont

- **Replacement of traditional graduation requirements** – Deeper forms of assessment (performance assessments, capstone projects, portfolio defense) replacing use of standardized testing in diploma requirements.

  KEY EXAMPLES: Colorado, Connecticut, New Mexico, New York, Vermont

- **Shared quality criteria** – Several states have developed and implemented a variety of tools, templates and processes, such as scoring calibration protocols, that provide educators with common language and learning goals to increase technical quality of assessments without requiring standardization of the assessment itself.

  KEY EXAMPLES: SIPS Network, SPA-LC, Colorado, New Hampshire, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington

- **Task/item banks** – Banks of state, vendor or teacher-created assessment items that can be pulled at any time for teacher use in the classroom based on the natural flow of their curriculum. While these tools can be a key support to assessment transformation, they must be situated within a larger innovation strategy that includes professional development for assessment literacy at scale.

  KEY EXAMPLES: SIPS Network, Alabama, Connecticut, Kentucky, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont

EXPANDING SYSTEM CAPACITY

States are creating and implementing a range of supports to build state capacity for successful and sustainable assessment practices.

- **Advisory boards/committees** – Diverse stakeholder groups convene to generate a vision for new assessments, brainstorm assessment innovations and/or provide feedback on proposed innovative assessment designs.

  KEY EXAMPLES: Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Utah, Virginia, Washington

- **Assessment literacy professional development** – Professional learning initiatives around technical aspects and implementation of high-quality assessments provided for educators and leaders.

  KEY EXAMPLES: Alabama, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Louisiana, Hawaii, New Mexico

- **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)** – Opportunities for educators and leaders to convene and learn in role alike groups both within and across learning communities.

  KEY EXAMPLES: SPA-LC, Center for Innovation in Education Interstate Learning Collaborative (C!E ILC), Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Virginia, Washington

- **Multi-state networks** – Groups of states coming together around shared challenges and solutions in developing new assessment systems.

  KEY EXAMPLES: Walton and Gates Innovative Assessment Grant, C!E ILC, Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Innovative Assessment Collaborative, SPA-LC, SIPS Network

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the growing momentum to improve state assessment systems, innovators continue to confront policy, resource and cultural barriers. As federal policymakers explore these barriers, states should continue to leverage existing opportunities to advance a vision for better assessment systems. Continued innovation is a critical driver of policy change.

1. **Limited federal flexibility** – The Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA), the only federal opportunity to pilot new approaches to state summative assessments, comes with significant limitations:
   a. No planning time – States must use test results for accountability upon approval.
   b. Timeline to scale – States must present a plan to scale statewide within five years regardless of design or state characteristics.
   c. Comparability – Innovative tests must demonstrate strict comparability to the traditional tests in order for the scores to be used in the same school accountability system despite their unique designs and desire to create something that better captures student learning and addresses student needs.
   d. Traditional technical quality requirements – Innovative systems must meet the federal technical quality requirements crafted for a single end-of-year assessment despite different designs and evolved approaches to ensuring quality.

   CURRENT OPPORTUNITY FOR STATES: States can innovate outside of the bounds of federal law, advancing new approaches to assessment in non-federally tested subjects, in state graduation requirements and in formative assessment tools. These approaches can build educator capacity and offer important lessons on what might be possible for a new assessment paradigm.

2. **Cost** – New assessments require resources to build and test while states continue to incur costs of administering the current system. High-quality assessment practices also require a large investment in assessment literacy.

   CURRENT OPPORTUNITY FOR STATES: As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent federal relief packages, there is both increased appetite and additional funding to jumpstart design of new assessment systems.

3. **Desire for consistent data for decision making** – Decisionmakers and advocates fear that moving away from traditional standardized assessments will disrupt access to data that provides a consistent picture of school quality across the system.

   CURRENT OPPORTUNITY FOR STATES: The COVID-19 pandemic increased calls for greater access to rich information about school quality. Advanced assessment models as well as more robust data collection across a range of academic, school climate, teacher quality, facilities, expanded learning opportunities and other measures can now provide a clearer picture of the full scope of strengths and areas for growth. This richer picture of school quality provides an opportunity to move from a system which places schools (and the communities they serve) in a hierarchy based **largely on standardized test scores in only two subject areas** toward one which establishes a culture of improvement for every learning community based on multiple measures.

