State Transition to High-Quality, College/Career-Ready Assessments:
A Workbook for State Action on Key Policy, Legal, and Technical Issues

Updated as of November 14, 2013

Table of Contents

Part I: Overview

Purpose

Over the next few years, states will be transitioning to new, high-quality assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or other state college- and career-ready (CCR) standards. States are committed to making this transition in a manner that is determined and thoughtful – to help transform teaching and learning, advance CCR outcomes, and close achievement gaps. The purpose of this document is to provide states with a workbook to inform this transition to high-quality, CCR assessments, with a particular focus on the policy, legal, and technical decisions states must address.[1] This workbook (along with state team meetings and other supports) is meant to help each state (1) evaluate its current readiness for this important transition, (2) identify priority issues for state action, and (3) develop a workplan to guide assessment transition over time.   This workbook was initially presented in draft for use at the CCSSO state team meeting on transition to high-quality, CCR assessments on August 20-21, 2013. We are continuing to revise and expand as appropriate to keep information updated and relevant.

Background

As embodied in the CCSS (and other state CCR standards), there is a new consensus goal that all students must graduate from high school ready for college and career. This includes mastery of more rigorous content knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge through higher-order skills. Achieving this goal for all students, particularly disadvantaged students, will require fundamental changes in teaching and learning. Between now and 2014-15, nearly every state will transition from current state assessments (generally aligned with prior state standards) to new, high-quality assessments aligned with CCSS/CCR standards in reading/language arts and math, including the state consortia assessments, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) or the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced). This will be a critical moment of truth and transparency for our education systems – helping policymakers, educators, parents, and students understand where we are and what it will take to move to CCR performance for all students. The few states that have already made this shift toward CCR state assessments have seen dramatic drops in the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency, as expected. The key for states will be to make this transition in a manner that galvanizes stakeholders to stay the course and empowers educators and others to make rapid, continuous improvement toward CCR outcomes for all students.

A Framework for CCR Assessment Transition

As states move forward on implementation of CCSS/CCR standards, they must address three overlapping sets of issues:

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[1] This workbook provides guidance on a range of issues that may implicate federal and state legal requirements, and is based on analysis of existing law in that regard. However, it is not meant to provide specific legal advice, which will depend among other things on particular state context.

1. **Instruction and Supports.** First and foremost, the shift to CCR standards and assessments must empower the shifts in teaching, learning, and supports that are necessary to achieve new, higher outcomes for all students, particularly disadvantaged students. Effective transition to CCR standards and assessments will require states and districts to ensure that educators at all levels of the system have access to the resources necessary to succeed, including curriculum and instructional tools, formative assessments, professional learning opportunities, and robust student data. States and districts must also ensure that students and their parents have access to the information and supports necessary to reach CCR standards, for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

2. **Communications and Coalition-Building.** To ensure strong implementation and understanding of CCR standards and assessments, such that they help transform teaching and learning, states will need to develop and implement rich, thoughtful systems of outreach and communications to all stakeholders, including educators, parents, and students, as well as business, civil rights, and political leaders. These systems should include proactive messaging and communications, strong partnerships and coalitions, and systems of rapid response to deal with challenges as they arise.

   Instruction and Supports

   Transition to CCR Standards/ Assessments

   Communic-ations and Coalition-Building

   Policy, Legal, and Technical Issues

3. **Policy, Legal, and Technical Issues.** States will need to address an array of policy issues related to the transition to CCR standards and assessments, such as how new assessments will be used in state accountability determinations, educator evaluation, and high-stakes student decisions. Several of these decisions implicate federal legal requirements, as well as state law. These issues require states to lead effective processes of policy design, make thoughtful decisions, and implement systems of feedback and continuous improvement over time.
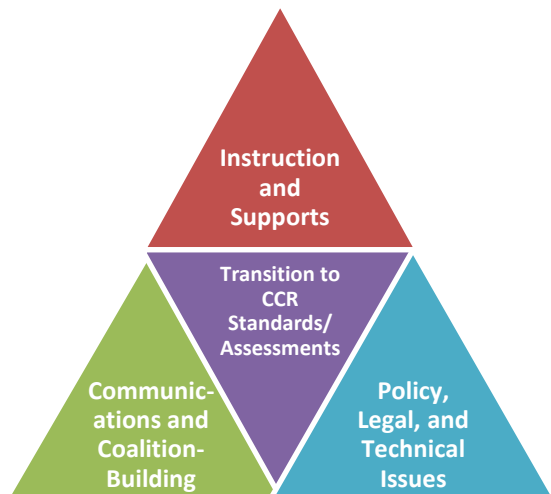
This workbook focuses primarily on the third piece of this puzzle above – the array of policy, legal, and technical issues implicated by the transition to CCR assessments. These issues are described in detail in the pages that follow. This document does not seek to resolve every such issue; those decisions will depend significantly on each state's context and values. Rather, this workbook is designed to provide a framework and template for each state to chart its own best path. This includes in Part II an overview of the policy, legal, and technical issues, and guiding questions for each state to determine its priorities, readiness, and action items. This also includes in Part III a brief analysis of each issue and deeper-dive questions to guide state decision-making.

