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State Summative Assessments: 2015-16 school year

Julie Rowland Woods

Because of political pressures and evolving state approaches, the assessments landscape is continually shifting. Since Education Commission of the States **first published a report** outlining where states stand in regard to summative assessments last November, at least 15 states have made significant changes to their assessment systems, either by discontinuing membership with consortia and/or choosing new vendors for some or all grades.

Current federal testing requirements are the culmination of decades of bipartisan efforts to improve American education. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, reauthorized in 2001 as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), establishes conditions that states must meet to receive federal education funds. One condition requires state education agencies to implement statewide assessments in mathematics and English-language arts in grades 3 through 8 and once in grades 10, 11 or 12. Many states, however, test math and English-language arts more than once in high school.

The federal law also requires a science assessment once in each of three grade brackets: 3-5, 6-9 and 10-12. Few states exceed these requirements, and most states test science in grades 4 or 5, 8 and a high school end-of-course assessment in biology.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Six states and Washington, D.C., plan to administer the full Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment in 2015-16.

Fifteen states remain members of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortia, and all but one plan to administer the full assessment in grades 3-8 math and English-language arts.

At least 25 states will administer a state-specific assessment in grades 3-8 math and English-language arts.

States typically meet the grades 3 to 8 math and English-language arts requirements through grade-level assessments, such as grade 4 mathematics or grade 6 English-language arts. High school assessments are often aligned with a specific course, such as algebra or literature. These are known as end-of-course (EOC) or end-of-instruction assessments and may also be used as exit exams that students must pass to graduate high school.

In addition to these federal conditions, many states and districts require assessments for other purposes. About half of states mandate the statewide administration of a social studies assessment, such as U.S. history, and an additional college and career readiness assessment used for college admissions, such as the ACT or SAT, which is typically taken in 11th grade. States or districts may also require additional interim or formative assessments to help guide instruction and check in on student learning throughout the semester.

To aid in keeping track of the ever-shifting assessment landscape, the name of assessment vendors and state-specific assessments are included in the chart where possible. However, for ease of viewing, a number of nuances, such as retest policies and the availability of voluntary college entrance exams, are not included.¹

The 50-state comparison chart below provides an updated high-level look at how states are meeting minimum assessment requirements.

**Because of the continually changing nature of the state assessments landscape, this information is up-to-date as of Oct. 23, 2015.*

STATE	Consortia	Grades 3-8 Math & ELA	Grades 9-11 Math & ELA	Science Grades	Social Studies Grades	Other College & Career Readiness Exams ²
Alabama	None	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire (10)	5 & 7 (ACT Aspire)		ACT Plus Writing (11)
Alaska	None	Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) ³	Alaska Measures of Progress (9 & 10)	4, 8, & 10		Choice of ACT, SAT, or ACT WorkKeys (11)
Arizona	None	AZMerit (AIR)	EOCs: ELA (9-11) & Alg. I, Geom., Alg. II (AIR)	4, 8, high school	U.S. citizenship test ⁴	
Arkansas	None (PARCC alum)	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire (9 & 10)	3- 10 (ACT Aspire)		ACT (11)
California	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (11)	5, 8, 10 (CA Standards Test ⁵)		CAHSEE (10) ⁶
Colorado	PARCC	PARCC	PARCC (9); grades 10 & 11 undecided	5, 8, & high school (grade TBD – not 12)	4, 7, & high school (grade TBD – not 12) ⁷	RFP out
Connecticut	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	SAT (11)	5, 8, & 10		
Delaware	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (11) & EOC: Alg. II or Int. Math II	5, 8, & 10	4, 7, & high school U.S. history	PSAT (10), SAT (11)
District of Columbia	PARCC	PARCC	PARCC ⁸	5, 8, high school biology (aligned with NGSS)		
Florida	None	Florida Standard Assessments (AIR)	Florida Standard Assessments (AIR) – ELA in 9 & 10 & EOCs: Alg. 1 & 2, Geometry	5, 8, & high school biology (Pearson)	U.S. history, civics (Pearson)	