A NATIONAL SNAPSHOT OF STATE ASSESSMENT INNOVATION

The work that follows details efforts across the nation to encourage, support and grow innovative state assessment systems, and represents a significant increase in recent state-level energy and action around new forms of assessment to provide deeper and more meaningful understanding of student learning.

MULTI-STATE INITIATIVES

Stackable, Instructionally- Embedded, Portable Science Assessments (SIPS). 6

Walton and Gates Innovative Assessment Grant. 6

Center for Innovation in Education Interstate Learning Community 6

CCSSO Balanced Assessment Systems Collaborative and Innovative Assessment Intensive Support 7

State Performance Assessment Learning Community (SPA-LC). 7

STATE INITIATIVES

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Colorado 8

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Georgia 9

Hawaii 10

Kentucky 10

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New Hampshire 13

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New York. 14

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Tennessee. 16

Texas 16

Utah 17

Virginia. 17

Vermont. 18

Washington 18

MULTI-STATE INITIATIVES

STACKABLE, INSTRUCTIONALLY-EMBEDDED, PORTABLE SCIENCE ASSESSMENTS (SIPS)

The SIPS team is collaborating with state partners and local educators to build Stackable, Instructionally-Embedded, Portable Science (SIPS) assessment tasks to simultaneously address states' needs for large-scale assessments and the needs of educators, parents and students for resources that support science learning throughout the school year. This model includes performance assessment tasks that are part of the curriculum and connect naturally with formative assessment strategies in standards-based and competency-based instructional models.

DESIGN

- Instructionally-embedded
- A network of states, researchers, consultants, technical experts and evaluators

STATUS

- In progress
- Currently convening AL, AK, MT, NE, NM, NY, SC and WY

Resources: SIPS Assessment Model

WALTON AND GATES INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT GRANT

These five states/CMOs are funded by the Walton and Gates Innovative Assessment Grant and supported by coaches from Education First and technical consultants from the Center for Assessment to work through an equitable design process to ensure innovations can best serve those students/stakeholders closest to the problem. The states/CMOs have been engaged in this work for over a year and they will be funded for at least another year with the possibility for continuing funding.

DESIGN

- Three states and two charter management organizations (CMOs) are engaging in site-specific designs intended to increase the equity of assessments for the most disenfranchised students

STATUS

- In progress
- MA, NM, TX, KIPP and Summit are all working on prototyping key components of their designs in order to refine these designs prior to piloting

CENTER FOR INNOVATION IN EDUCATION INTERSTATE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Learning community dedicated to building fair and equitable systems, working with teams of state, intermediary and local educational leaders as they advance ecosystems in their states that raise up equity-seeking innovative practice in teaching, learning and assessment, including performance assessments.

DESIGN

- Regular meetings to share problems of practice and ideas for innovation
- Supporting both assessment and accountability strands

STATUS

- In progress
- Currently convening AK, CA, CO, GA, IL, KY, NH, NM and VT

CCSSO BALANCED ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS COLLABORATIVE
CCSSO INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT INTENSIVE SUPPORT

Through its Balanced Assessment Systems Collaborative, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is working with 28 states interested in designing a system of assessments better designed to support student learning. These states are thinking about ways to build greater coherence among various components of the assessment system instead of limiting the focus to just administration of summative assessments.

CCSSO is also providing intensive support to a subset of states committed to exploring innovative assessment approaches that align to student-centered learning. Participating states are working with CCSSO staff and the Center for Assessment to develop a theory of action for improving the state's assessment system.

DESIGN

- Network to help states seeking to create balance across assessment components
- Intensive individualized support for state teams interested in advancing innovative assessments

STATUS

- Balanced Assessment Collaborative is ongoing
- Intensive support is wrapping up in Fall 21; current states receiving intensive support are MI, SC and UT

Resources: Balanced Assessment Systems Collaborative

STATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT LEARNING COMMUNITY (SPA-LC)

The State Performance Assessment Learning Community (SPA-LC), managed by the Learning Policy Institute, supports states seeking to include performance assessments to transform statewide assessment systems to be more instructionally relevant. SPA-LC currently focuses on science assessment.