Overarching Issues in CCR Assessment Transition

Before turning to the array of specific policy, legal, and technical issues states must address in transition to CCR assessments, it is important to note several overarching issues that states should keep in mind across these issues and throughout the transition.

- ✓ **Commitment to High-Quality.** State transition to CCR assessments is meant to enhance the quality of state assessments. New assessments should be fully aligned to CCSS/CCR standards, assess deeper learning knowledge and skills, cover the full range of cognitive complexity, meaningfully inform and reflect strong teaching and learning, be internationally benchmarked, and be valid and reliable for each intended use. Whether implementing the new CCSS consortia assessments (PARCC or Smarter Balanced) or other assessments aligned to CCSS/CCR standards, states must ensure that new assessments meet a new, higher bar of quality that can help transform teaching and learning, and help ensure that all students are prepared for college and career. To that end, on October 1, 2013, CCSSO released the High Quality Summative Assessment Principles for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Assessments Aligned to College and Career Readiness Standards. The principles included therein are intended to be used as a tool to help states hold themselves and their assessments accountable for high quality.

- ✓ **Multi-Year Transition.** State transition to CCR assessments will be a multi-year process, which will require multiple steps in state policy and other actions. For most states, 2012-13 involved implementation of historical state assessments aligned to historical state standards, not CCSS/CCR standards – though a few states have already implemented transitional state-developed or other assessments aligned to CCR standards (such as KY and NY). Most states will implement historical state assessments again in 2013-14 and/or field test new CCSS/CCR assessments, including the PARCC or Smarter Balanced consortia assessments. In 2014-15, most states will implement CCR assessments statewide for the first time. Finally, 2015-16 will be the second administration of CCR assessments in most states, providing two consecutive years of data on the new assessments, supporting more clear determinations of growth, and bringing some stability to the system. In developing a transition strategy, states must think about the full sequence of steps through transition from 2012-13 to 2015-16 and beyond.

- ✓ **Timeline/Authority.** Given the multi-year, multi-step nature of this transition to CCR assessments, it is important that states work backwards from key deadlines to determine the optimal timing (likely a range) within which key decisions must be made. Further, states should be clear on who has authority (formal and informal) to make and/or influence each decision, particularly including decisions with legal or budget implications.

✓ **Aligned Strategy.** While each policy, legal, and technical issue in this workbook is discussed separately, they are actually deeply integrated – just as the broader policy, communications, and instructional issues associated with transition to CCR assessments are so integrated. For example, the move to CCR assessments is an opportunity to align systems of school accountability and educator evaluation. Further, provision of teacher and student supports is vital to building public will and ensuring appropriate judgment regarding teacher or student performance. As a result, states must not only examine each priority issue, but think across those issues and across their strategies to ensure a coherent, aligned approach.

✓ **Continuous Improvement.** The shift toward CCR standards and assessments is meant to promote a new era in teaching and learning. This will not be like flipping a light switch. Rather, this movement is an opportunity to move toward systems of innovation, evaluation/feedback loops, and continuous improvement at all levels, to best advance CCR outcomes for all students. States and districts must build in cycles of review and refinement as part of this strategy process.

