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|  | **District Assessment System Design Toolkit**  *User Guide* |
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**Developed By**

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# Version History

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Version | Notes |
| 06-29-2018 | 0.9 (beta) | Released at the CCSSO 2018 National Conference on Student Assessment. |

# Conventions

The following conventions are consistent across all Toolkit documents:

* Black italic san serif text indicates a document or folder in the Toolkit.
* Black plain san serif text indicates a section or object within a Toolkit document.
* Violet italic san serif text indicates a team of individuals.
* Red italic san serif text indicates a role of an individual.
* Yellow highlight indicates text to be customized for the specific district project.

Other types of formatting (**bold**, *italic*) are used as they are normally used.

# Acknowledgments

This section identifies teams and roles, which are described in detail on pages 3-6. This Toolkitarose from several projects carried out by the first author from 2008 to 2018. In the spring of 2017, three Michigan school districts participated in a full-scale pilot of the Toolkit with the number of participants ranging from 15 to 25. The following organizations gave considerable support to the pilot:

* Bloomfield Hills Schools (MI) Supported a Design Team.
* Dearborn Public Schools (MI) Supported a Design Team.
* Novi Public Schools (MI) Supported a Design Team.
* Oakland Schools Provided meeting space and External Facilitators for Bloomfield and Novi.
* Wayne RESA Provided an External Facilitator for Dearborn.
* Michigan Assessment Consortium Provided logistical support and funding for workshops. Coordinated the work of the Facilitation Team. Funded an independent review.
* Center for Assessment Funded the Lead Facilitator.

In addition, the following individuals contributed significantly to the pilot and ultimate shape of the Toolkit:

* Wendy Osterman District Liaison from Bloomfield Hills Schools.
* Daniel Patterson District Liaison for Dearborn Public Schools.
* Jeffrey Dinkelmann District Liaison for Novi Public Schools.
* Jonathan Flukes External Facilitator for Bloomfield Hills Schools. Developed and reviewed documents.
* Ellen Vorenkamp External Facilitator for Dearborn Public Schools. Developed and reviewed documents.
* Steven Snead External Facilitator for Novi Public Schools. Developed and reviewed documents.
* Kathy-Dewsbury White Coordinated the work of the Facilitation Team. Developed and reviewed documents.
* Jason O’Donnell Served as Meeting Coordinator.
* Karrie LaFave Served as Meeting Coordinator.
* Ed Roeber Served as Independent Evaluator.
* Joseph Martineau Served as Lead Facilitator. Developed most documents.

# Orientation to the DASD Toolkit[[1]](#footnote-1)

## Why the Work Matters

District Assessment System Design (DASD) is not an easy task because there are many stakeholders with potentially conflicting needs that must be satisfied with a district’s assessment system. The Toolkit provides materials for a skilled facilitator (who is also an expert in assessment) to guide a district through a principled design process in three workshops. It is built to facilitate the process of evaluating an existing district assessment system and to either revise or replace the existing system.

The reason that the Toolkit may play an important role is that designing a new district assessment system or revising an existing district assessment system so that it fulfills the needs of various stakeholders is very hard work. The way the process is carried out can mean the difference between designing s system that adequately attends to all stakeholder needs and one that meets the needs of a select few. It can be the difference between a house and a pile of bricks[[2]](#footnote-2).

## Some Key Questions

Do you have a coherent and effective district and school assessment system to complements and enhances instruction? Does it serve student, teacher, administrator, and policymaker needs, and with good balance?

Was the system designed so that teachers, principals, and administrators share power in service of providing students the best possible education? Or does the collection of tests feel more like a collection of bricks than a well-designed house?

Does each test have a clear and appropriate purpose? Are these purposes clearly understood? Agreed to by all parties? Are current uses appropriate to the test purposes? Is it clear what uses are appropriate, and which are not for data from each test? Does it feel like some tests will crumble under the weight of use?

Are some tests given by tradition without a clear understanding of why? Do you experience “system creep,” with new tests added but old ones rarely dropped? Are test data actually used when they become available? Are tests used for new purposes without explicit attention to whether the new uses are appropriate?

Are the tests (taken as a set) coherent, or do tests prescribed by the state, district, school, or the classroom teacher conflict with each other in timing, content standards, or results? Does it feel like, overall, testing disrupts rather than facilitates instruction?

If at least some of this sounds familiar, you are decidedly not alone. You can improve your situation by intentionally and thoughtfully designing an assessment system. But designing, implementing, and maintaining a coherent district and school assessment system is challenging work. It requires the will to work together across all levels in the district.

It requires time for a team of district and school representatives to intentionally consider their most important instructional and assessment purposes, and to design a system that supports those purposes. Maintaining a system over time requires clear policies that refer back to the purposes of the assessment system, and periodically, the time and effort to keep the system coherent and useful. This is needed to ensure that the design of the assessment system evolves intentionally to meet changing needs, without continuing to hold on to components that are no longer useful or necessary.

It is not easy work. But it is important. The reason it is important is that when there is a sound assessment system in place, students get information they need to improve their own learning, classroom educators get the information they need to monitor and respond to student learning long before learning is evaluated, school leaders get the information they need to focus their resources, and the district office gets the information it needs to evaluate and improve district programs and resource targeting.

## What the Toolkit Is and Is Not

The Toolkit is intended to provide a structure for a team of district and school personnel to have the difficult conversations, in a principled manner, that are necessary to design a district assessment system. It walks a Design Team through the process over a set of meetings and provides the district with design documents.

