



Illinois State Board of Education

Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts



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Assessment and Accountability
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<http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm>

Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts

This document has been adapted from the **Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts** with permission from Achieve, Inc. www.achieve.org/assessmentinventory. Districts are encouraged to adapt the student assessment inventory for their local context and use. In addition, the **Assessment Inventory Facilitation Process** is an available companion document that provides a step-by-step facilitation process for districts to follow when using the assessment inventory.

District Assessment Context

Educators, parents, and students are concerned that district assessments are taking valuable time away from teaching and learning. These concerns are legitimate and merit attention. District officials have the opportunity to respond to concerns about over-assessment by leading a conversation among educators and the broader community that directly addresses the amount of assessment and points the way toward a more coherent, educationally sound approach to assessment.

The **Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts** is a tool district teams can use to take stock of their assessments and assessment strategy from a student perspective. The tool supports a process by which districts evaluate assessments students are currently taking; determine the minimum amount of assessment information necessary for essential diagnostic, instructional, and accountability purposes; and work to ensure that every district-mandated assessment is of high quality, is providing the information necessary for specific district purposes, and is supported by structures and routines that ensure assessment results are used to benefit students.

A high quality assessment contributes to the process of collecting and interpreting information that can be used to inform teachers, students, and, when applicable, parents/guardians or other district personnel of assessment information about students' progress in attaining the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to be learned or acquired in school (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 2003).

We encourage district teams who use this inventory to discuss outcomes with parents, their school board, and the community.

- What assessments have been eliminated?
- Why are the remaining assessments important?
- How will the remaining assessments be used?

The bottom line is that district assessments should provide valuable information and experiences that are not available on the state large-scale assessment or in the classroom through daily instructional activities.

Districts interested in evaluating alignment and quality of district assessments may use resources such as the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) [Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment](#) or the [Student Achievement Partners' Assessment Evaluation Tool](#) either individually or in partnership with other districts. Districts using assessments that are created by test or instructional materials publishers may choose to network with other districts using those same assessments to determine if alignment and quality evaluations have already been conducted and to work with vendors in concert to petition for improvements. It may also be helpful to utilize the Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO) [Criteria for High-Quality Assessments Aligned to College and Career Readiness](#).

Why A District Assessment Inventory?

The **Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts** will build a shared understanding of what purpose each assessment is designed to serve, point out both gaps and redundancies overall and for specific populations of students, identify lack of alignment between standards and assessments, identify low quality assessments, illuminate the resources spent on assessment, and highlight which assessments provide information that is useful to teachers and students and which assessments do not. District teams develop an appropriate assessment strategy, lead the inventory process to streamline the amount of time spent on assessing students, and work to ensure that the assessments in place are supported by structures and routines that ensure assessment results are used to benefit students.

This process requires a significant district commitment. A superintendent and/or school board must commit to the process and timeline, frame the purpose and importance of this effort for staff and district stakeholders, and support staff in prioritizing their work. While a suggested facilitation process is described below and in the **Assessment Inventory Facilitation Process**, district teams should keep the following general issues in mind:

- The inventory tool is only one element of a thoughtful, longer process that engages stakeholders in productive conversations regarding their concerns about district assessments that leads to real changes in the district's assessment strategy. The process begins with recognizing stakeholder (e.g., educators, parents, students, and community) concerns. It then uses those concerns to frame the utility of an inventory process, and continues after the process is complete by implementing the recommendations.
- The inventory tool is a suggested template, but districts are free to modify the tool to better meet their needs.

- The inventory is not a one-time event. Districts should regularly re-examine their assessments in light of changing district needs and improvements in available assessments.

Reflect and Plan

Districts teams should answer the following questions while planning their inventory. Remember to contextualize your plan within the implementation of the New Illinois Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core.

The inventory process includes five steps:

1. Reflect and Plan
2. Conduct the Inventory
3. Analyze the Inventory
4. Make Recommendations
5. Evaluate

1. What are the objectives of the student assessment inventory?
2. What would indicate to the district that the process was a success?
3. Which individuals are responsible for the success of this process? Document their specific roles and responsibilities.
4. How will the results of the inventory be communicated to district policymakers (e.g., school board), school leaders, parents, students, and the community?
5. How will the district communicate to necessary parties that these individuals will be collecting this information?
6. What is the scope of the inventory? Which assessment should be included and excluded from the inventory table? Based on this scope, what information is needed?
7. What groups should be convened or surveyed to help provide answers (e.g., groups of teachers and other assessment users)?
8. How will they be convened (e.g., in focus groups by grade level or subject) and/or surveyed?

