Interim Assessment Identification and Evaluation Process

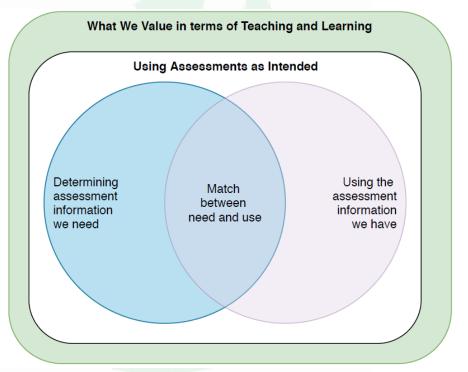## Phase 1: Identifying Assessment Gaps and Needs

Selecting, designing, or developing assessments that can be used to support a vision of teaching and learning requires careful planning around that vision. Phase 1 of the Interim Assessment Specifications process is intended to help you articulate a theory of action for how assessment processes and information can be used by educators to improve student achievement and instructional practices by doing the following:

1. Asking you to specify a vision for teaching and learning,
2. Evaluating the degree to which the tools currently available to educators align with and support that vision, and
3. Identify potential gaps in the information believed necessary to help students, educators and/or schools improve.

These sections should be answered **collaboratively by a group of district or school leaders who make decisions about the assessments that are used** to monitor district- or school-wide progress against the state's standards. In cases where the **state provides interim assessment resources to districts**, we invite states to consider the ways in which districts and schools would use interim assessment data as part of a balanced assessment system[1] as they review the toolkit. These steps are also illustrated in the illustration provided here.

The Phase 1 activities defined within this document will help you identify and prioritize your assessment needs and clarify the:

- characteristics of an interim assessment that are necessary to meet those needs and align with your district's vision for teaching and learning; and
- evidence necessary to evaluate whether the assessment can be interpreted and used in a manner that supports your goals and needs.

What We Value in terms of Teaching and Learning

Using Assessments as Intended

Determining assessment information we need

Match between need and use

Using the assessment information we have

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[1] Assessment systems are balanced when the various assessments in the system are coherently linked through a clear specification of the learning targets, they comprehensively provide multiple sources of evidence to support educational decision-making, and they continuously document student progress over time (NRC, 2001). Balanced assessment systems should be defined by their ability to provide information, rather than based on the assessments that comprise them.

This serves as important preparation for Phase 2 of the process in which assessment characteristics and desired evidence will be clearly articulated for consideration during assessment selection and evaluation activities. This document (i.e., Phase 1) is structured in four parts, which are described below. Each part includes an activity that is intended to help capture your thinking in a concise way that can be shared with your supervisors, peers, or those whom you support in their work.

Section	Purpose	Description
Part 1	Overall Vision	In Part 1, the user will articulate their overall vision of teaching and learning by describing what student achievement looks like and how students, teachers, and principals can facilitate learning through their behaviors. The purpose of Part 1 is to help the user hone in on the broader goals that could be served by assessment information
Part 2	Assessment Vision	In Part 2, the user will answer a variety of questions focusing on the role assessment can play in meeting the broader goals that are defined in Part 1. Part 2 allows the user to define the types of information from an assessment that each individual can leverage to help achieve their goals.
Part 3	Assessment Lay of the Land	Part 3 provides a resource design to help users identify example assessments and the role they may play in a larger assessment system. This resource will help users engage in an activity focused on identifying what assessments are available and how they are currently being used.
Part 4	High Priority Needs	In Part 4, the user will answer a few targeted questions focused on identifying and prioritizing existing gaps in information and/or assessment needs. The responses to this part of the tool will be used to help clarify if an assessment is needed, the primary purpose and intended use of that assessment, and the types of questions it should answer to support educators as intended

Part 1: Overall Vision for Teaching and Learning: What we value for students [content] and teachers [instruction]

Think about your vision for teaching and learning at the district and school levels. If a district or school is meeting its organizational purpose, what do you hope to achieve in terms of how students learn, how teachers teach, the role building leaders play, and the role of the Local Education Agency (LEA, e.g., district)? Consider the behaviors for each of the following groups of people.