The Toolkit materials stop at the completion of the design process. While it does provide some documents that can help the district plan implementation, implementation is another process that requires additional effort, from selecting or designing assessments to meet each need identified in the design process to providing professional learning opportunities and other support to various stakeholders in the system (e.g., district leaders, district central office staff, school leaders, and teachers).

## Issues the DASD Toolkit is Designed to Address

Several issues that must be addressed in designing a coherent and useful district assessment system. Based on conversations among some of the author team, some key issues are identified in Table 1 below. The Toolkit is intended to address those issues.

Table 1. Addressing challenges and needs in the toolkit.

| Challenge | Associated Need | How the Need is Addressed in the Toolkit |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Limited Utility | Address conflicting needs within a single system | By including all key district stakeholder roles in the process. |
| Poor Assessment  Literacy | Basic assessment literacy | By developing a shared, consistent, and coherent assessment vocabulary necessary for designing a district assessment system. |
| Poor Assessment Use Literacy | Basic assessment use literacy | By developing shared, consistent, and comprehensive, shared, coherent vocabulary around assessment purposes and uses, and identifying the types and characteristics of assessment(s) appropriate for each use/purpose. |
| Parsimony | A system that minimizes duplication (and thus the amount time devoted to formal test taking) | By using a disciplined process to identify a prioritized set of uses and purposes. This is followed by (for each purpose/use) the smallest set of assessments that can adequately fulfill those needs. This may be reflected in tweaks to, considerable modification of, or wholesale replacement of an existing system. |
| Incoherence | A system in which various components form a coherent whole to create a comprehensive and balanced set of information about each student’s achievement | By attending to coherence throughout the disciplined design process. |
| Power Boundaries | A system in which educators share power and collaborate across all levels in the system (from the classroom to the district superintendent and school board) | By attending to power sharing and power differentials through the disciplined design process. |
| Implementation  and Maintenance  of an Assessment  System | A plan for implementing the system that attends to potential hurdles and protects against *ad hoc* modifications to the system | By using a disciplined process that identifies anticipated hurdles from all stakeholders’ perspectives. This includes near-term barriers to implementation and a plan for addressing them. It also provides a strong set of design documents that can serve as a foundation for ongoing evaluation of the sufficiency of the system and for evaluating (1) whether existing assessments should be continued as is, (2) whether and how they may need to be modified, and (3) whether and how any new proposed assessments would fit into the overall system. |

## What A District Invests

The DASD Toolkit is not a “silver bullet.” It requires commitment from district leadership to invest in, support, and follow up on the work of a small Facilitation Team and a larger Design Team. The investment comes in the following forms:

* Procuring the services of an External Facilitator who is also a measurement expert.
* Materials, food, and facilities to host three six-hour design workshops.
* Time for the members of the Facilitation Team to prepare for and conduct the three workshops and to follow up on homework assigned in advance of each workshop.
* Time for all members of the Design Team to do pre-workshop homework and attend each of the three workshops.

## What a District Gets in Return for its Investment

Upon conclusion, the External Facilitator and District Liaison will deliver to the Project Champion a package containing the following:

* A summary of the existing assessments used in the district
* A document describing the Design Team’s proposed district assessment system design
* A report describing how the team created the final design
* A document describing potential barriers to implementation with associated strategies to address them.

These deliverables will both document why the system was set up the way it was and serve as a baseline for returning to as the system evolves. Returning to this new baseline can help the district ensure that the evolution continues to be intentional, coherent, and balances the needs of various stakeholders.

This investment will give the district a strong baseline from which to begin the real work: implementation. To assist with implementation, the district may desire additional follow-up meetings with the External Facilitator to review progress in implementing and improving the system. The External Facilitator may be able to provide expertise on difficult issues and an independent viewpoint not constrained by living within existing district systems.

## Who Serves on the Facilitation Team and the Design Team?

As noted above, there is a small Facilitation Team and a larger Design Team.

### Members of the Facilitation Team

There are four key project leadership roles necessary to make the district assessment system design process successful. They are:

* Project Champion
* District Liaison
* External Facilitator
* Meeting Coordinator

#### Project Champion

This person authorizes the work and supports the project by coordinating with the External Facilitator and District Liaison to develop a project mission, attending the first hour of workshop 1 to charge the Design Team with fulfilling its part of the mission, meeting briefly with the District Liaison and External Facilitator for a progress report after each workshop, supporting and encouraging the work of the Facilitation Team and Design Team, and attending the last hour of workshop 3 to receive an oral report from the Design Team.

This person should be a member of senior district leadership (e.g., District Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent) or have the authority to speak for senior district leadership regarding the work of designing a district assessment system. She should also have a fully understanding of the resources necessary for a successful outcome and be committed to expending those resources. She should be willing to spend the necessary time with the District Liaison to identify and recruit an External Facilitator, a Meeting Coordinator, and members of the Design Team. Finally, she should be willing to spend the time to attend the first hour of the first workshop, and attend the last hour of the third workshop, and receive brief progress reports after each workshop.

#### District Liaison

This person holds the key district role in the success of the project. She works closely with the Project Champion to identify and procure the services of an External Facilitator, identify and assign a Meeting Coordinator, identify and recruit potential members of the Design Team, brief the Project Champion on progress with the External Facilitator after each workshop, and advocate with the Project Champion for needed support and/or resources.

This person also works closely with the External Facilitator by serving as the facilitator’s point of contact; sharing information about the district’s structure, culture, and context; assisting in planning and preparing for each workshop, supporting the External Facilitator by watching for and communicating issues as they arise during the workshops, and synthesizing homework of the Design Team and providing it to the External Facilitator in a timely manner so that they can be incorporated into the next workshop’s materials.