A special interest group within the broader collaborative is pursuing statewide systems of assessment anchored to open-source science curriculum materials.

Within the special interest group, states are developing:

» Tasks to include in interim and summative assessments as a mechanism to incentivize the use of high-quality instructional materials and models

» Classroom tasks that support project-based learning approaches

» Better use of existing performance assessments for classroom, school and district purposes

DESIGN

- Multi-state collaborative of states seeking to include performance assessments as part of their state systems
- Includes special interest groups of states pursuing similar projects

STATUS

- In progress
- Special interest group focused on curriculum-embedded assessment is launching
- Special interest group states include CA, LA, MA, NH, NM and WA

STATE INITIATIVES

ALABAMA

The Alabama Department of Education is developing a professional learning approach in science, grounded in high-quality classroom performance tasks, to support the implementation of newly adopted science standards. This includes:

» The development of open-source professional learning modules that guide educators through performance assessment development and implementation processes that can be implemented locally throughout the state

» A state-led network of educators and leaders who have participated in the professional learning and developed a suite of assessment tasks for classroom use

» A library of performance tasks deemed high-quality by the state that will be made available for classroom use

DESIGN

- Professional learning community (PLC) organized by the state focused on classroom performance assessment development in science

STATUS

- Professional learning modules have been developed
- Tasks developed through initial processes are being updated to provide a library of exemplar tasks provided by the state for classroom use

COLORADO

The state engaged Colorado practitioners and leaders from K-12 education, industry and higher education to create a process and support to the field in the development of performance assessments that students can use to demonstrate their readiness to graduate from high school. During the 2018-2019 school year, Colorado educators created tools designed to support teachers, schools and districts as they implement performance assessment systems. These resources represent the components of the state-wide scoring criteria needed to ensure that all performance assessments are rigorous and equitable.

The Colorado Department of Education has also partnered with educators from 22 school districts across the state to form a Professional Learning Community (PLC) focused on cultivating strong performance assessment practices and supporting the design of the collaboratively-developed, standards-based performance assessment on the Graduation Guidelines Menu of Options. The PLC is working to provide tools, templates and examples that will be made available for each performance assessment approach, such as tasks, culminating events and graduation requirements.

DESIGN

- Performance assessment option to meet graduation requirements
- Shared state-wide scoring criteria
- Professional Learning Community (PLC)

STATUS

- Guidance went into effect for 20-21 school year

Resources: *Colorado Department of Education Performance Assessment Webpage*

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut is leveraging state-local collaboration to develop a library of performance assessments to be used for interim purposes in science (as a parallel to interim assessments available through the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium for math and English Language Arts). Through a statewide development process, the State Education Agency coordinated the development of performance tasks in grades 3-12 in science. These tasks will be available to all districts for their use as they are field tested. The state is exploring options for including these classroom-based performance tasks within statewide systems.

Beginning with the class of 2023, Connecticut state law requires that each student earn "a one credit mastery-based diploma assessment" in order to earn a high school diploma. Locally-created assessments allow districts to align the diploma assessment to the local context.

The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents partnered with the Great Schools Partnership to develop a brief that makes the case for aligning these assessments to transferable skills/portrait of a graduation competencies. The Connecticut Department of Education also provides guidance and resources for assessment literacy as a way of supporting mastery-based learning (which was allowed for in the same legislation).

DESIGN

- Development of science performance assessments to serve as interim assessments available to districts though the Local Assessment Resources in Science (LARS)
- Policy requirement that local education agencies develop a mastery-based diploma assessment

STATUS

- State is reviewing and modifying an initial round of tasks for piloting in Fall 2021
- The policy requirement for mastery-based diploma assessment will go into effect for class of 2023

Resources:
– *Mastery-Based Diploma Assessment Brief*
– *Assessment for Mastery-based Learning*

GEORGIA

Georgia is embarking on a unique approach to assessment innovation by leveraging the expertise of local school districts to develop and implement innovative assessment solutions designed to support student learning. In 2018, the Georgia Legislature passed Senate Bill 362, establishing Georgia's innovative assessment pilot program. The state subsequently received approval from the U.S. Department of Education to participate in the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority program.