Part II: State Self-Assessment on CCR Policy, Legal, and Technical Issues

As the first step in a more complete planning process toward transition to high-quality, CCR assessments, each state should take time to determine its status on a range of policy, legal, and technical issues, including identification of the highest priorities and most significant opportunities and challenges within those priority areas. We have identified a set of priority issues, which are listed below in a somewhat linear fashion, though we recognize that priorities will vary from state to state, and that there are numerous other important issues for states to consider.

I. **Transition Assessments in 2013-14:** Some states may need to determine which test(s) to administer in 2013-14 (and 2014-15), such as current state assessments (not aligned to CCCS/CCR standards), new/transitional state assessments aligned (in whole or part) to CCSS/CCR standards, and/or field tests of new CCR assessments.

II. **School and District Accountability**: States will need to consider how to incorporate new assessments into accountability systems in 2013-14 and/or 2014-15 and beyond, including with regard to annual accountability determinations, classifications and consequences, public reporting, and continuous improvement of CCR systems of accountability and supports.

III. **Use of Assessment Data in Educator Evaluation**: Many states will have to determine when and how to incorporate measures of student growth based on new CCR assessments into systems of educator evaluation, including design, implementation, and use to inform personnel decisions.

IV. **High-Stakes Student Decisions**: Some states that use assessments to inform "high-stakes" student decisions (e.g., graduation, promotion) will need to determine if and how to phase-in and use new CCR assessments to inform those decisions, or how the nature of the stakes may evolve through the transition.

V. **Testing Time and Cost**: States will need to understand, accurately determine, and effectively communicate about the time and cost associated with new assessments, and the implications of that, including as it relates to the range of state and local assessments being replaced.

VI. **Data and Technology Readiness**: States will need to understand the technology infrastructure necessary to support full movement to CCR assessments, and the gap in current technology. Also, states will need to determine what investments in data systems will be necessary to support best use of CCR assessments and other data to inform teaching and learning, while respecting student privacy.

Other important policy, legal, and technical issues are discussed briefly at the end of this workbook, and may be addressed in greater detail over time, including accommodations and

alternatives for students with disabilities and English Language Learners, alignment with postsecondary education, and alignment with early learning, among other issues.

State Self-Assessment on Transition to CCR Assessments

Policy Issues Self-Assessment/ Planning Questions	I. Transition Assessments in 2013-14 (and 2014-15)	II. School and District Accountability	III. Use in Educator Evaluation	IV. High-Stakes Student Decisions
1. What is the status of state planning in this area, particularly for 2013-14 as well as 2014-15 and beyond? How high a priority is this area?				
2. What issues have been decided? What issues remain open for state action?				
3. What are the key challenges/questions in addressing those issues?				
4. What is the decision-making process? Who has authority? What is the timeline? Who else should be involved?				
5. How can state action best support positive shifts in teaching and learning? What, if any, negative impacts should be avoided?				
6. What communications strategy should the state have on this issue? To what stakeholders? With what partners?				
7. What support, if any, does your state need in this area?				

Policy Issues *Self-Assessment/ Planning Questions*	V. Testing Time and Cost	VI. Data and Technology	VII. Other	VIII. Other
1. What is the status of state planning in this area, particularly for 2013-14 as well as 2014-15 and beyond? How high a priority is this area?				
2. What issues have been decided? What issues remain open for state action?				
3. What are the key challenges/questions in addressing those issues?				
4. What is the decision-making process? Who has authority? What is the timeline? Who else should be involved?				
5. How can state action best support positive shifts in teaching and learning? What, if any, negative impacts should be avoided?				
6. What communications strategy should the state have on this issue? To what stakeholders? With what partners?				
7. What support, if any, does your state need in this area?				

Part III: Deep Dive on State Policy Issues on CCR Assessment Transition

This section provides room for deeper state analysis and decisions on several major policy, legal, and technical issues related to state transition to CCR assessments. For each issue, we include (1) a statement of the particular challenge, (2) a set of principles that should guide state deliberations, and (3) an initial list of deep-dive questions for states to work through in addressing the issue.

