



Through-Year Assessment: Ten Key Considerations (Webinar)

May 10, 2023 (1:30-3:00 PM ET)

Nathan Dadey, Carla Evans & Will Lorié (Authors & Presenters)

Scott Marion (Moderator)

The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment

The Presenters & Moderator



Nathan Dadey



Carla Evans



Will Lorié



Scott Marion

Zoom protocols (yeah, we know you know)

- Please ensure your name is visible as a participant
- Please introduce yourselves via chat
- We will be monitoring the chat and Q & A for questions and comments throughout the webinar
 - We'll do our best to keep up with your questions

Webinar Outline

Ten Key Considerations (40-50 min)

- Conceptualization and Design (Considerations 1-4)
- Curriculum and Instruction (Considerations 5-7)
- Logistical and Technical (Considerations 8-10)
- Concluding Thoughts
- Brief Q & A following each section

Q & A Session (30± min)

Additional Resources & Wrap-Up (5 min)


Framing

- The Center for Assessment has a nuanced perspective on through-year assessment programs: We are not “all in” or “all out.”
- Center Associates do not all share the same perspectives, which we see as a feature, not a bug.
- As you enter this space today, we encourage you to interrogate the claims and evidence about through-year assessment programs with us.
 - *See our [paper](#) for a full discussion of some of the points we will skim over today.*

Definition

A through-year assessment *program* is:

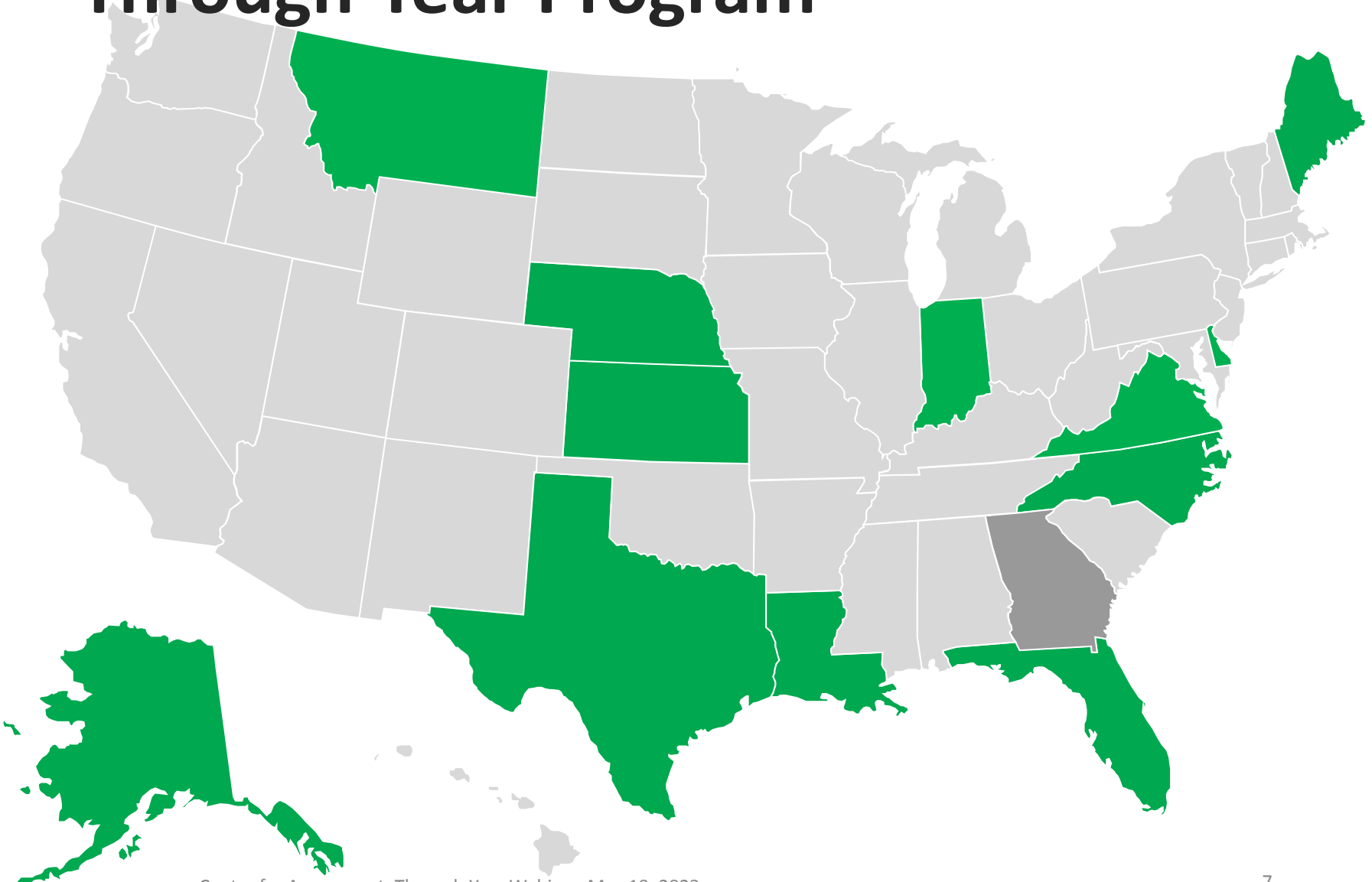
- Administered in **multiple distinct sessions** during a school year, and
- Intended to support (a) the production and use of a **summative determination**, and (b) **one additional aim**.