This person also works closely with the Meeting Coordinator by inviting her to participate in workshop planning meetings and reviewing meeting logistics as identified by the coordinator.

Finally, this person coordinates the work of the Design Team by serving as a fully-participating member of the team, listening for team members’ concerns and either resolving them or bringing them to the attention of the External Facilitator, and identifying whether there is an opportunity and/or need for participants to receive professional development credit for participation (and if so, ensuring that the proper structure is in place). She also distributes pre-workshop materials in a timely manner, communicate expectations for homework to be completed in advance of workshops, monitoring and coordinating completion of homework in advance of workshops, and providing completed and synthesized homework to the External Facilitator sufficiently in advance of workshops to be incorporated into workshop materials.

This person also needs to have the trust of the Project Champion, have the trust of the Design Team members; have a very strong understanding of the differing needs of teachers, school leaders, district central office staff, and district leadership; and be a district employee that is the closest to having the attributes an External Facilitator needs.

#### External Facilitator

This person is responsible for leading the work of the Facilitation Team by leading planning meetings with the District Liaison and Meeting Coordinator, advising the District Liaison as needed, and incorporating completed homework assignments from workshops 1 and 2 into workshop 2 and 3 materials. She is also responsible for facilitating the three workshops and completing and delivering project deliverables along the way and at the end of the project.

She also needs strong facilitation skills, specifically in the areas of eliciting full participation from quiet or introverted members of the Design Team, helping members to identify common ground with priorities appear to be in conflict, and ceding the floor when the team’s work is on target and timely. She also needs the ability to understand and navigate difficult policy issues in K-12 education and to understand the different needs of teachers, school leaders, district central office staff, and district leadership.

She also needs professional expertise in assessment *FOR* learning (*formative* assessment); assessment *OF* learning (*interim* and *summative* assessment); and assessment at the classroom, school/district, state, and national levels.

Finally, it is important to use an *external* facilitator for two reasons. First and foremost, if there is a district employee who fits this description, their knowledge and abilities is too important as a fully participating member of the Design Team or as the District Liaison on the Facilitation Team. Second, it is important to have an independent, external perspective to identify and work around potential blind spots.

#### Meeting Coordinator

This person is responsible for attending planning meetings to track any logistical needs, such as meeting rooms, tables, meals, snacks, beverages, ensure that information technology needs are met (e.g., screen projection and internet access), and printing and packaging workshop participant packets. She is also responsible for coordinating and monitoring the logistics needed for participants to earn professional development credits (if applicable) and for reimbursements, if applicable.

#### Transferring Leadership from the External Facilitator to the District Liaison

Two of the External Facilitator’s roles are to be the measurement expert and to allow the District Liaison to fully participate and contribute his or her expertise in the workshops. However, it is important that when the design work is completed, the district have a person that can facilitate continuing work.

The intent is that in the first workshop, the District Liaison will be fully engaged as a participant among peers, as a backup to the External Facilitator in the second workshop, and as the primary facilitator in the third workshop (supported by the External Facilitator). Even so, it may be that in the subsequent work of implementing the district assessment system design, the district will benefit from additional help from the External Facilitator in a consulting role.

### Members of the Design Team

It is important that various roles within the district be represented on a broad team of participants beyond the Facilitation Team. This is necessary for two reasons: (1) to ensure that the work addresses the needs of various roles within the district and (2) to allow for the team to discuss and negotiate varying needs in the design process.

#### District Representatives

A potential list of district representatives is provided below, with the caveat that not every role is available in every district or that it may not be feasible for some district central office roles to be represented.

* Superintendent or designee
* School board member
* Assessment director
* Curriculum director
* Title I director
* English learner director
* Special education director
* Education technology director
* Instructional coach

#### School Leadership Representatives

School leadership representatives should include leaders from all levels in the district (e.g., elementary, middle, and high school). The External Facilitator will work with the District Liaison to ensure that the work of the teams maintains both (1) coherence across grade levels, and (2) flexibility for appropriate differences across levels. A potential list of school leadership representatives is provided below, with the caveat that not every role may be available.

* Principal
* Assistant principal
* School counselor
* Instructional coach
* Department head
* Teacher leader

#### Classroom Teacher Representatives

Classroom representatives should include teachers from all levels in the district (e.g., elementary, middle, and high school). A potential list of classroom representative is provided below, with the caveat that not every role may be available.

* Grade level teachers
* Subject area teachers
* Title I teacher
* English learner teacher
* Special education teacher

#### Parent Representatives

It may be appropriate to select a small number of reasonably knowledgeable parents to participate on the Design Team.

# Preparing for the Project

## Selecting a Facilitation Team

The first task that must be completed is determining whether there is a viable Project Champion. Without a district policymaker with authority to issue a charge to the Design Team and to champion their work, it is doubtful that the project can be successful. The second task is identifying a qualified and enthusiastic District Liaison. Without a district employee who is willing and able to lead the project from within the district, it is also doubtful that the project can be successful.

The third task is identifying a qualified External Facilitator who has the necessary professional knowledge of assessment and has the necessary facilitation skills. It is important that this person be able to speak with authority on issues of assessment at the classroom, district, state, and national levels. This is true not only because s/he needs project expertise to guide the Design Team, but also needs to be able to quickly diagnose when the work is getting off track or going in an unfruitful direction. Finally, a person with a track record of successfully coordinating meetings needs to be selected as the Meeting Coordinator.