9. What individual or entity has the authority to act on the results of the inventory? Who will be making the recommendations?

10. Are there other districts with whom it would be useful to collaborate during this process?

11. Who will collect the information needed for the inventory table? How will they access this information?

Conduct the Inventory

Two assessments frequently used in Illinois have been included in the inventory table as an example. This inventory may be used for assessments that may include federal and/or state accountability, district accountability, predictive, diagnostic, instructional uses (e.g., grouping), high school graduation, student promotion/retention, factor into course grades, college admissions, teacher evaluation, Advanced Placement credit, International Baccalaureate, English language proficiency, international comparisons, and other uses.

Inventory Table Example

Name of Individual(s) completing the table:			
Date:			
Name of assessment:	PARCC	ACT	
Entity requiring assessment state – SEA or other agency; district; or school:	ISBE	District	
Grade(s) assessed:	Grades 3-8 and students enrolled in English III, Algebra II/Integrated Math III	Grade 11 students	
Course(s) or subjects assessed:	ELA and Math	English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Writing	
Which students are eligible or required to take assessment?	All students enrolled in grades 3-8, and all students enrolled in English III, Algebra II/Integrated Math III regardless of grade level	Grade 11 students if the district opts to administer ACT	
Type of assessment summative; interim; formative; diagnostic:	Summative	College Entrance Exam	
Number of years assessment has been administered in the district:	1 year	5 years	
To which content standards is the assessment aligned? (source of alignment verification):	The New Illinois Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core	College Readiness Benchmarks	
Intended purpose(s) of the assessment:	Document student knowledge and application of state standards for ELA and	Determination of college readiness	

	Math.		
Intended use(s) of the assessment:	State and district accountability	College entrance	
Users of the assessment:	State and district assessment staff and teachers	District administrators, students, community stakeholders	
Do users of the assessment use it for its intended use(s)?	Yes	Yes	
To what degree do users of the assessment find it useful or not useful? 1 – not useful 2 – somewhat useful 3 – useful 4 – very useful Explain why.	4 – District staff find it useful for informing curricular decisions	4 – Students find the score beneficial for college entrance	
Type of administration:	Computer based	Paper based administration	
Item type(s):	Selected and constructed response	Selected response and constructed response for writing	
Accommodations:	Extensive supports for students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities are available.	Limited supports including extended time and alternative test forms (e.g., Braille, DVDs, reader, scribe, computer for essays).	
Assessment administration time:	Approximately 9 to 10 hours depending on grade level	Approximately 4 hours	
Assessment window:	March 9-April 3 April 27-May 22	March 3-17	
Assessment frequency:	Given twice (performance-based assessment and end-of-year assessment) for one score	Given once	
Time between Assessment administration and results to users:	TBD	Approximately 2 weeks	
Vendor:	Pearson, PARCC, Inc.	ACT	
Contract expiration date:	2018	2015	
Entity that holds contract:	ISBE	ISBE	
Annual cost (total and per student):	No cost to district.	No cost to district.	
Funding source(s):	ISBE	ISBE	

The **Assessment Inventory Facilitation Process** contains a blank inventory table.

Analyze the Inventory

The assessment inventory tool is intended to guide districts in looking across assessments, in addition to reviewing assessments independently, to inform their recommendations and decisions. As such, district teams should answer the following questions to analyze the inventory, inform public dialogue, and begin

to formulate recommendations.

1. The most important way to first analyze the information collected through the inventory process is to develop a student-level perspective on the assessments students are taking. One way of doing this is to look at all the assessments a student takes while they are in a particular grade level or grade band (e.g., grades K-5). The district team can then look at any additional assessments students may be taking based on particular needs and characteristics. The district should also answer these questions for other select grade levels or grade bands depending on the district's goals (e.g., to address concerns throughout K-12, or to address high school assessment).