We introduced “aims” to capture a core motivation behind through-year designs: to accomplish “something else” while also creating a summative determination.

Current Landscape: States Developing or Considering a Through-Year Program

- 1. Alaska
- 2. Delaware
- 3. Florida
- 4. *Georgia*
- 5. Indiana
- 6. Kansas
- 7. Louisiana
- 8. Maine
- 9. Montana
- 10. Nebraska
- 11. North Carolina
- 12. Texas
- 13. Virginia



Plus assessment programs like DLM

Goals of the Paper

Through-year assessment is garnering a lot of attention.

We want to draw attention to the complexities of through-year assessment programs.

The goal of this paper is to provide a critical and constructive examination of what it would mean to move towards implementing a through-year assessment program, in light of the constraints and requirements of large-scale state testing.

<https://www.nciea.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Ten-Key-Considerations-Through-Year-Assessment-Report-March2023-F.pdf>



Ten Key Considerations

Conceptualization and Design

Considerations 1-4

Consideration 1:

Research on through-year assessment is limited.

Why?

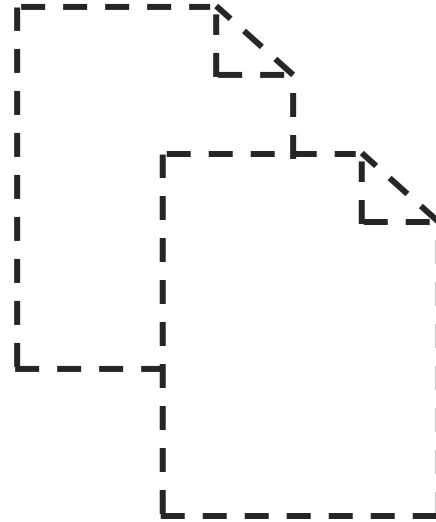
Through-year assessment programs are just now being explored and developed, so research **is limited**. We don't yet know what **will work**, and **what doesn't work**.

We **have** some
research on



**recommendations
and guidance**

We **need** research
on



**implementation
and effectiveness**

Guided by



**a comprehensive
research agenda**

Consideration 2:

No through-year program can solve all assessment problems.

Why?

A through-year program can only **address a limited number of problems**. Attempting to do too much will likely mean that the program doesn't do anything well.

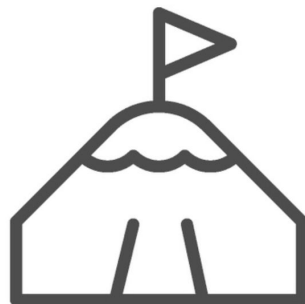
High-Level Guidance on Program Theory

Prioritization is critical: the more an assessment program is designed to do, the less it can do well.

Also critical is:



Stakeholder
Engagement



Long Term
Commitment



Intentional
Detail

Consideration 3:

Each through-year assessment design requires trade-offs.

Why?