## Selecting Design Team Members

It is important to have enough Design Team members to adequately represent the needs of all affected roles in the district central office, school leadership, and classroom teachers. At the same time, it is important to have a team that is small enough to come to consensus over the period of three workshops. The Project Champion and the District Liaison will need to balance these needs to identify and recruit Design Team members.

## Becoming Familiar with the Toolkit

The Toolkit is a collection of electronic files and folders consisting of Adobe® Acrobat documents (.pdf) and Microsoft® Word (.docx), Excel (.xlsx), and PowerPoint (.pptx) documents as follows:

DASD Toolkit User Guide.docx This document

DASD Toolkit Introduction.docx A introduction document for potentially interested districts

Project Workbook A folder with three versions of a Project Workbook

Project Workbook.xlxs A blank (template) workbook to be completed during the project

Project Workbook Exemplar.xlxs A locked down, completed workbook

Project Workbook Sandbox.xlxs An unlocked version of the exemplar workbook

Final Project Reports A folder with three versions of a Final Project Report

Final Project Report.docx A blank (template) final report to be completed during project

Final Project Report Exemplar.docx A locked down, completed project report

Final Project Report Sandbox.docx An unlocked version of the exemplar

Workshop 1 Materials A folder of materials needed for Workshop #1

Facilitation Team Packet A folder of materials for the Facilitation Team

WS 1 Annotated Agenda.docx A detailed agenda

WS 1 Slide Deck.pptx A slide deck

WS 1 Vocabulary Activity.docx A set of materials for engaging with the vocabulary

WS 1 Purposes Activity.docx A set of materials for engaging with the purposes of assessment

WS 1 Reflection Summary.docx A template for summarizing the end-of-workshop reflections

WS 1 Planning Notes.docx A template for saving any notes from workshop planning

WS 1 Workshop Notes.docx A template for saving any notes from the workshop itself

Design Team Packet A folder of materials to be included in a packet for Workshop #1

WS 1 Participant Agenda.docx A basic agenda for the workshop

WS 1 Facilitation Team Bios.docx Bios for the Facilitation Team

WS 1 End-of-Workshop Reflection.docx A reflection form providing feedback on Workshop #1

WS 1 Proposed Group Norms.docx A set of norms to be discussed and finalized

WS 1 Advance Look at WS 2 A description of design work that will be done in Workshop #2

WS 1 Purposes of Assessment A document describing the various purposes of assessment

Advance Readings A folder of documents to be read in advance of Workshop #1

1 - Orientation to the Project.docx

2 - Key Vocabulary.docx

3 - Primer on Types of Assessment.docx

4 - Primer on Formative Assessment.docx

5 - Learning Point on Formative Assessment.pdf

6 - Primer on Purposes of Assessment.docx

Workshop 2 Materials A folder of materials needed for Workshop #2

Facilitation Team Packet A folder of material for the Facilitation Team

WS 2 Annotated Agenda.docx A detailed agenda to be customized

WS 2 Slide Deck.pptx A slide deck to be customized

WS 2 Reflection Summary.docx A template for summarizing the end-of-workshop reflections

WS 2 Planning Notes.docx A template for saving any workshop planning notes

WS 2 Workshop Notes.docx A template for saving any notes taken during the workshop

Design Team Packet A folder of materials to include in a packet for Workshop #2

WS 2 Participant Agenda.docx A simple agenda to be customized

WS 2 End-of-Workshop Reflection.docx A reflection form providing feedback on Workshop #2

Workshop 3 Materials A folder of materials needed for Workshop #3

Facilitation Team Packet A folder of materials needed for the Facilitation Team

WS 3 Annotated Agenda.docx A detailed agenda to be customized

WS 3 Slide Deck.pptx A slide deck to be customized

WS 3 Reflection Summary.docx A template for summarizing the end-of-workshop reflections

WS 3 Planning Notes.docx A template for saving any workshop planning notes

WS 3 Workshop Notes.docx A template for saving any notes from the workshop itself

Preliminary Report A folder of 3 versions of a Microsoft® Word preliminary report

Preliminary Report Exemplar.docx An exemplar final project report

Preliminary Report.docx A final project report to be filled out

System Design Schematics A folder of Microsoft® PowerPoint presentations containing district assessment system design schematics that can be useful in explaining how the system works and why it is important to be thoughtful about changing it

Schematic Exemplar.pptx A completed district assessment system design schematic

Schematic Sandbox.pptx An unlocked version of the exemplar

Schematic Object Templates.pptx A PowerPoint presentation containing templates for each potential type of object included in a district assessment system design schematic.

Design Team Packet A folder of materials to include in a packet for Workshop #3

WS 3 Participant Agenda.docx A simple agenda to be customized

WS 3 End of Workshop Reflection.docx A reflection form providing feedback on Workshop 3

As a first step in preparing for the project, the External Facilitator should become intimately familiar with this DASD Toolkit User Guide, the contents of the Project Workbooks folder, and the contents of the Project Reports folder, in that order. The External Facilitator should carefully review the Project Workbook Exemplar document and experiment with the Project Workbook Sandbox document to understand how the Project Workbook document functions. Similarly, the External Facilitator should review the Project Report Exemplar document together with the Project Report document to see what parts of the report she will be responsible for completing. In addition, it would also be helpful to review the Project Report Exemplar document together with the Project Workbook Exemplar document to see how the contents of the project workbook are incorporated into the project report. The Project Workbook Sandbox document is provided in case the results of the project are sufficiently similar to the exemplar project that the Sandbox document could serve as a useful starting point.