Under Georgia's approach, the Georgia Department of Education will oversee the innovative assessment pilot program while two approved districts/consortia – Georgia MAP Assessment Partnership and Putnam Consortium – take the lead in developing and implementing innovative assessment solutions. The assessment systems being developed by these districts/consortia include a through-course model and a standards-based curriculum embedded model to maximize instructional time and provide immediate feedback to inform instruction, and prepare students for the next grade, course, college or career.

DESIGN

- Two networks/consortia piloting different assessment models

STATUS

- Approved under the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority
- Assessments in development
- Field testing

Resources: *Georgia Department of Education web page for Assessment Innovation and Flexibility*

HAWAII

The Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) intends for the Hawaii Comprehensive Assessment Program (HICAP) to work as a balanced statewide assessment system that meets federal accountability requirements while also inspiring teachers and students to engage in deeper teaching and learning practices. HICAP is a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

The state received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's FY21 Competitive State Assessment Grant competition to help the state advance this work in a planning phase before applying for the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority. The state, in partnership with the Center for Assessment, is providing extensive assessment professional learning opportunities for educators involved in HICAP.

HIDOE also supports a unique model for attending to cultural and linguistic relevance in assessments through their Kaiapuni Assessments of Educational Outcomes. These assessments monitor student learning through Hawaiian language and leverage Hawaiian teaching, history, culture and values as part of a teaching-learning-assessment system.

DESIGN

- Shortened summative computer-adaptive test
- Classroom-based assessments, including common performance tasks, created by Hawaii educators
- Hawaiian language assessments for core content areas
- Culturally and linguistically responsive

STATUS

- Competitive State Assessment Grant Awarded
- Planning to Apply for Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority

Resources:
– *HIDOE Application for Competitive State Assessment Grant*
– *Hawaiian Language Assessment Efforts*

KENTUCKY

The commissioner formed an inclusive coalition of educators, students, families and community members at the state level to gather empathy data - the lived experiences of stakeholders within the current system - from across the state and then use that data to create current state, future state and learning agenda documents to offer guidance and sponsorship to local teams. They are also producing a guide to support local processes based on lessons they learned as members of the radically inclusive and collaborative coalition. Seven local district teams have formed and will utilize radical inclusion and liberatory design to pursue individual inquiries and to build and test prototypes of local assessment and accountability models aligned to the statewide learning

agenda. The statewide coalition in tandem with both the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Board of Education will work with the local coalitions to examine implications for revisions of the state accountability and assessment system.

The first phase of the public process is underway. Local laboratories kicked off in September of 2021. Plans for a new assessment and accountability design are scheduled to be completed in summer, 2022. The commissioner is willing to pursue Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority or policy change if needed to enact and scale key approaches.

DESIGN

- Public engagement process

STATUS

- Willing to pursue Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority if public process indicates it's necessary

Resources: Kentucky Coalition for Advancing Education

LOUISIANA

In 2018, the State Department of Education of Louisiana received approval from the U.S. Department of Education to create an innovative through-year assessment program in English Language Arts. This assessment program is meant to bring state standards, curriculum and assessments in English Language Arts into full alignment with each other by creating a set of unit-based tests with an accompanying end-of-year writing task. These unit-based tests will be given throughout the year and correspond to units in an open access, teacher developed curriculum: ELA Guidebooks 2.0.

The state hopes that seeding these assessments throughout the year will empower students and educators by supporting their engagement with text that they have studied previously, helping remove cultural bias that can occur when some students have greater access to the concepts embedded in unfamiliar texts. The state also hopes that these assessments will help provide teachers with more actionable feedback on student learning as they progress from one unit to the next.

