

# Restructuring Academic Assessments

## What to Learn from Your State's ESSA Plan

While states are required to test students in grades three through eight in reading and math, ESSA only requires states to test students at least once in high school ELA and math. For science, students must be tested at least once during each grade span (3-5; 6-9; 10-12). ESSA provides a range of assessment opportunities for LEAs, including:

- At the high school level, LEAs may opt to use “nationally recognized assessments” (e.g. ACT, SAT) in lieu of the annual state assessment, if approved by the state. Districts that use nationally recognized assessments are also required to ensure accommodations are available for students who require them.
- If a state chooses to apply for the Innovative Assessment Pilot, the state will be working with selected local districts to try alternative ways to assess student learning, such as competency-based testing.
  - LEAs may use funds to audit local assessment processes and tools to remove unnecessary exams or to improve existing tests. LEAs cannot apply for the pilot separately and should connect with the SEA to learn about eligibility.
- All LEAs are required to notify parents annually of state and local testing participation policies.<sup>3</sup>

## Guidance for School Improvement

Depending on state decisions, LEAs might work with schools and stakeholders to restructure local testing requirements. LEA leaders should be transparent about both broad and unique needs around types of assessments, testing time, and necessary data. As part of a larger strategy for school improvement, districts and/or schools may consider assessments for school leadership or personnel and use results to drive professional development opportunities (e.g. cultural competency, family and community engagement).

## Find Support for this Strategy in ESSA

TITLE I, PART A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies

TITLE II PART A: Supporting Effective Instruction

TITLE IV, PART B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

3. American Federation of Teachers. “Every Student Succeeds Act: A New Day in Public Education.” Standards and Assessments. Accessed May 1, 2017



### Assessment Participation

For accountability purposes, LEAs are required to have at least 95 percent of students from each school, as well as students in each subgroup, participate in testing. Each state determines through its state accountability system how to address those schools that do not meet this 95 percent threshold. LEAs and schools must educate communities and families about these requirements.

## Essential Stakeholders

- ✓ Families and students, particularly those that feel strongly opposed and in favor of standardized testing, and those whose children use testing accommodations, and families of students with disabilities and English learners
- ✓ Teachers and administrators across subjects and grades, including teachers of students taking alternate assessments
- ✓ Disability rights advocates
- ✓ Civil Rights organizations
- ✓ Assessment developers and administrations
- ✓ Curriculum directors and specialists, including professional development directors (e.g. Representatives from Native American Language Immersion Schools) and experts in culturally relevant curricula
- ✓ Information Technology services and internet providers

## Ask the Experts

- ✓ [Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts](#) (Achieve)
- ✓ [Developing and Measuring Higher Order Skills: Models for State Performance Assessment Systems](#) (CCSSO and the Learning Policy Institute)

### Spotlight on New Hampshire Deeper Learning Assessment

New Hampshire's Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE) is an accountability strategy that offers locally-developed common performance assessments.