## Selecting a Design Team

If possible, it is important to identify *potential* members, and recruit them to participate on the team. It may be important to allow potential members who are recruited to decline so that *all* members of the team are interested in and committed to doing the work. If possible, the Design Team should not be selected until the Facilitation Team is fully identified. This is so that the External Facilitator can be available to consult with the District Liaison and Project Champion as needed when selecting the team. It is important for the Project Champion to be included in identifying and recruiting potential members of the Design Team for two reasons: (1) to let potential members know that their participation is sanctioned and supported by district leadership, and (2) to ensure that selected membership does not somehow conflict with district policies, priorities, or other activities. It may be helpful to recruit district central office representatives first and request their assistance in recruiting school leadership representatives and teacher representatives.

# Workshop 1

Workshop 1 is intended to address a considerable challenge noted in Table 1: a need for improved basic assessment literacy. The vocabulary of assessment is fractured, with the same term having different meanings and different terms having the same meanings, both for typical educators and experts in assessment. Having a shared, consistent, and coherent set of assessment vocabulary can be helpful in the following ways:

* Avoiding misunderstanding
* Avoid inconsistent implementation
* Giving stakeholders a more secure and stable way of communicating.

Without those benefits of a shared, consistent, and coherent vocabulary, it is difficult to imagine how a shared, consistent, and coherent assessment system could be designed and implemented.

## Preparing for Workshop 1

### Facilitation Team

As a first step, the External Facilitator and District Liaison should become intimately familiar with the documents in the Workshop 1 Materials folder, including all documents in all subfolders.

There are advance readings and additional documents to be provided to the Design Team members in a packet at the workshop. The advance readings should be provided to Design Team members sufficiently in advance of the first workshop to read them carefully and take notes about questions or concerns to be resolved at the first workshop. The advance readings are numbered in the preferred order of reading as they build upon each other.

All of the documents in the Design Team Packet folder (including the advance readings) should be provided to all Design Team members as they sign in to the workshop for reference.

#### Planning Meeting

The External Facilitator, District Liaison, and Meeting Coordinator should have a planning meeting sufficiently in advance of the workshop to address any preparations that will be necessary. If the Project Champion desires to be deeply involved in the project, she should also attend the planning meeting.

The External Facilitator is responsible for customizing the meeting materials in the Workshop 1 Materials folder.

### Design Team

The members of the Design Team should be notified that the workshop will be structured based on the assumption that they have all carefully read each advance reading and taken notes on questions and concerns.

## Conducting the Workshop

The annotated agenda (WS 1 Annotated Agenda) and slide deck (WS 1 Slide Deck) should be sufficiently explanatory for the External Facilitator to conduct workshop 1. In the last part of workshop 1, the Design Team will begin the task of conducting a district assessment audit. At the end of workshop 1, the Design Team will be assigned homework to complete the district assessment audit.

## Conducting a District Assessment Audit

Near the end of the first workshop, the External Facilitator will introduce the Design Team to the first worksheet (the tab entitled WS1. Assessment Audit) in the Microsoft® Excel document entitled Project Workbook. Appendix A gives detailed instructions for using the worksheet to conduct the audit.

The District Liaison will need to take ownership of the Project Workbook while the district assessment audit is conducted. In order to adequately prepare for the second workshop, the audit will need to be completed at least one week in advance of the second workshop to allow for the District Liaison and the External Facilitator to communicate regarding any audit entries that are confusing or incorrectly entered. The WS1 Audit worksheet in the Project Workbook was created to help the District Liaison enter the data without any errors by identifying any errors in data entry. However, it is unlikely that there will be no ambiguities or errors in the worksheet.

The data in the WS1 Audit worksheet also carries over to the WS2 Audit Summary worksheet that summarizes the district assessment audit. This document will be used in Workshop 2. It creates two summaries that are exemplified in Figures 1-2 below. Figure 1 gives a more detailed summary of the audit. As can be seen in this figure, the rows show the various purposes of assessment and the columns show the characteristics of the assessment (e.g., what level of school, the type/mindset of assessment, who has control over timing of assessment, who has control over content of the assessment, what the assessment covers, and when the assessment is given. The numbers in the cells represent the number of entries in the audit with the specific combination of purposes and test characteristic. Red cells indicate that there is no match between purpose and assessment characteristic, orange indicates a weak match, yellow indicates a modest match, yellow-green indicates a strong match, and green indicates an optimal match.

Figure 2 gives a higher-level summary of the percentage of entries within each group (type/mindset, control over timing, control over content, coverage, and timing) that represent optimal, strong, modest, weak, and no match between purpose and assessment characteristic.

Figure 1. An example of more-detailed results of the district assessment audit.