Activity for Part 1: *In each row of the table, briefly respond to each question about students, teachers, and principals. This will help you think about how assessment information can support those behaviors and needs in part 2. Please note that this is intentionally high level to help prompt your thinking around assessment needs.*

	If our vision for teaching and learning were actualized:	
Student	Generally, what does student success look like with regard to the knowledge and skills they should demonstrate?	*For example:* Specific content knowledge in math; Critical thinking that can be transferred across content areas; The ability to engage collaborative problem solving; or Demonstrating independent ability to engage in research to solve a novel problem.
	What are your overarching goals for them by the end of the year?	
Teacher	How do you think a teacher best facilitates student learning? In practice, what does this look like?	
	What do you think is most important for students to learn and teachers to teach? For example, what specific aspects of the curriculum are critical to helping students learn foundational concepts? More advanced concepts?	
Principal	What should principals do to support high quality instruction?	
Local Educational Leaders	What should district leaders do to support schools efforts to support teachers and students?	
Others	Please add as many rows as necessary.	

Part 2: Assessment Vision: The assessment information we value, irrespective of what we have)

After thinking about what students, teachers, and principals should do that promote student learning, it is important to think about the kinds of assessment information that support those activities. What type of information would each group of people find most useful in their work? What, specifically, would help them make better decisions about their next steps, instruction, planning, or guidance?

Activity for Part 2: *In each row of the table, briefly respond to each question about what information from an assessment could help benefit them. The responses to the questions should be related to the response from Part 1. Please note that assessment information does not have to be the results of a test, but can include a process of gathering evidence.*

	What assessment information would be most helpful for each question?	
Student	*Consider your description of **student** success and how students learn.*	
	Which kind of assessment information do **students need** given your vision for teaching and learning and why? **How should students use** assessment information given your vision for teaching and learning?	
Teacher	*Consider your beliefs regarding how a **teacher** best facilitates student learning*	
	What type(s) of assessment information do **teachers need** to facilitate student learning and why? **How should teachers use** each type of assessment information?	(scores, student work, comparisons, informal observation) (remediation, regrouping)
Principal	*Consider what you believe **principals** should do to support high quality instruction.*	
	What assessment information do **principals need** and why (e.g., support teachers)? **How should principals use** each type of assessment information?	
Local Education Leaders	*Consider the behaviors you believe **district leaders** should engage in to facilitate teachers and students.*	
	What assessment information do **district leaders need** and why? **How should district leaders use** each type of assessment information?	
	Others' needs and uses (please add as many rows as necessary)	
Others		

Part 3: The Assessment Lay of the Land: The assessment information we have and how we should use it

In light of your vision for teaching and learning (Part 1) and your vision for assessment (Part 2), it is important to think about the tools and resources that are already available to help students, teachers and principals meet these goals. This can help clarify and articulate the purposes and uses that are currently being served (whether in a limited or robust way) and highlight those areas that may reflect gaps in need. For example, the state summative assessment is available for everyone to use, but isn't appropriate to inform student instructional needs. However, the results from the state summative assessment are a robust resource to quickly identify groups of students that need more support and engage in general evaluations of curriculum implementation *for the year*.

While you may have a variety of assessment results available to you, different assessments serve different purposes and should be used in different ways. Several examples are provided in the following table, which lists several assessment types, their primary purpose, and potential uses. After reviewing the examples in the table, please respond to the questions in the activity for Part 3.

Others have attempted to further parse Perie, Marion, and Gong's (2007, 2009) definition (see Crane, 2008), but we argue that regardless of the definition, we need to be more specific with how interim assessments are being *used*. That specificity can be achieved by specifying the question you are trying to answer with the assessment information. The questions you are trying answer can help identify the group of interest (e.g., state, district, school, classroom, and student) that will be using the information as well.