Through the pandemic, the state has continued to advance its work in three crucial areas:

- A teacher guide document to help educators better use the score reports that will come with these new assessments
- A vision for creating state assessments for multiple different high-quality curriculums being widely used across the state
- A state assessment model, developed for middle school, to work in the elementary grades
- Began the development of assessments for elementary school, starting in fifth grade

The state plans to extend the innovative work in English Language Arts and social studies to science, using a similar design. They will similarly use performance assessment tasks that are administered throughout the year, anchored in classroom experiences. The state is launching a series of professional learning modules for district leaders. This ongoing professional learning is discipline-specific and will help educators use state, local and classroom assessments more effectively to support student learning.

DESIGN

- Integrated English Language Arts and social studies through year assessment based on known texts aligned to the curriculum
- Curriculum-anchored assessment in science
- Statewide assessment literacy approach

STATUS

- Approved under Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority
- Pilot expanding to additional districts in the state
- Administration of first innovative assessments on pause due to the pandemic

Resources: One-Pager on Louisana's Approach

MASSACHUSETTS

Though many credit the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) for the state's first-in-the-nation status on traditional testing metrics, concerns over equity and depth of learning have caused the state to commit to a new statewide assessment model that centers on deep learning for all students that is rigorous, relevant and engaging. In early 2020, Massachusetts applied and received approval for the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA), with a proposal to create a new assessment for Science and Technology/Engineering (STE). The state also received a federal Competitive Grant for State Assessments (CGSA) to support the implementation of the state's approved IADA plan.

Additionally, the state is funded by the Gates and Walton Foundations and supported with technical assistance from Education First and the Center for Assessment. Under this project, Massachusetts is:

» Developing an innovative science test that uses computer-simulated, authentic performance tasks to measure students' mastery of science knowledge and practices

» Provides professional development and support to participating schools on practices for deeper learning

The innovative state assessment work is being done in collaboration with other statewide initiatives including the Kaleidoscope Collective to advance deeper learning in schools as well as an effort to design classroom-embedded interim performance tasks that both reflect features of high-quality teaching and learning in science as well as aspects of the innovative summative test. These interim tasks and accompanying professional learning are intended to provide a bridge between state initiatives to directly influence teaching and learning in the classroom.

DESIGN

- Science and Technology/Engineering assessment with more in-depth, computer-based performance tasks
- Curriculum-anchored assessment system for interim assessments
- Professional learning collective to advance deeper learning

STATUS

- Approved under Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority
- Assessments in development
- Field testing
- Interim system is being designed

Resources:
– *Massachusetts Competitive State Assessment Grant Application*
– *Kaleidoscope Collective*

NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina received approval in 2019 to participate in the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) program. The state's goal is to scale the North Carolina check-ins, a system of through-course assessment opportunities that will provide granular data for immediate feedback about students' performance throughout the year. The proposed plan is to move toward a balanced assessment system that combines real-time, instructionally-useful data with annual summative data used for accountability purposes. The state is piloting the assessment system through IADA with plans to scale statewide by the end of the demonstration authority period.

DESIGN

- "Delayed multi-stage adaptive" assessments
- Both interim and summative

STATUS

- Approved under Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority
- Assessments in development
- Pilot assessments implemented

Resources: North Carolina Personalized Assessment Tool

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire was one of the first states to pursue large-scale performance assessments. They did so because it was a good match to the state's competency education model. Performance assessment is used in participating districts for state/federal accountability as part of a three-part system, which also includes the state test in grade spans, and body of work measures. At the local level, performance assessment is taking the place of tests and other local assessments to advance deeper learning.

The state formed an intermediary organization, the New Hampshire Learning Initiative (NHLI), to provide professional development as well as support the development and scoring of assessments. NHLI is providing assessment literacy and performance assessment learning opportunities for all interested districts from across the state in both the NH Performance Learning and Assessment Consortium for Educators (NH PLACE) and the NH Science Performance Learning and Assessment Consortium for Educators (NH Sci-Place).