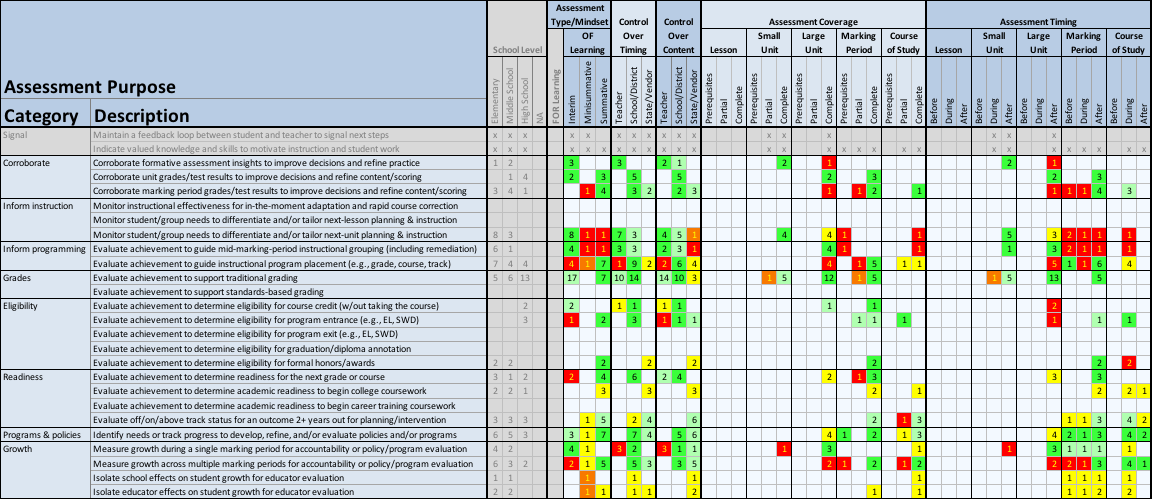
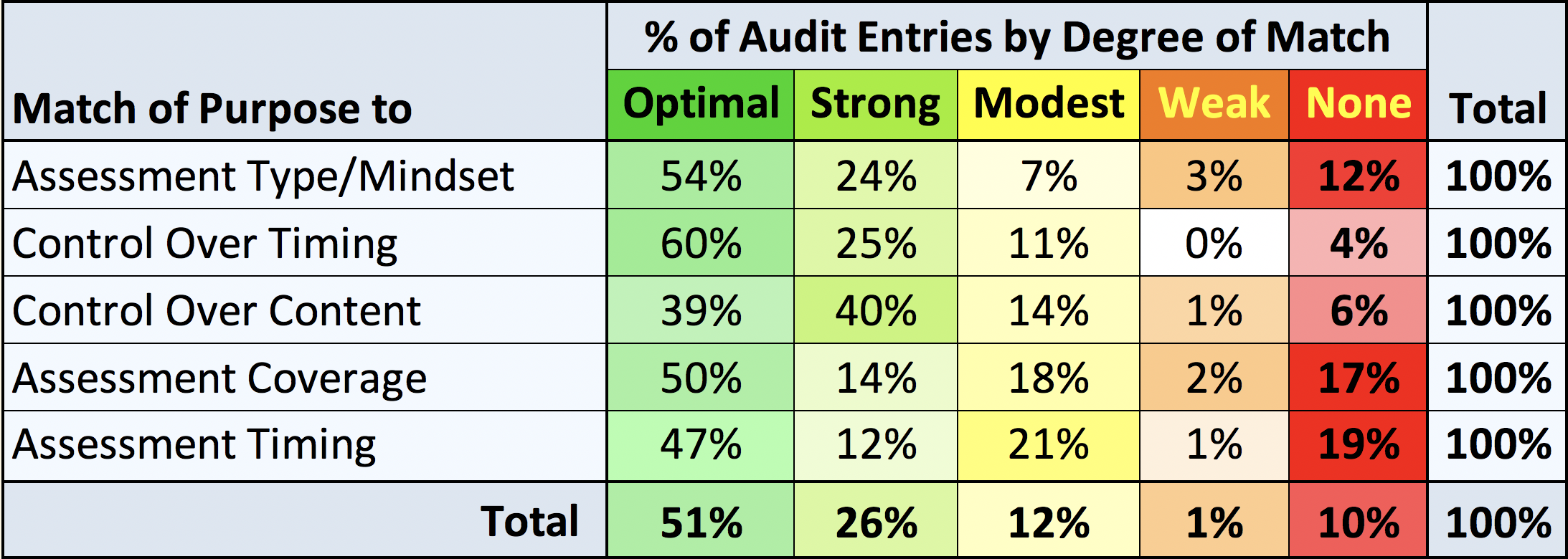


Figure 2. An example of less-detailed results of the district assessment audit.



## Preparing for Workshop 2

### Facilitation Team

As a first step, the External Facilitator and District Liaison should review the data entered into the WS1 Audit worksheet in the Project Workbook to make sure that all of the data are correctly entered and make sense. This is important because the results of the audit will be used in comparison to the results of the design activities in workshop 2 to see how much revision of the existing assessment system is necessary.

As a second step, the External Facilitator and District Liaison should become intimately familiar with the documents in the Workshop 2 Materials folder, including all documents in all subfolders.

There are documents to be provided to the Design Team members in a packet at the workshop. All of the documents in the Design Team Packet folder should be provided to all Design Team members as they sign in to the workshop for reference.

#### Planning Meeting

The External Facilitator, District Liaison, and Meeting Coordinator should have a planning meeting sufficiently in advance of the workshop to address any preparations that will be necessary. If the Project Champion desires to be deeply involved in the project, she should also attend the planning meeting.

The External Facilitator is responsible for customizing the meeting materials in the Workshop 2 Materials folder.

### Design Team

The members of the Design Team should be notified that the workshop will be structured based on the assumption that they have all carefully read each advance reading and taken notes on questions and concerns.

## Conducting the Workshop

The annotated agenda (WS 2 Annotated Agenda) and slide deck (WS 2 Slide Deck) should be sufficiently explanatory for the External Facilitator to conduct workshop 2.

## Preparing for Workshop 3

### Facilitation Team

As a first step, the External Facilitator and District Liaison should become intimately familiar with the documents in the Workshop 3 Materials folder, including all documents in all subfolders.

There are documents to be provided to the Design Team members in a packet at the workshop. All of the documents in the Design Team Packet folder should be provided to all Design Team members as they sign in to the workshop for reference.