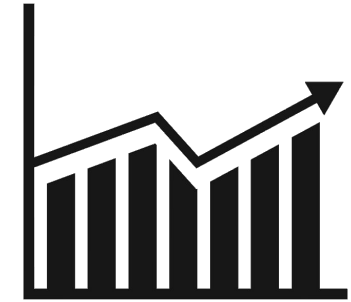
Not all through-year assessment programs are the same. There are a **few emerging models**, that also differ in the details. Each comes with **tradeoffs** and potential benefits.



What will be assessed and when?



How will the assessments be administered?



How will annual determinations be created?

Consideration 4:

The needs of students with disabilities and English learners must be considered in the earliest stages of design.

Why?

There has not yet been in-depth work on the ways **general** through-year assessment programs can **support—and affect—students who need accommodations and support.**

Some key questions include:

- Does the timing and structure of administration work equally well?
- Are the intended goals reached equally well?
- Does the program offer appropriate accommodations and supports at each and every administration?

Patterns of learning are highly variable.



Questions?
Comments?
Wonderings?

Curriculum and Instruction

Considerations 5-7

Consideration 5:

Through-year assessment programs could reduce local control over curriculum

Why?

Through-year assessment programs require states to decide **how** and **when** they will assess students during the year. These decisions affect how teachers, schools, and district administrators handle curriculum and instruction decisions (e.g., pacing; scope and sequencing; etc.).

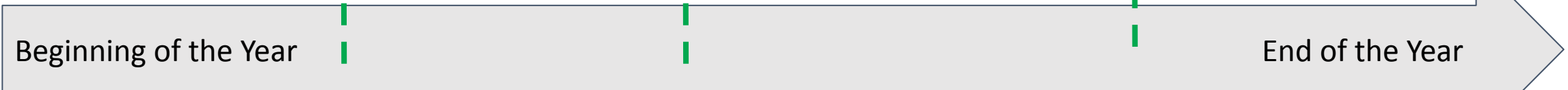
Example: Grade 4 Math

1

Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8	Unit 9
Factors and multiples	Fraction equivalence and comparison	Extending operations to fractions	From hundredths to hundred-thousands	Multiplicative comparison and measurement	Multiplying and dividing multi-digit numbers	Angles and angle measurements	Properties of two-dimensional shapes	Putting it all together

2

Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7
Place value, rounding, and algorithms for addition and subtraction	Unit conversions	Multi-digit multiplication and division	Angle measure and plane figures	Fraction equivalence, ordering, and operations	Decimal fractions	Exploring measurement with multiplication



Implications

If students are tested multiple times per year, districts must consider *when* they teach *what* content.

Currently, such decisions vary widely from district to district, reflecting curriculum variation.

Standards Tested at Each Administration

All State
Content
Standards

1. Alaska
2. Florida
3. Kansas
4. Nebraska
5. Maine
6. Texas
7. Virginia

Subset of State
Content
Standards

1. Delaware
2. DLM
3. Indiana
4. Louisiana
5. Montana
6. North Carolina

Consideration 6:

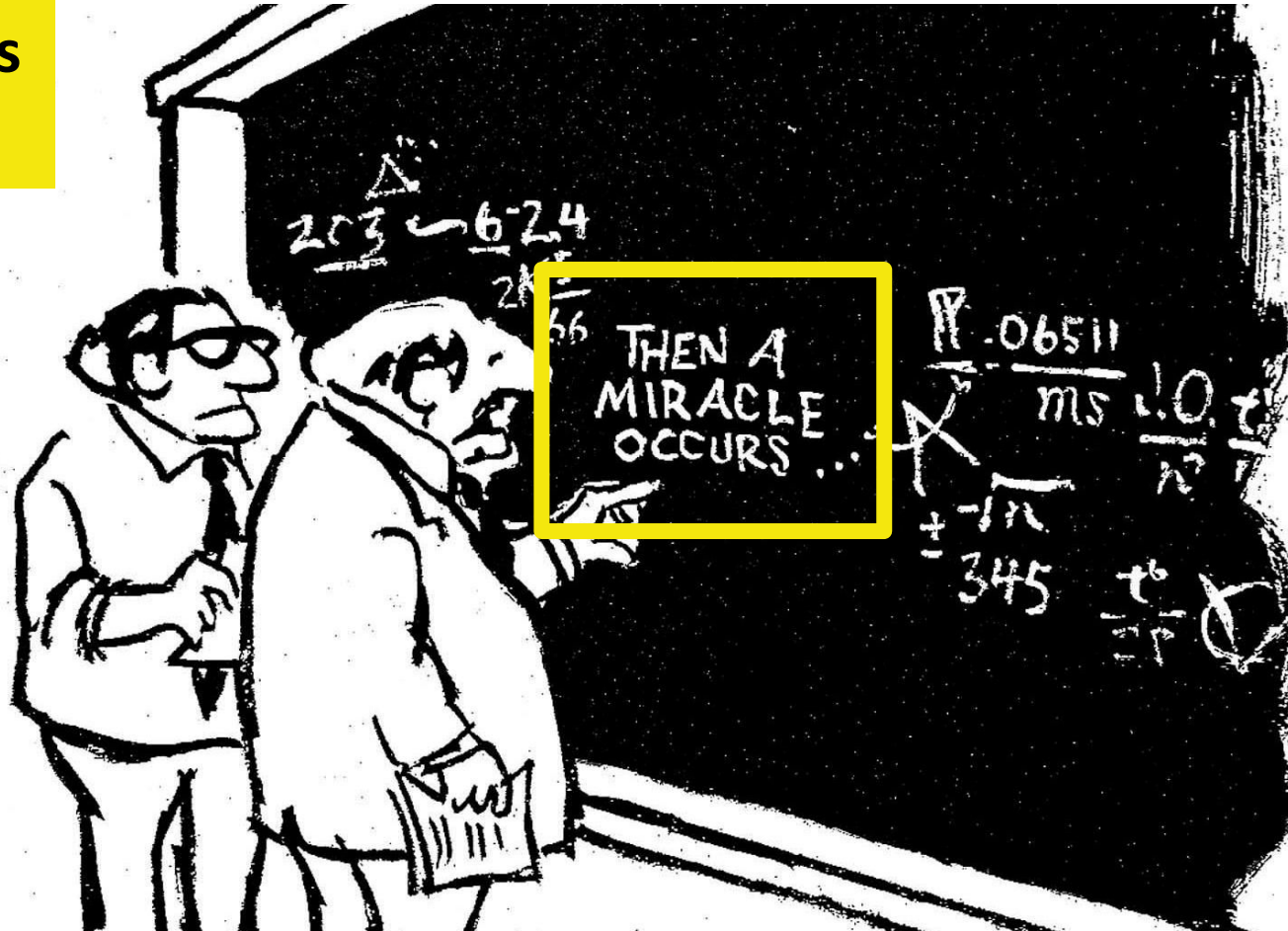
Using state tests—through-year or not—to directly inform instruction requires radical changes.

Why?

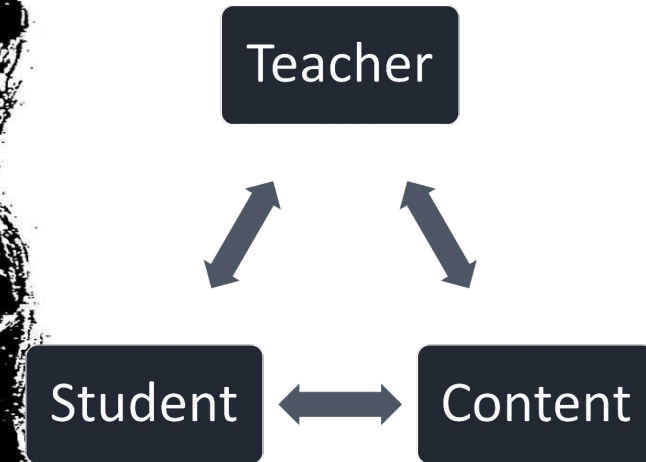
State assessment results are designed for **systems monitoring and evaluation**; in particular, identifying schools in need of additional support and intervention.

Quantitative Results Reported

- Scaled score
- Achievement level
- Subscores
- Grade level equivalent
- Percentile rank
- Growth metric



Changes to the Instructional Core of Classrooms



Consideration 7:

Through-year programs may compound existing tensions between accountability and instruction.

Why?