DESIGN

- Common performance tasks designed by teacher-led committees
- Double blind calibration scoring
- Survey of teachers and leaders

STATUS

- Granted Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority waiver
- Implementing performance assessments in Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE) districts

Resources:
– *New Hampshire PACE Program*
– *New Hampshire Learning Initiative (NHLI)*

NEW MEXICO

The goal of the New Mexico Graduation Equity Initiative (NMGEI) is to address the education system's history of structural and inherent racism. The New Mexico Capstone Community of Practice is entering its second year of operation, engaging schools, districts, and communities across New Mexico in developing Portraits of a Graduate and multi-year capstone programs, in the hopes that future legislation would allow for a capstone graduation option available in 2023. Additionally, 2021-2022 is the inaugural year of the Educator Community of Practice, which is designed for educators who are practicing capstone teachers and their students who are engaged in the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). Future Focused Education is coordinating the entire project on behalf of New Mexico's Public Education Department and is leading the community engagement and prototyping work. The project is supported by other organizations as well, including the Center for Assessment and the Center for Innovation in Education.

DESIGN

- Community of practice supports schools piloting capstone projects tied to community-based graduate profiles
- This project is funded and supported by the Walton and Gates Innovative Assessment Grant with the goal of creating a more equitable and just assessment approach to certifying students for graduation

STATUS

- Working to move away from standardized assessments in graduation requirements

Resources: Info on New Mexico Grad Equity Initiative and Community of Practice

NEW YORK

Member schools of the New York Performance Standards consortium were given flexibility to administer Performance Based Assessment Tasks in place of some Regents exam requirements for graduation. Schools use shared rubrics, developed and maintained with teachers by the intermediary organization to frame and assess student capstone projects.

At present, the state has not released any process for new schools to apply for/receive the flexibility, presenting issues for potential scale required for any Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority application. At the same time, student activism has emerged around the use of standardized assessments in the screening of New York City public schools. In 2020, Teens Take Charge filed a federal complaint with the USED Civil Rights division about the racialized impact of city and state required standardized assessments in the screening process for New York City schools.

DESIGN

- Locally-created performance assessments in place of graduation requirements for some schools
- Common rubrics/scoring guides
- Network supporting calibration activities

STATUS

- State waiver granted to allow some schools to waive standardized tests in graduation requirements
- Working to move away from standardized assessments in graduation requirements
- Student activist groups have filed a federal complaint

Resources:
– *New York Performance Standards Consortium*
– *Teens Take Charge Civil Rights Complaint*

OREGON

In Oregon, the Local Performance Assessment Requirement states that school districts shall administer one or more performance assessments each year to all students in grades 3-8 and in high school in mathematics, scientific Inquiry, speaking and writing. Performance assessments must be a standardized measure (e.g., activity, exercise, problem or work sample scored by a common scoring instrument, such as the official state scoring guides or another scoring guide adopted by the district) that is embedded in the school curriculum and evaluates the application of students' knowledge and skills. Work samples, scored using the official state scoring guide, are just one example of acceptable performance assessments. Districts have substantial flexibility when it comes to planning the performance assessments that will be used to fulfill this requirement.

DESIGN

- Curriculum-embedded measure of knowledge and skills in grades 3-8 in math, science, speaking and writing
- Scored on a common rubric; Learning education agencies can use state-created scoring guide or create their own, so long as the measure is standard for all students
- Formative, but compliance is reported to Oregon Department of Education

STATUS

- Fully implemented

Resources: Local Performance Assessment Requirement Page

RHODE ISLAND

The Rhode Island Learning Champions project, a collaborative effort of the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and the Great Schools Partnership, brought together outstanding Rhode Island educators and administrators to build the components of a proficiency-based learning system. One of the key outcomes of the Rhode Island Learning Champions project was to build a network of educators across Rhode Island to develop a shared understanding of proficiency-based learning beliefs and practices.

As a result of those conversations, educators within each grade band piloted and calibrated scoring of student work on performance assessment tasks aligned to the Proficiency Frameworks created by the first round of Rhode Island Learning Champions. These performance assessments are available on the RIDE website as samples for the field.

DESIGN

- Statewide collaboration to build sample performance assessments aligned to statewide proficiency-based learning framework
- Sample tasks piloted in classrooms across the state and student work samples were collected for calibration.

STATUS

- Pilot completed and work samples publicly available online as resources

Resources: RIDE Aligned Performance Assessment website

TENNESSEE

As a part of their suite of COVID-19 recovery supports, the Tennessee Department of Education (TNDOE) announced Innovative Assessment Supports. The department will provide a free and optional bank of test items that can be embedded into the curriculum. Items can be teacher or machine-scored and data are immediately available.