In order to answer activity 3, we've provided a reference that clarifies the major types of assessments (including performance based assessment) in the table below. This table is intended to be a resource that is more specific about the uses and questions certain assessments may address.

Reference Resource: Table of Assessment Types, Purposes, Examples, and Potential Uses

Assessment Type	Primary purpose	Example	Use and the Question it Addresses
Summative Assessment	Evaluate performance following a macro-unit of instruction (e.g., grade-level, course) Evaluate program quality and effectiveness	State summative aligned to state standards College entrance exams (e.g., ACT, SAT) District graduation test Final exams or final projects	Evaluate achievement after a macro unit: How well did my student learn the course's content? Corroborate interim assessment: Are my interim assessment results valid? Evaluate readiness for the next macro unit: Are my students ready to move on to the next course? After-the-fact evaluation/adjustment instructional practices: How well are my teachers equipped to instruct the curriculum?

			What professional development can help teacher's instruction or student learning?
			Predict later student outcomes: What is the likelihood that my students will graduate college- and career-ready?
			Grading and accountability: Is the student ready to move to the next course or grade?
Interim Assessment	Evaluate performance or program quality and effectiveness Predict performance Inform instruction and practice	Off-the-shelf interim[2] assessments State provided assessments District provided or developed common assessments District provided or developed on-demand assessments (e.g., individual teacher-scored) School developed assessments	Evaluate achievement after a mid-sized unit (e.g., lesson plan): How well did my students learn the current unit? Monitor progress within a macro-unit (e.g., semester, course, credit, or grade): How well are students making progress across units? Corroborate formative assessment: Can I confirm the assumptions about my students that I obtain through instruction? Pre-test to tailor unit instructional plans for the group and individual students: What are my students' areas of strengths and weaknesses as I approach this unit? Diagnose individual students' and group instructional needs. Are there particular objectives/learning targets/standards with which students need assistance? Mid-course self-evaluation and adjustment of teacher classroom practices (i.e., adjust curriculum): Are there any adjustments that need to be made to the way that curriculum

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[2] Interim assessments can range from periodic standardized assessment products to those that are marketed as "formative," "benchmark," "diagnostic," and/or "predictive." They are neither formative (e.g., do not facilitated moment-to-moment targeted analysis of and feedback designed for student learning) nor are they summative (i.e., provide a broad summary of course- or grade-level achievement tied to specific learning objectives). Off the shelf assessments are those that are procured by a vendor and not custom developed or developed by a state or district

			is being delivered?
			Mid-course evaluation and adjustment of school and district policies and programs (i.e., adjust curriculum): Are we identifying any areas of mid-semester professional development based on student progress against the standards?
			Predict performance on summative assessment: What is the likelihood that students will be proficient on the state summative assessment? What should I do to help students progress toward proficiency?
			Grading (and possibly accountability): Is the student ready to move to the next semester or eligible for any given program?
Formative Assessment	Inform instruction and practice[3]	A process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievements of intended instructional outcomes (Wiley, 2008, p. 3).	Monitor moment-to-moment student learning: How well is my student acquiring a specific skill or learning target? Diagnose individual students' immediate instructional needs: Are there particular objectives or learning targets with which this student needs assistance? Diagnose immediate group instructional needs: Does this class understand this particular standard or skill? Immediately adjust instruction: Do I need to restate the idea in a different way? Differentiate instruction: How much scaffolding or support does this student need to access this idea?

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[3] Note: Student results from formative assessment are not appropriate for use in grading or accountability. However, ratings of the quality of formative assessment practice may be appropriate for use in accountability if well designed.