#### Planning Meeting

The External Facilitator, District Liaison, and Meeting Coordinator should have a planning meeting sufficiently in advance of the workshop to address any preparations that will be necessary. If the Project Champion desires to be deeply involved in the project, she should also attend the planning meeting.

The External Facilitator is responsible for customizing the meeting materials in the Workshop 2 Materials folder.

#### Preliminary Project Report

In advance of the meeting, the External Facilitator should prepare the portions of the project report that can be completed based on the work from workshop 2. This includes copying and pasting into the report tables from the Project Workbook as noted in the Project Report. An example is given in the Project Report Exemplar.

### Design Team

The members of the Design Team should be notified that the workshop will be structured based on the assumption that they have all carefully read each advance reading and taken notes on questions and concerns.

## Conducting the Workshop

The annotated agenda (WS 3 Annotated Agenda) should be sufficiently explanatory for the External Facilitator to conduct workshop 2. Because there is not a lot of specialized data entry and required during workshop 3, and because workshop 3 consists mostly of discussion of the work completed thus far and high-level planning for implementation, there is no slide deck. There is a document entitled WS 3 Implementation Planning Notes.docx in which notes on the discussions will be taken. In Workshop 3, the intent is for the District Liaison to take over leadership of the project. The district will likely need some additional support from the External Facilitator, but it is important for the district to see a leader for the project internal to the district.

# Delivering the Final Report

Although the same document is used or the preliminary and final reports (Project Report), it will be necessary to incorporate any changes to the report from Workshop 3 and to add the planning materials to the report.

# Appendix A: Using the Project Workbook to Conduct an Assessment Audit

Based on vocabulary developed during the first workshop, the External Facilitator will, in the second half of workshop 1, explain the assessment audit process and start the Design Team on the audit, leading the team through a few entries to ensure that all members understand what is needed to complete the audit. It will then become the responsibility of the District Liaison to coordinate the work of the Design Team in completing the audit between workshops 1 and 2. The External Facilitator should be available to assist the District Liaison with any questions and/or difficulties as she works with team members to complete the audit. To facilitate completion of the audit between workshops, the External Facilitator will likely need to schedule work sessions with the Design Team, either as a whole team, or with different sessions for different representatives within the team (e.g., central office, elementary school, middle school, and high school). The District Liaison should be the keeper of the Project Workbook during the period in which the Design Team works on completing the worksheet (tab) entitled WS1. Audit Worksheet. The Project Workbook should from then on be kept by the External Facilitator to avoid duplication of work and conflicting work.

## How the Audit Worksheet Functions

The basic structure of the assessment audit worksheet is that each row contains the data for one assessment (or a single entry in the audit). Each column is a field containing data about a potential characteristic of each assessment. The worksheet uses color coding to help the External Facilitator and District Liaison accurately complete the audit. The worksheet uses color coding to help the keeper of the workbook to create complete entries. Figure 1 (on the next page) presents an annotated excerpt from a sample worksheet to explain the color coding. It only shows some of the columns and some of the rows in a completed worksheet.

Figure 1. Annotated Excerpt from a Worksheet in Progress.

**F**

**A**

**E**

**C**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **D**  **B** |  |
| **G**  **J**  **K** |  | **H** |
|  | **F**  **L** |  |

In Figure 1 there are required sections and an optional section for each entry. In this excerpt, these required sections are labeled A, B, C, and D. In each required section, data must be entered into at least one column for each entry (or row).

The *Notes* section (labeled E) is optional. It is provided to keep notes on important characteristics of assessments that could not be captured in the previous sections. The fields labeled F are shown in grey because they are either auto-calculated or are not applicable. Data in these grey-shaded fields cannot be edited. The row labeled G has an entry ID shaded in bright red. This indicates that there is invalid data entered on that row. The invalid data can be seen to the right in the cell that is also shaded in bright red (and labeled H). The row labeled J is shaded in pink, indicating that there is a gap between entries. To make the audit summary work as intended, there cannot be any gaps between entries. Finally, the row labeled K has an entry ID shaded in bright yellow. This indicates an entry that is not complete (there has to be at least one “x” in the light-yellow-shaded group of cells labeled L in the required section labeled D.

## What to Include in the Audit

To keep the audit from becoming overwhelming, *Formative* Assessment (or Assessment *FOR* Learning) should not be included in the audit. However, all other assessment should be included, including things such as end-of-course assessments, end-of-grade assessments, midterms, unit exams, quizzes, homework, projects, performances, and/presentations.

It is also reasonable to make only a single entry for each *class* of assessments. For example, daily graded homework could be combined, so long as the homework assignments are reasonably similar. For example, it would not be reasonable to combine daily short writing assignments with daily vocabulary/grammar/mechanics worksheets in an English classroom.

## Walking the Design Team Through Audit Entries

Entering the data into the WS1. Assessment Audit worksheet of the Project Workbook can be viewed as a professional learning activity in which the Design Team has an opportunity to put their newly learned assessment vocabulary good use. In introducing the assessment audit, the External Facilitator can facilitate this by asking the Design Team to identify an assessment at each level of school (e.g., elementary, middle, high school) and for each assessment going step by step through each of the groups of columns in the worksheet for which data are required, as follows:

* Content Area or Course
* Description/Name
* School Level
* Assessment Type
* Control over Timing
* Control over Content
* Appropriate Scope and Timing
* Purpose
* Item Type

The External Facilitator should guide the Design Team toward an accurate classification in the Assessment Type, Control over Timing, Control over Content, Appropriate Scope & Timing, and Item Types groups.