DESIGN

- Free, optional interim assessment resources
- Results not used for accountability

STATUS

- Available starting in 20-21 school year

Resources: TNDOE Innovative Assessment Supports 20-21

TEXAS

In 2019, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 3906 calling for the development and pilot of an integrative formative assessment to potentially replace the current summative assessment. This would more quickly address instructional gaps by providing detailed and timely data throughout the school year and multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate proficiency, while allowing for more rapid measurement of learning loss due to instructional disruptions such as COVID-19. The state also received a federal Competitive State Assessment Grant to create a Through-Year Assessment Pilot consisting of modular assessments that provide timely feedback to educators and parents while creating a valid, reliable and fair summative assessment of individual students.

The design of the pilot will align with elements that are most important to stakeholders, such as:

- Equity for different student groups
- Minimally disruptive testing schedules
- Immediate and useful educator data that can be used to inform instruction

Because of the difficulty of designing an assessment to serve multiple purposes, the Texas Education Agency also launched the Texas Formative Assessment Resource (TFAR), an optional online tool designed to inform teaching decisions and improve instructional supports. TFAR aligns to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, is available at no cost to districts and open-enrollment charter schools and is not tied to accountability. TFAR allows educators to create formative assessments by writing or selecting items from an item bank.

DESIGN

- Through-year modular online assessment accompanied by free, optional interim assessment resources
- Results not used for accountability
- Additional optional assessment resources for formative assessment

- **STATUS**
- Bill passed in 2019
- Through-course assessment pilot funded by TFAR available starting in 21-22 school year

Resources:
– *House Bill 3906*
– *Texas Competitive Assessment Grant Application*
– *TFAR*

UTAH

In 2020, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) convened an Assessment Strategic Plan Work Group composed of key education stakeholders that made recommendations for the future of Utah's state assessment systems. Recognizing the role that accountability systems play in the process of creating a balanced assessment system, Utah launched a process in September of 2021, facilitated by the Center for Assessment and KnowledgeWorks, to explore improvements to the state's accountability system to better align with the Utah state Portrait of a Graduate, associated competency frameworks, and the Utah Personalized, Competency-Based Learning Framework.

DESIGN

- Advisory working group
- Board approved performance assessment system

STATUS

- Evaluating current system

Resources:
– *Recommendations of the Utah Assessment Strategic Plan Working Group*
– *Utah Portrait of a Graduate*
– *Utah Personalized, Competency-Based Learning Framework*

VIRGINIA

In Virginia, performance assessment measures subject-matter proficiency, requires students to apply the content and skills they have learned and should present opportunities for students to demonstrate acquisition of the "Five C's" – critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration and citizenship – described in the Board of Education's Profile of a Virginia Graduate.

The 2014 General Assembly eliminated Standards of Learning assessments in Grade 3 History, Grade 3 Science, Grade 5 Writing, United States History to 1865 and United States History: 1865 to the Present. Additionally, the Assembly's action required local school divisions to continue to teach the content and to measure student achievement with local alternative assessments, including authentic or performance assessments. School divisions must certify annually that they have provided instruction and administered an alternative assessment, consistent with Board of Education guidelines, to students in grades and subject areas that no longer have a corresponding standards of learning test.

Over the last three years, the Virginia Association for Developmental Education (VADE), along with private and higher education partners have implemented the "Virginia is for Learners" initiative, working with over 75 districts and school teams to implement changed curriculum, instruction and assessment systems.

DESIGN

- School-created performance assessments as an alternative to end of year summative assessments
- State provides guidance, support quality criteria checks

STATUS

- Standardized summative assessments eliminated in 2014 session

Resources:
– Local Assessment Page
– Quality Criteria Tool
– Virginia Profile of a Graduate*
– VADE webpage
– Commonwealth Partnership website

**Other states that have established or are currently working on developing graduate profiles:* Michigan, South Carolina, Washington State, *and* Wyoming

VERMONT

Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements are the locally-delineated set of content knowledge and skills connected to state standards that, when supplemented with any additional locally-developed requirements, have been determined to qualify a student for earning a high school diploma. Vermont's Education Quality Standards (EQS) require that schools' graduation requirements be rooted in demonstrations of student proficiency, as opposed to time spent in classrooms.