The literature is full of cases documenting the ways accountability pressure can have a negative impact on instruction. With more state testing throughout the year, **what is the likelihood those negative effects will increase rather than decrease?**

Some Possible Mitigation Strategies

- Do not use the results from within-year administrations in a student's summative determination of proficiency.
- Design through-year components based on rich performance tasks or other models of good classroom assessment.



Questions?
Comments?
Wonderings?

Logistical and Technical

Considerations 8-10

Consideration 8:

Through-year assessment programs likely require more time, money, and resources than current state testing programs.

Why?

Through-year assessment programs **increase the number of testing occasions**. The costly and resource-intensive large-scale assessment processes of item development, form assembly, scoring, reporting, and psychometric quality assurance apply to each administration.

Greater demands on state and local capacity

1. Administration
 - Training *times X*
 - Rostering *times X*
 - Teachers and coordinators diverted to test admin *times X*
2. Managing missing data
 - Multiple make-up days?
3. Monitoring of accommodations
4. Communicating results

Consideration 9:

Through-year programs will reduce overall testing time only if districts use them in place of their own interim tests.

Why?

Through-year assessment programs **increase** the time that students engage in state testing. To reduce the overall testing time for students, time for through-year must be taken from testing elsewhere.

Consideration 10:

Making claims about student proficiency is more challenging with a through-year assessment program than with current state testing.

Why?

End of year testing programs can make claims about student proficiency at the end of the year. To do the same, through-year programs must support strong assumptions or work through new challenges.

What kind of interpretive claim is at work?

- Is the claim about end-of-year proficiency?
 - Prediction assumption
- Is it a claim about proficiency on the last tested occasion of particular content?
 - “Adequate OTL” assumption
 - Aggregation challenge
- Is it a more complex claim, similar to course grades?
 - Conceptual challenge



Questions?
Comments?
Wonderings?

Concluding Thoughts

We Need:

- **Evidence.** Building a research base involves:
 - Careful and deliberate design and implementation
 - Making space and time for research
 - Attending to unintended consequences
- **Partnerships** across vendors, states and research groups to build this evidentiary base together.





The Road Ahead

- Assessment evolves.
 - There have been a number of periods in this evolution.
- Each period has offered promise, and delivered on *some* of that promise.
 - What are the promises we, collectively, should work to deliver on?
 - What do we hope will be the legacy of through-year assessment in five years? Ten?

Q & A Session

We Want to Hear from You

- We'll take your questions however you want to ask them:
 - Use the Q & A function
 - Use the chat
 - Raise your virtual hand and we'll unmute you
- Please keep your questions concise and comments relatively brief.

Kickoff Questions

1. What do you think is driving this interest in through-year assessment?
2. What are the most optimistic outcomes you envision for through-year assessment systems?
3. What are your biggest concerns about things that could go wrong with through-year systems?

Additional Resources & Wrap-Up

2021 Convening Materials



The graphic features a large, stylized number '2' composed of blue and orange dots. Below it, the text '2021 CONVENING' is displayed in bold black letters. To the left is a green leaf-like icon. Below the title are four numbered boxes with icons and text:

- 1. DEFINITIONS, AIMS, AND USE-CASES (with a right-pointing arrow icon)
- 2. CLAIMS, DESIGNS, AND EVIDENCE (with a starburst icon)
- 3. TECHNICAL AND LOGISTICAL ISSUES (with a curved arrow icon)
- 4. THREADING THE NEEDLE (with a needle and thread icon)