			Self-evaluate micro-unit instructional effectiveness: How well am I communicating this concept right now?
Performance based assessment[4]	Can serve many purposes depending on how it's used, when it's administered, and how much information in covers.	Summative assessment (e.g., end of course exam or project) Interim assessment (e.g., post-unit assessment, mid-unit assessment of progress, pre-test to evaluate instructional needs) Formative assessment (e.g., within-classroom project-based assessments that help target skill deficiency or mastery)	Instantiates learning goals for students based on enacted curriculum: Does the performance assessment reflect expectations as indicated in the curriculum? To evaluate curriculum implementation and quality: How well are students performing based on my instruction of this curriculum? If my instruction is well-aligned, how well does this curriculum promote student success? To evaluate instructional adherence to curriculum: Does my teaching reflect the curriculum based on student performance? As evidence of competency or grade-level mastery: Does the performance assessment align with the complexity expected of the competencies students are expected to master?

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[4] While not part of the summative, interim, or formative assessment categories, performance based assessments are often referenced when thinking about these three types. It is important to recognize that performance can fulfill a variety of purposes depending on how they are designed and the questions they are intended to answer.

Activity for Part 3: *In each row of the table below, consider the resource table above. Think about your context and identify whether the following assessment types are available to you (i.e., yes or no). Describe the assessment and identify what it is (e.g., ACT, SAT, state summative, off-the-shelf interim [e.g., NWEA, STAR, iReady], etc., locally developed item bank). Then indicate the primary purpose the assessment is intended to serve (i.e., predict, evaluate, or inform and how you are using the assessment information. Finally, think about how the information from the assessment* **should** *be used. The responses to this activity will help you determine what existing assessments are available to you as part of a larger system, what gaps may be present, and whether an assessment is meeting your intended use as effectively as possible.*

We do NOT expect for you to have all of these assessments. This is simply intended to help you understand the variety of information that is available to you to address Activity 4.

What assessment information Is available to us?				Primary Purpose	Alignment with Intent
Assessment Type	Description	Available	What is the assessment, tool, or resource?	How am I using the information from this assessment?	Refer to the table of assessment types above. How *should* we use this?
State summative assessment	The state summative assessment used for accountability.	Yes ☐ No ☐	For example, the ACT, SAT, or state developed test		
Other state provided summative assessments	This could include other summative assessments like English Language Proficiency, end-of-course tests not used for accountability, graduation tests, semester exams, college entrance exams, or college entrance prep tests.	Yes ☐ No ☐	For example WIDA 2.0 or ELPA 21		
State provided interim assessments	This could include state provided item banks, interim assessments.	Yes ☐ No ☐	For example, an off-the-shelf assessment or state developed interim (e.g., mini-summative assessment)		
State provided assessment supports	This could include state provided resources on assessment literacy, using assessment information, reporting templates, improvement planning guides, etc.	Yes ☐ No ☐	For example, interpretive guides or rubrics		
District provided: Common assessments across schools	These include any assessments that the district provides to schools, which could include off-the-shelf assessments, district	Yes ☐ No ☐	For example, an off-the-shelf assessment or district developed interim (e.g., aligned		

		Yes	No			
	developed assessments, etc.			with common curriculum units)		
District provided: Optional (i.e., not common across schools)	These might include assessments that are developed or purchased by the district but available to a teacher on-demand. They may be locally scored.	Yes ☐	No ☐	For example, an off-the-shelf assessment or district developed interim (e.g., on-demand and aligned to curriculum)		
School provided: Common within school	These might include assessments that are developed or purchased by the school that are administered within classrooms and compared across classrooms.	Yes ☐	No ☐	For example, an off-the-shelf assessment or district developed interim (e.g., on-demand and aligned to units or lesson plans)		
School provided: Optional (i.e., not common within school)	These might include assessments that are developed or purchased by the school that are administered within classrooms but are administered on-demand by the teacher.	Yes ☐	No ☐	For example, an off-the-shelf assessment or district developed interim (e.g., on-demand and aligned to units or lesson plans)		
Classroom assessments used as part of student grades	These might include assessments that are developed by teachers (e.g., quizzes, end of unit tests, essays, research reports, performance tasks).	Yes ☐	No ☐	For example, student work or reports.		