I. Transition Assessments in 2013-14 (and 2014-15)

Issue: **As we transition to CCR assessments, some states will need to determine what assessments to administer in 2013-14 and how to do so.** Most states will continue to administer prior state assessments or transitional state assessments that bridge between prior state standards and CCSS/CCR standards, while also field testing new CCR assessments (including PARCC and Smarter Balanced). Some states may consider whether to avoid "double-testing" by administering either current state tests or new field tests to some or all of their schools. Federal law (NCLB) requires that each student be tested each year in grades 3-8 and once in high school. CCSSO convened states in spring 2013 to develop recommendations to USED allowing states to use either state tests or field tests in 2013-14 in certain circumstances. Secretary Duncan subsequently issued guidance to states allowing them to seek field testing flexibility in this regard. Whatever the choice of assessment in 2013-14, states should consider how to best advance shifts toward CCSS/CCR teaching and learning during that period. Finally, states that may not move forward on one of the consortia assessments should have a clear plan for ensuring high-quality, CCR assessments by 2014-15.

Guiding Principles:
- States should continue to assess each student every year at least in grades 3-8 and once in high school using either prior state assessments or new assessments aligned with CCSS/CCR standards, including transitional assessments or field tests of new CCR assessments, as appropriate.
- States should continue to provide, to the full extent possible, timely data and reports to students and families that explain those test results.
- States should have clear pathways toward full implementation of high-quality, CCR assessments through 2013-14 and by 2014-15 (such as with PARCC or Smarter Balanced).

Sample Deep-Dive Questions on Transition Assessments:

Questions	State Response
1. How will you approach **testing for the 2013-14 school year** – administer the current state assessment and CCR field tests, a transitional assessment and field tests, or	

Questions	State Response
apply for a waiver to administer only the field tests for some schools or districts?	
2. What are the **state's plans for field testing** in 2013-14 (if applicable)? Who is participating in the field test, and how were they selected? What controls are in place to ensure a representative sample? How much time will students spend on the field test? When will it be administered? How is the state communicating to policymakers, educators, parents, and the public about field testing and the data, if any, that will be available?	
3. If you are **considering administering only field tests to some schools in 2013-14**, does the test design support this? Through the assessment consortia or otherwise, what can be done in terms of aggregate and individual test reports? How will you relate different assessment outcomes across the state?	
4. Which consortia or other CCR assessments are you planning to use in **2014-15 and beyond**, and what are the implications for your state's 2013-14 assessment?	
5. How can you best **promote shifts in teaching and learning** aligned to CCR/CCSS through assessments in 2013-14 and beyond?	
6. Other	

II. School and District Accountability (and Reporting)

Issue: Each state will have to determine how it will leverage and incorporate new CCR assessments into annual accountability determinations in 2013-14 (if relevant), 2014-15, and 2015-16 and beyond. This raises a number of technical issues related to setting performance standards/cut scores, setting annual measurable objectives, calculating growth in student performance, and combining assessments with other measures. The likely significant drop in the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency on CCR assessments presents one important challenge. Federal law (NCLB) requires annual accountability determinations for all schools and districts. Each state will have to determine how to make annual determinations regarding accountability, supports, and consequences even as it is shifting toward CCR teaching and learning and CCR assessments – perhaps on different timelines. Finally, states have a parallel opportunity to continuously improve systems of CCR accountability and supports, including public reporting, through this transition – to improve CCR accountability measures, strengthen diagnostic reviews and supports, and advance new competency-based pathways. CCSSO convened states in spring 2013 to develop recommendations in which states can report annual accountability determinations through assessment transition but hold schools in status in terms of supports and consequences, including most significant interventions in lowest performing (e.g., Priority) schools. Secretary Duncan subsequently issued guidance to states permitting some flexibility in this regard.

Guiding Principles:
- States should make annual accountability determinations for all schools and districts throughout the assessment transition.
- States should continue to report timely data (including by subgroup) to schools, parents, and the public, to the full extent possible.
- States should continue throughout transition to provide a range of supports and interventions to underperforming schools, particularly including lowest performing schools, which may include holding in status, which may implicate federal law (including under ESEA waiver flexibility).
- Accountability determinations in 2013-14 and 2014-15 should be based in significant part on state and/or CCR assessments, and will continue to reflect to the extent possible student performance according to status measures, growth measures, graduation rates, etc. – for schools overall and by student subgroup.
- States should set performance levels for new assessments at CCR (or on-track-to-CCR) levels for purposes of school and district accountability, and promote ambitious, achievable improvement toward those outcomes for all students.
- States should leverage the opportunity of the assessment transition to continuously improve the validity and utility of CCR accountability systems, including with regard to shifts in teaching and learning.