https://www.nciea.org/library/?_resource_events=convening

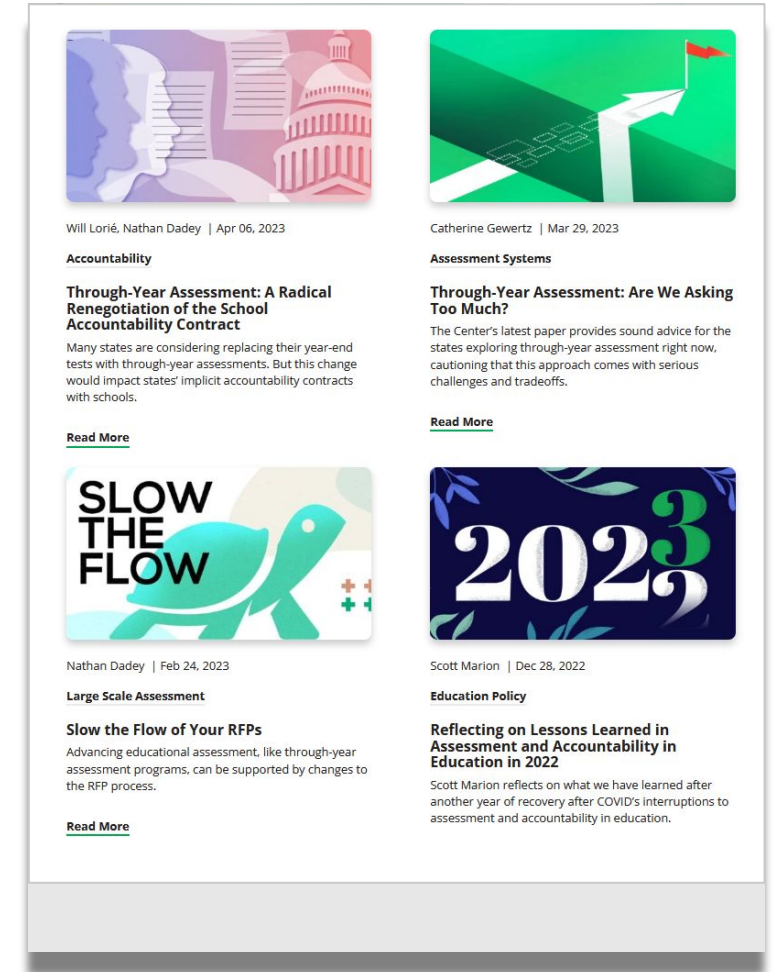
Considerations Paper



The graphic shows a photograph of students in a classroom. Below the photo, the title 'THROUGH-YEAR ASSESSMENT: TEN KEY CONSIDERATIONS' is written in bold black letters. Below the title is the date 'March 2023' and the authors 'Nathan Dadey, Carla M. Evans & Will Lorie' from the 'Center for Assessment'. The Center for Assessment logo and '25th ANNIVERSARY' are also present. At the bottom, it says 'National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Dover, New Hampshire'.

<https://www.nciea.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Ten-Key-Considerations-Through-Year-Assessment-Report-March2023-F.pdf>

Blogs



A grid of four blog cards. Each card has a header image, a title, a byline, a category, a short description, and a 'Read More' link.

- Card 1:** Header image shows a profile of a person and a building. Title: 'Through-Year Assessment: A Radical Renegotiation of the School Accountability Contract'. Byline: Will Lorie, Nathan Dadey | Apr 06, 2023. Category: Accountability. Description: Many states are considering replacing their year-end tests with through-year assessments. But this change would impact states' implicit accountability contracts with schools.
- Card 2:** Header image shows a green landscape with a white path leading to a red flag. Title: 'Through-Year Assessment: Are We Asking Too Much?'. Byline: Catherine Gewertz | Mar 29, 2023. Category: Assessment Systems. Description: The Center's latest paper provides sound advice for the states exploring through-year assessment right now, cautioning that this approach comes with serious challenges and tradeoffs.
- Card 3:** Header image shows a green turtle. Title: 'Slow the Flow of Your RFPs'. Byline: Nathan Dadey | Feb 24, 2023. Category: Large Scale Assessment. Description: Advancing educational assessment, like through-year assessment programs, can be supported by changes to the RFP process.
- Card 4:** Header image shows the year '2023' in white on a dark blue background with leaves. Title: 'Reflecting on Lessons Learned in Assessment and Accountability in Education in 2022'. Byline: Scott Marion | Dec 28, 2022. Category: Education Policy. Description: Scott Marion reflects on what we have learned after another year of recovery after COVID's interruptions to assessment and accountability in education.

https://www.nciea.org/blog/?_search=through-year

Thank you!

**Please contact us
with any questions.**

Nathan Dadey
ndadey@nciea.org

Carla Evans
cevens@nciea.org

Will Lorie
wlorie@nciea.org

Scott Marion
smarion@nciea.org



www.nciea.org