In the Purpose section, it is important to mark each purpose that the assessment is used to address, even if the match between the assessment and a purpose is poor. At this point in the project it is not necessary to comment on the appropriateness of an assessment for the purposes is it used for as that will come to light in workshop #2.

In the Appropriate Scope and Timing section, the scope and timing of an assessment may not actually be appropriate. Again, at this point in the project it is not necessary to comment on appropriateness as that will come to light in workshop #2.

The Item Type section is included to roughly estimate the degree to which complex tasks are included in the district assessment system as compared by using item type as a proxy for task complexity.

As the homework is completed between workshops, the District Liaison should take a similar approach in terms of guiding the Design Team to accurate classifications and avoiding comment on appropriateness of purposes or scope and timing.

Note that it is important that the External Facilitator relinquish control over the homework between workshops so that district capacity is built in the form of the District Liaison gaining experience through guiding the homework between workshops.

# Appendix B: Building a District Assessment System Design Schematic

The External Facilitator is responsible for using the results of workshop 2 to build a custom district assessment system design schematic to be discussed during workshop 3 and finalized as part of the Final Project Report. The schematic can be helpful in communicating with stakeholders how the complete district assessment system is organized and to facilitate principled conversations about modifications to the system.

This section is intended to assist the External Facilitator in building a custom district assessment system design schematic. However, this section does not give instructions for doing so because it will require some creativity to develop a schematic that is useful to the district. This section describes resources that can be helpful and some guidelines for developing the custom schematic.

## Resources

You can see an exemplar in the Schematic Exemplar document in the Workshop 3 Materials > Facilitation Team Packet > System Design Schematics folder. Reviewing how the exemplar is organized may help in developing a custom schematic for the district.

There is also a Microsoft® PowerPoint presentation named Schematic Object Templates in the same folder. The last slide in that presentation contains pre-formatted object templates to use in creating a system design schematic. It is not necessary to use each type of object found in the template, as it contains every type of object that could be used in building a design schematic.

There are two special types of objects in the template that may not be intuitive to use. First is the half circle arrow, which is actually a full circle arrow with the bottom half colored white. To use this object, it may be necessary to rotate the shape[[3]](#footnote-3) and hide the white part of the circle behind the object it points to[[4]](#footnote-4).

The object labeled Coverage of needed professional learning is an irregular polygon. You will likely need to adjust the shape to enclose all of the elements that professional learning opportunities will need to cover[[5]](#footnote-5) and place it at the very back of the slide[[6]](#footnote-6).

## Approaches

There are two approaches to creating a customized district assessment system design schematic customized to the results of the Design Team’s work. They are:

1. If the last slide of the Schematic Exemplar is reasonably close to the results of the Design Team’s desired design, it can be helpful to take the last slide of the Schematic Sandbox as a starting point for the recommended process described below.
2. If the Schematic Exemplar is not reasonably close to the results of the Design Team’s desired design, it may be necessary to start from scratch using the objects from the Schematic Object Templates document.

## Guidelines

There are a few guidelines to consider in building a district assessment system design schematic intended to help the resulting design schematic to be maximally legible and useful. These guidelines can be seen operationalized in the Schematic Exemplar document. The guidelines include:

* Use as short a label as possible for each element to keep a large enough font size for display.
* Use as short a label as possible for each annotation.
* Avoid connectors (straight, angled, and half-circle arrows) that cross each other. This may require considerable creativity in placement of the design elements.
* Keep explanation of each component to the minimum necessary when added to a slide.

## Recommended Process for Creating a Custom Schematic

1. Develop the complete design schematic as the last slide. If the resulting design is similar to the design in the Schematic Exemplar, it may be appropriate to use the last slide of the Schematic Sandbox as the starting point for this step.
2. Identify where the locus of control is for each element of the schematic and color code the elements accordingly.
3. Add annotations to each element (if appropriate) giving examples of each element where appropriate using small text above, below, or to the side of the element. Color code the annotations according to locus of control.
4. Print out the complete design schematic and number the elements based on when they will be introduced. That is, the element(s) to appear on the first slide should be labeled “1,” the element(s) to appear on the second slide should be labeled “2,” and so on.
5. Work backward from the last slide and remove element(s) added on the next slide, associated connectors, and associated annotations that appear on later slides as each new slide is created. To clarify what this means, review the Design Schematic Exemplar starting at the last slide and going backward.
6. Once the slides are all created, highlight each new element that appears on each slide:
   1. Change borders of new elements to black (elements should otherwise have no borders)
   2. Change labels of new elements to black (labels should otherwise be white)
   3. Change connectors to new elements to black (connectors should otherwise be grey)
   4. Explain new elements and how they relate to the others using red text.

It is better not to use animations to build up the system design schematic, but to use separate slides. This is because the slides can become quite cluttered and will not work well as a PDF.

1. This section is an excerpt from the Toolkit document entitled DASD Toolkit Orientation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Coladarci (2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In most versions of Microsoft® Word, this is done as follows: select the circle arrow, click the Shape Format tab in the ribbon, click Rotate, and select the desired option. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In most versions of Microsoft® Word, this is done as follows: select the circle arrow, click the Shape Format tab in the ribbon, click Send Backward, and select Send to Back. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In most versions of Microsoft® Word, this is done as follows: select the irregular polygon, right click it, and select Edit Points from the popup menu. You can then move the points around and add new points or delete existing points by right clicking one of the points and selecting the desired option from the popup menu. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In most versions of Microsoft® Word, this is done as follows: select the irregular polygon, click the Shape Format tab in the ribbon, click Send Backward, and select Send to Back. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)