Classroom assessments not used as a part of student grades	These might include informal assessments that are developed by teachers (e.g., observations, exit tickets, informal conversations, probing questions)	Yes ☐	No ☐	For example, one-on-one interactions with students.		

Part 4: Targeting a Priority Needs and Uses (how well does the assessment information that we have align with the assessment information that we want? what needs to be scrapped, built, bought, or revamped?)

Part 4 of the tool will ask you to examine the assessments available to you and determine whether there is redundancy in the information provided, what gaps in information may exist, and what needs and uses should be prioritized. Consider the assessments that you've identified in the table above to answer the questions in the activity below.

Activity for Part 4: *Begin by answering the following questions below. Use the table below the questions to help you identify high priority purposes and uses that are aligned to your overall vision (Part 1) and assessment vision (Part 2).*

1. **Generally,** fill in the Table below based on the available assessments you identified in Activity 3, how you use them, and then how they are intended to be used? Consider those assessments that are most valuable to evaluate. You may need to add additional tables depending on the number of assessments available at each level (e.g., state, district, school, and classroom). Consider how you use and should use the assessment information for the groups identified (note, not all rows may be

Name of Assessment: State Summative Assessment *(Completed Example)*					

We use the results of the summative to (for each group) :
1. Student: target standards for individual student-level remediation;
2. Teacher: group incoming students based on summative assessment performance using scores on reporting categories (i.e., subscores); identify possible areas of emphasis on standards and create first 2 weeks of lesson plans
3. Principal: Identify the percentage of students in each performance level by grade and student group to determine if specific interventions should be implemented schoolwide
4. District: Identify areas for professional development based on feedback from School Leadership Teams in schools with high percentages of students in the lowest performance level.

Consider your responses for current use and intended use in activity 3 (i.e., last two columns). How well does your **current use** in activity 3 align with your **intended use**?	Group	Level of Alignment				
		Strong Match	Some Match	Weak Match	No Match	N/A
	Student	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
	Teacher	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Principal	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Education Leaders	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐

Center for Assessment

Name of Assessment						
Consider your responses for current use and intended use in activity 3 (i.e., last two columns). How well does your **current use** in activity 3 align with your **intended use**?	Group	Level of Alignment				
		Strong Match	Some Match	Weak Match	No Match	N/A
	Student	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Principal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Education Leaders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Name of Assessment						
Consider your responses for current use and intended use in activity 3 (i.e., last two columns). How well does your **current use** in activity 3 align with your **intended use**?	Group	Level of Alignment				
		Strong Match	Some Match	Weak Match	No Match	N/A
	Student	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Principal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Education Leaders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Name of Assessment						
Consider your responses for current use and intended use in activity 3 (i.e., last two columns). How well does your **current use** in activity 3 align with your **intended use**?	Group	Level of Alignment				
		Strong Match	Some Match	Weak Match	No Match	N/A
	Student	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Principal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Education Leaders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Based on those assessments that exhibit weak or no match with your desired uses, which ones may be eligible for elimination or revision (for example, because they are redundant, not useful, or incoherent with their intended uses)?

Assessment	Description	Keep	Revise	Eliminate	Why?
Name of Assessment		☐	☐	☐	
Name of Assessment		☐	☐	☐	
Name of Assessment		☐	☐	☐	
Name of Assessment		☐	☐	☐	
Add rows as needed		☐	☐	☐	

6. Based on your responses to Activity 3 and the table above, what is the highest priority assessment information needed **that we do not currently have** for each group in the table? How would you rank these needs?

Group	High Priority Assessment Information Needed (Please add rows if necessary)	Rank Order (1 = Highest, 5 = Lowest)
Student		**Rank** 1 2 3 4 5
Teacher		**Rank** 1 2 3 4 5
Principal		**Rank** 1 2 3 4 5
Educational Leaders		**Rank** 1 2 3 4 5
Others (e.g., student, teacher, etc.)		**Rank** 1 2 3 4 5