The set of example questions asked about students may consist of the following:

- a. How many required assessments (beyond teacher-developed classroom assessments) do ALL 4th grade students (for example) typically take in a given year?
 - b. How often are ALL 4th grade students typically taking required assessments?
 - c. How many required assessments are many, but not all, 4th grade students taking in this district, based on their specific needs or characteristics?
 - d. How frequently are the students in the subcategory taking required assessments, including retakes?
 - e. Based on this analysis, are there particular grade levels, subject areas, or times in the school calendar where students are taking too many assessments?
2. A next level of analysis is to identify the assessments the district plans to continue to administer and clarify if any of these assessments need any changes to ensure they are helpful for their intended uses.
 - a. What assessments are essential to continue because of clear requirements in law or policy (and identify law/policy)? More information concerning the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) may be found in Appendix B of this document.
 - b. What assessments provide useful data for students, teachers, parents, and the system as a whole?
 - c. Which of these assessments are high quality* and aligned to the New Illinois Learning Standards?
 - d. Of the assessments identified, what might strengthen the use of assessment results for their intended uses (e.g., assessment or report quality, professional development and

school data teams, data management, assessment timing in relation to professional development cycles, or curriculum pacing)?

3. The next step is to identify assessments for possible elimination or significant modification.
 - a. Are there assessments not being used for their intended purpose?
 - b. Are there assessments users do not find useful? Of these, what might be the causes for lack of usefulness (e.g., assessment or report quality, alignment with full assessment system, professional development and school data teams, data management, assessment timing in relation to professional development cycles or curriculum pacing)?
 - c. Are there redundant assessments?
4. The last step is more detailed analysis to help districts start building toward recommendations. As districts reach this point, it will be crucial for them to re-engage with teachers, parents, students, or others who deeply informed the inventory process to review potential options and decision points. Doing so will help ensure sound recommendations and provide a solid base of support for them.
 - a. For assessments identified as necessary to continue, are there any needed changes? Identify the assessments, potential changes that need to be made, and how those changes could occur.
 - b. For assessments identified as not being used for their intended purposes, are not useful, or are redundant, analyze the potential options and considerations:
 - i. Stop administering the assessment.
 - Are there any current contracts or other operational issues of which the district team needs to be aware?
 - If an assessment of this kind is needed to comply with a law or policy, or has critical instructional uses, would the district team need to replace the assessment with another assessment? If so, what criteria would be used to select an assessment that better serves the district's needs?
 - ii. Continue administering the assessment, but make significant changes in design and/or administration.
 - What design and/or administration changes are needed?

- If the assessment was developed within the district, who needs to be involved in the redesign or restructuring process?
 - If the assessment is created by test publishers or instructional materials publishers, will the vendor be amenable to working with the district to make changes? Is networking with other districts a viable option?
- iii. Continue administering the assessment “as is” or with minor changes.
- If the district process has identified problems with this assessment, why will the district team recommend continuing “as is”? What mitigating factors are involved?
 - What evidence will teachers, parents, and district leaders need to see for assurance this process has explored all options?

Make Recommendations

Based on the analysis above, what recommendations will the district make to streamline and/or strengthen its assessment program? Use this table to document and evaluate the district’s decisions.

Evaluate

Once recommendations are made and changes implemented, districts should engage in a regular evaluation process where the assessment system is re-evaluated. Remember that the inventory is not a one-time event. Districts should regularly re-examine their assessments in light of changing district needs and improvements in available assessments.

Recommendations Table Example

Assessment	Recommendation	Rationale	Authority	Timing of Recommendation	Action Steps
PARCC	Continue using the assessment.	Replaces ELA and Math benchmark and summative assessments.	Superintendent	September	None

Resources

ISBE Resources

Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts

- www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm

Assessment Inventory Facilitation Process

- www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm

Guiding Principles for Classroom Assessment

- www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm

Additional Resources

Achieve Assessment Inventory Resources

- www.achieve.org/assessmentinventory

Student Achievement Partners' Assessment Evaluation Tool

- www.achievethecore.org/page/606/assessment-evaluation-tool-aet-list-pg

Council of Chief State School Officers' Criteria for High-Quality Assessments Aligned to College and Career Readiness

- www.ccsso.org/Documents/2013/CCSSOAssessmentQualityPrinciples10-1-13FINAL.pdf

Center for Assessment

- www.nciea.org