STATE	Consortia	Grades 3-8 Math & ELA	Grades 9-11 Math & ELA	Science Grades	Social Studies Grades	Other College & Career Readiness Exams ²
Georgia	None	Georgia Milestones Assessment System (DRC) ⁹	EOCs: Math & ELA ¹⁰ (DRC)	3-8 & high school physical science ¹¹ & biology	3-8 & U.S. history & economics	
Hawaii	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (11) + Alg. 1 & 2 EOC	4, 8, & high school biology	U.S. history	ACT Aspire (8), ¹² ACT (11)
Idaho	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (9 & 10)	5, 7, & high school biology or chemistry	5 U.S. Citizenship test ¹³	SAT, ACT, or Compass
Illinois	PARCC	PARCC	PARCC	4, 8, & 10 (aligned with NGSS)		RFP out
Indiana	None	ISTEP+ (Pearson)	ISTEP+ (10)	4, 6, & high school biology	5 & 7	
Iowa	None (SB affiliate)	Iowa Assessments	Iowa Assessments (10 & 11) ¹⁴	5, 8, & 11		
Kansas	None	Kansas Assessment Program (Achievement and Assessment Institute at University of Kansas)	Kansas Assessment Program (10)	5, 8, & 11	6, 8, & 11	
Kentucky	None	K-PREP (Pearson) – writing in 5, 6 & 8; reading in 3-8	K-PREP On-Demand Writing (10 & 11) & ELA & Math (ACT QualityCore)	4, 7, & high school biology	5, 8, & high school U.S. history	ACT (11)
Louisiana	None (PARCC alum)	LEAP/iLEAP (RFP out) ¹⁵	EOCs: Alg. & Geometry, Eng. II & III	3-8 ¹⁶ & high school biology	3-8 ¹⁷ & U.S. history ¹⁸	ACT (11)
Maine	None	RFP out	RFP out	5, 8, & 11		
Maryland	PARCC	PARCC	PARCC (9-12)	5, 8, & high school biology	High school government	
Massachusetts	PARCC	TBD ¹⁹	MCAS (10); TBD (9 & 11)	5, 8, & one of four science EOCs		
Michigan	Smarter Balanced	M-STEP (combination of Smarter Balanced & state)	PSAT (9 & 10)	4, 7, & 11	5, 8, & 11	SAT & ACT WorkKeys (11)
Minnesota	None	Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (Pearson)	Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments – reading (10) & math (11) (Pearson)	5, 8, high school		
Mississippi	None (PARCC alum)	Mississippi Assessment Program (Questar)	EOC: Alg. I & Eng. II (Questar)	5, 8, & high school biology	U.S. history	ACT (11)