Sample Deep-Dive Questions on Accountability and Reporting:

Questions	State Response
1. Will your state make any **changes to accountability systems/determinations for 2013-14**? Will your state hold status on supports and consequences, including identification of the lowest-performing schools?	
2. How will your state set **CCR performance on new assessments as "proficiency"** for school and district accountability? How will you utilize other performance levels, if at all?	
3. How will **new CCR assessments be incorporated in accountability** in terms of annual measurable objectives (for status and/or progress), use with multiple measures (including measures from other subjects), etc.?	
4. How and when will you incorporate **growth measures** based on new CCR assessments? Will you try to do so across different assessments (and if so, how) or wait for two or more years of new data?	
5. How will your state make **accountability determinations for 2014-15 and for 2015-16**? How does the transition to CCR assessments connect with broader efforts to **improve state systems of CCR accountability, diagnostic review and supports** (such as move to more competency-based models)? How will you ensure and improve validity over time?	
6. Will your state seek to **hold**	

Questions	State Response
schools in status in terms of supports and consequences until 2014-15 or 2015-16, including with regard to priority and focus schools? Will the state use new assessments to incentivize and recognize high performance/improvement, including Reward schools?	
7. How will the state **report data from new CCR assessments** to best inform parents and other stakeholders at the school level, and to improve teaching and learning?	
8. **What have you learned to date in terms of identification or supports to schools and districts?**	
9. Other	

Issue: The majority of states are advancing new systems of educator evaluation based on multiple measures of student achievement and educator practice, including measures of student growth based on state assessments (where applicable). Each state must determine how to phase in use of new CCR assessments in this regard. This applies to both states that are already implementing and using new systems of educator evaluation, including for professional development and/or personnel decisions, and states that are phasing in those systems over the next few years.   States need to determine how this transition can best transform teaching and learning. States will need to determine when and how they can sufficiently determine student growth for purposes of educator evaluation (particularly between 2013-14 and 2014-15), including states that require multi-year averages. There are also legal issues associated with use of assessments for "high-stakes" personnel decisions, and the assessments must be used in a manner that is sufficiently valid and reliable for those purposes, including providing sufficient notice, training, and supports for educators. Current federal ESEA waivers require state development and implementation of educator evaluation and support systems by 2014-15, though many states have more ambitious state laws. CCSSO convened states in spring 2013 and developed recommendations that would allow states to use most valid student achievement data for educator evaluation during assessment transition (such as with non-tested grades and subjects) and/or interpret ESEA waiver requirements to allow states to phase in use of assessments for personnel determinations, with no need for moratorium. Secretary Duncan subsequently offered states the opportunity to apply for a waiver for one year of flexibility (until 2016-17) in use of data from new CCR assessments to inform personnel decisions.

Guiding Principles:
- States that are moving on educator evaluation should continue to move on design, implementation, and use of educator evaluation systems based on multiple measures of student achievement, including new CCR assessments as appropriate, feasible, valid, etc., and/or other measures of student achievement as necessary (though this may implicate federal waiver requirements).
- Use of evaluation results based on new CCR assessments may (as determined by states and/or districts) be phased-in over time, including the option of an initial focus on professional development and sequencing of additional uses for personnel decisions that appropriately reflects educational judgment, growth model requirements, validity, etc.
- States should ensure the necessary training, communication, and processes of ongoing support and monitoring so that implementation of the evaluation system promotes effective teaching and learning, and is part of an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement.

Sample Deep-Dive Questions on Educator Evaluation:

Questions	State Response
1. What is the **status of your state's design, implementation, and use of educator evaluation** based in part on growth on state assessments? How does your timeline relate to transition to CCR assessments?	
2. Is your state planning to use **growth measures** as a part of educator evaluation during the CCR assessment transition, particularly in 2014-15? What is your technical approach to this based on your growth model? How will this be understood and communicated to the field? What other student achievement measures could be used during this transition (such as with non-tested grades and subjects)?	
3. How is your state planning to use educator evaluations based in part on CCR assessments during this transition, including in 2014-15? Will they be used **for purposes of professional development or to inform any "high-stakes" personnel decisions**? If so what is your plan to ensure sufficient notice, opportunity, validity, etc.?	
4. How can the movement to CCR assessments for purposes of educator evaluation best **inform and transform teaching and learning** in your state? What does this mean for phase in of uses?	
5. How can the **state system of educator evaluation be improved** over time to	