Vermont Transferable Skills Assessment Supports (VTSAS) resources cut across academic content areas and support assessment of the transferable skills articulated in Vermont's EQS. Educators use a diverse array of proficiency-based assessment tools to assess critical skills that show up across disciplines (for example, problem solving). Unlike standardized tests that measure how well students have mastered specific knowledge and skills through a series of questions, performance assessments typically require students to complete a complex task, such as a writing assignment, science experiment, speech, presentation, performance or long-term project, to demonstrate mastery of the topic. Educators worked collaboratively to develop common assessments, scoring guides, rubrics and other methods to evaluate student work. A unique feature of this work was the creation of task models that could be applied across a range of tasks (for example, a podcast task that could be used in a range of contexts). The autonomy afforded by these models was a crucial step in increasing buy-in and support from the field.

DESIGN

- Proficiency-based graduation requirements aligned to Vermont Portrait of a Graduate
- Resources, scoring guides and common tasks to support educators in implementation

Resources:
– *Vermont Graduation Requirements*
– *Vermont Transferable Skills Assessment Supports (VTSAS)*
– *Task Model for Problem Solving*
– *Vermont Portrait of a Graduate*

STATUS

- Graduation requirements have gone into effect for graduating class of 2020
- Assessment resources available statewide

WASHINGTON

Washington has developed new graduation requirements that allow students to acquire credits through local assessment opportunities, including performance assessments. The new requirements mandate that all students have at graduation, a record of their academic achievements, community-based work, work experience, etc., including how schools and districts acknowledged/provided credit. Washington is exploring developing performance assessments that can be used as part of classroom instruction that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate readiness, engage with communities, etc.

DESIGN

- Flexible graduation requirements and pathways that include a portfolio of student activities within and outside of school
- Libraries of tasks for local use
- Statewide advisory board directing development of performance assessments
- Professional learning community

STATUS

- Graduation requirements are in effect
- Task libraries, professional learning communities and other supports are in development

AUTHORS

This report was made possible by the following organizations who help education stakeholders at the federal, state and local levels design and implement personalized learning and competency-based education systems. Collectively, we are working towards a coherent vision of equitable education systems capable of supporting all children.

The Aurora Institute is a non-profit organization that seeks to transform education systems and accelerate the advancement of breakthrough policies and practices to ensure high-quality learning for all K-12 learners. Aurora is shaping the future of teaching and learning for more than 14 million students each year through its work in policy, research, and field-building convenings. We aim to build a world where all students, but especially for those who have been historically underserved, attain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to achieve long-term success, contribute to their communities and advance society.

The Center for Assessment, founded in 1998, strives to increase student learning through more meaningful educational assessment and accountability practices. We engage in deep partnerships with state and district education leaders to design, implement, and evaluate assessment and accountability policies and programs, and to design technically sound policy solutions to support important educational goals.

C!E, the Center for Innovation in Education, is a national non-profit working at the intersection of policy, practice, innovation and equity. We work with state and local partners to transform learning, assessment of learning and systems of accountability in service of expanding opportunity, voice, and belonging.

Envision Learning Partners (ELP) is a nonprofit consultant and PD provider dedicated to helping school districts engage every one of their students in a high-quality system of performance assessment. An innovative and balanced assessment system is a powerful lever for deepening learning and driving toward equitable outcomes because it focuses every layer of the district on improving the quality of student work.

The Great Schools Partnership is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit school-support organization working to redesign public education and improve learning for all students. Working at all levels of the education system, from the classroom to the statehouse, the Great Schools Partnership provides school and district coaching, professional development, and technical assistance to educators, schools, districts, organizations, and government agencies.

KnowledgeWorks is a national nonprofit organization advancing a future of learning that ensures each student graduates ready for what's next. For more than 20 years, we've been partnering with states, communities and leaders across the country to imagine, build and sustain vibrant learning communities. Through evidence-based practices and a commitment to equitable outcomes, we're creating the future of learning, together.

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