STATE	Consortia	Grades 3-8 Math & ELA	Grades 9-11 Math & ELA	Science Grades	Social Studies Grades	Other College & Career Readiness Exams ²
Missouri	None	Missouri Assessment Program (DRC)	EOC: Alg. I & II, Eng. I & II (Questar)	5, 8, & high school biology	High school government	ACT (11)
Montana	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (11)	4, 8, & 10		ACT Plus Writing (11)
Nebraska	None	NeSA – reading & math in 3-8 + writing in 4 & 8 (DRC)	NeSA (11) ²⁰ reading, writing, & math (DRC)	5, 8, & 10		
Nevada	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (CTB/McGraw-Hill)	EOCs: ELA I & II, Math I & II (CTB/McGraw-Hill)	5, 8, & 10 ²¹		ACT Plus Writing (11)
New Hampshire	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced ²²	SAT (11)	4, 8, & 11 (Measured Progress)		
New Jersey	PARCC	PARCC	PARCC	4, 8, & high school biology		
New Mexico	PARCC	PARCC	PARCC	4, 7, & high school	EOCs ²³	
New York	None (PARCC alum)	New York State Testing Program (Pearson ²⁴)	EOCs (Common Core Regents Exams)	4, 8, & high school EOC	Global History & U.S. History	
North Carolina	None (SB affiliate)	NC End-of-Grade Tests	EOCs: English II & Math I	5, 8, & high school biology		ACT Plan, ²⁵ ACT (11)
North Dakota	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (11)	4, 8, & 11	U.S. citizenship test ²⁶	ACT or ACT WorkKeys (11)
Ohio	None (PARCC alum)	State (AIR)	State (AIR) ²⁷	5, 8, & high school	4, 6, & high school	
Oklahoma	None	Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests + writing (5, 8) (Measured Progress)	EOCs: Eng. II & III, Alg. I & II, Geometry (Measured Progress)	5, 8, & high school biology	5, 7 (geography), 8, & high school U.S. history	
Oregon	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (11)	5, 8, & 11	5, 8, & 11	PSAT (10)
Pennsylvania	Both ²⁸	Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (DRC)	EOCs: Algebra I & Literature (DRC)	4, 8, & high school biology		
Rhode Island	PARCC	PARCC	PARCC – ELA (9 & 10) + EOCs: Algebra I & Geometry	4, 8, & 11		
South Carolina	None	RFP out	RFP out – Alg. I & Eng. I	4-8 (SCPASS), high school biology	4-8 (SCPASS), U.S. history + U.S. citizenship test	ACT WorkKeys (11)

STATE	Consortia	Grades 3-8 Math & ELA	Grades 9-11 Math & ELA	Science Grades	Social Studies Grades	Other College & Career Readiness Exams ²
South Dakota	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (11)	5, 8, & 11		
Tennessee	None	TNReady (Measurement Inc.)	EOCs: Eng. I, II, & III, Alg. I & 2	3-8, high school biology & chemistry	3-8 & U.S. history ²⁹	ACT Explore (8 or 9), Plan (10), ACT (11)
Texas	None	STAAR (incl. writing in 4 & 7) (ETS)	EOCs: Eng. I & II, Alg. I (ETS)	5, 8, & biology	8 & U.S. history	
Utah	None	Student Assessment of Growth & Excellence (AIR)	Student Assessment of Growth & Excellence (9-11) (AIR)	4-11 (incl. Earth systems, biology, physics, chemistry)	U.S. citizenship test ³⁰	ACT Explore (8 or 9), ACT Plan (10), ³¹ ACT (11)
Vermont	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (11)	4, 8, & 11		
Virginia	None	Virginia Standards of Learning – math & reading in 3-8; writing in 8 (Pearson)	EOC: Alg. I & II, Geometry, Eng. 10 (writing EOC) & 11 (reading EOC) (Pearson)	5, 8, & high school earth science, biology, or chemistry ³²	VA studies (4 or 5); civics & econ. (7 or 8); US & VA history; world history and/or world geography	
Washington	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (11) + EOCs: Math ³³	5, 8, & high school biology		
West Virginia	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced	Smarter Balanced (9-11)	4, 6, & 10		
Wisconsin	None	Wisconsin Forward Exam (DRC)	ACT Aspire (9 & 10)	4, 8, & 10	4, 8, & 10 ³⁴	ACT Plus Writing & WorkKeys (11)
Wyoming	None (SB affiliate)	Proficiency Assessment for Wyoming Students (PAWS) (ETS)	ACT Aspire (9 & 10)	4 & 8		ACT Plus Writing (11)

ENDNOTES

- 1 Grades in which students may retest and all available end-of-course exams are not included. Although some states see close to full participation in optional college entrance or college and career readiness exams, such as the ACT or SAT, only those exams that are mandatory statewide for all students are listed. Additionally, federal law requires all states to participate in the NAEP in reading and mathematics in grades 4 and 8 and to provide alternative assessments for special populations and students with cognitive disabilities. How states are addressing these additional requirements are not indicated in this document.
- 2 Mandatory statewide for all students — does not include states that offer an exam but taking it is optional.
- 3 From the Department website: “Alaska has chosen the Achievement and Assessment Institute (AAI) at the University of Kansas to develop a custom assessment that measures the Alaska English Language Arts & Mathematics Standards adopted in 2012.”
- 4 Students must correctly answer 60 out of the 100 questions as a high school graduation requirement.
- 5 California anticipates transition to a NGSS-aligned test in the future.
- 6 SB172, signed into law in October 2015, suspends the CAHSEE and eliminates it as a graduation requirement through 2018. Administration of the exam was canceled this year but graduating students were given a reprieve. All other end-of-course exams have been eliminated unless specifically mandated by ESEA.
- 7 The social studies assessments at all three grade levels will be administered on a sampling basis with schools participating once every three years.
- 8 Geometry or Integrated Math II and English 10 required, all other PARCC High School EOCs optional.
- 9 Data Recognition Corp. (DRC) recently acquired key assets of the CTB assessment business of McGraw-Hill Education.
- 10 Algebra I or coordinate algebra, geometry or analytic geometry, literature and composition (grade 9), American literature and composition.
- 11 Physical science or physics.
- 12 Under review.
- 13 Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, all Idaho high school students will be required to take the U.S. citizenship test.
- 14 9th grade ELA & math assessments will be required in 2016-17.
- 15 Recent legislation permits no more than 49.9% of questions to be based on consortia-developed assessments, including PARCC.
- 16 Louisiana will field test new science assessments in 2016-17.
- 17 Social studies assessments in grades 3-8 will be field tests only in 2015-2016 to be used operationally in 2016-2017.
- 18 Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, all students enrolled in a required civics course must take the U.S. citizenship test.
- 19 The Massachusetts board of education is set to vote in November on the assessment selection. The commissioner has recommended blending PARCC and state-specific items rather than choosing between PARCC or the previous state assessment.
- 20 This assessment will be college and career ready in English-language arts in 2017 and in math in 2018.
- 21 Grade 10 science assessment will be replaced by a science end-of-course in 2016-17.
- 22 New Hampshire received approval from the U.S. Department of Education to pilot performance-based exams in some grades and subjects in pilot districts for two years.
- 23 New Mexico offers 63 end-of-course exams, including social studies exams in grades 6-8 and high school.
- 24 New York is switching from Pearson to Questar in 2017.
- 25 North Carolina will administer the ACT Plan for the last time in the 2015-16 school year.
- 26 Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, North Dakota students must earn a passing grade on the U.S. citizenship test.
- 27 Classes of 2016 and 2017 will still take Ohio Graduation Tests. Classes of 2018 and 2019 will need to earn a total of 18 points on seven end-of-course tests: English I & II, Algebra I, Geometry/Integrated Math, Biology or Physical Science, U.S. history, U.S. government.
- 28 While Pennsylvania reports participation in both consortia, neither consortium’s website lists the state as a member.
- 29 HB10 requires high school students graduating after January 1, 2016 to take a U.S. citizenship test. Local education agencies must prepare a 25-50 question test from the citizenship test and to allow students to take the test as many times as is necessary to pass the test with at least 70 percent of the answers correct.

- 30 SB60 requires a student who graduates on or after January 1, 2016, to pass a basic civics test (50 of the 100 U.S. citizenship test questions) as a condition for receiving a high school diploma.
- 31 While the ACT Explore and Plan are in the process of being discontinued, Utah will use these assessments for the 2015-16 school year.
- 32 Students must take two of the four science courses to graduate high school.
- 33 “Math EOCs are based on the Washington State Learning Standards in math, and are available in algebra 1/integrated math 1 and geometry/integrated math 2. They are designed using items from the Smarter Balanced math test. These tests can be used to fulfill assessment graduation requirements through the Class of 2018.”
- 34 Beginning in the 2016–17 school year, high school students must take the U.S. citizenship test as a graduation requirement.

RELATED ECS RESOURCES

Related Resources: [50 Ways to Test: A look at state summative assessments in 2014-15](#)

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