Questions	State Response
promote CCR outcomes in parallel to phase in of CCR assessments, and ensure alignment across multiple measures with regard to the full range of CCR knowledge of skills (including through "non-tested" grades and subjects, in high-quality observations, etc.)? How can the move to CCR assessments and data reporting help drive new, more effective models of professional development and practice?	
6. Other	

IV.   High-Stakes Student Decisions

Issue: Nearly half of the states use state assessments for some form of "high-stakes" student decisions, including graduation and/or retention in grade. As these states shift to new CCR assessments, they should consider whether, and in what ways, to use these assessments for high-stakes student decisions. Because they may result in denial of a "property interest" under federal (or state) law (e.g., a high-school diploma), high-stakes testing decisions implicate two core legal doctrines – due process and nondiscrimination. In general, due process requires that students have sufficient notice of the new requirements and sufficient opportunity to learn the material being tested on the front end; that the assessments be valid and reliable for their purposes; and that students have opportunity for remediation, retesting, and/or alternative pathways on the back end. Further, where a given assessment policy results in "disparate impact" by race or ethnicity (such as significant gaps in award of diplomas), nondiscrimination laws require that the policy be related to a legitimate educational purpose (including valid and reliable for that purpose) and that there not be a less discriminatory alternative. The shift to CCR standards is a significant one in terms of student expectations, teaching, and learning, and can be expected to result in continued disparities in student test scores by subgroup. If states are going to use new CCR assessments to inform high-stakes student decisions, then states must be deliberate in fashioning a strategy that is educationally sound and minimizes legal risk. This may involve immediate shifts in CCR teaching and learning; administration of current and new CCR assessments over several years; and a mix of student supports, multiple opportunities, and/or alternate pathways.

Guiding Principles:
- States should consider the value proposition—the pros and cons—associated with using CCR assessments for high-stakes student decisions, and have a clear, educationally sound purpose for any policies that advance such high-stakes uses (including consideration of the likely consequences of those policies).
- States should seek to expose students to CCR standards, teaching, and learning as quickly as possible.
- In cases where high-stakes student consequences attach to CCR assessments in particular states, those states should:
  - provide students and parents with sufficient notice of policy and practice changes (along with projected timelines);
  - provide students with opportunity to learn the material being tested in new CCR assessments, through aligned curriculum, instruction, and supports over a period of years;
  - provide plans for student remediation and multiple opportunities to take the assessments, and consider educationally appropriate alternative means for students to demonstrate mastery;
  - consider using assessments as one of several factors in making high-stakes decisions; and

o monitor the impact of high-stakes testing decisions for students, in particular significant subgroup disparities, and explore possible approaches to mitigate those disparities while maintaining the rigor the student assessment process.

Sample Deep-Dive Questions on High-Stakes Student Decisions:

Questions	State Response
1. **Does your state use assessments for high-stakes student decisions** (in whole or part), including student promotion/retention and/or high-school graduation? If so, would new CCR assessments be used for this purpose, or is this under consideration? When would this shift occur?	
2. If applicable, what is your state's **educational rationale** for having high-stakes student assessment? Does that rationale still hold as we shift from minimum competency to CCR standards and assessments, and how important is it in the current reform environment?	
3. What **notice** has the state provided regarding the transition to CCSS/CCR standards and assessments? When? How is the state ensuring corresponding shifts in **opportunity to learn** in terms of curriculum, instruction, supports, etc.?	
4. Is the state considering continued implementation of **current state assessments for high-stakes purposes for some cohorts of students**, during the transition to CCR assessments? If so, how aligned are those standards to/as part of the new CCSS/CCR standards and assessments?	

Questions	State Response
5. Will the state have **remediation opportunities, multiples administrations, and/or alternative pathways** for students to demonstrate mastery if they do not succeed on the state assessments?	
6. What is the state's plan for **monitoring the results** of new CCR assessments in terms of subgroup performance, and taking appropriate action?	
7. Other	

V.   Testing Time and Cost

Issue: Current investments of time and money in state assessments vary widely. **As states transition to high-quality, CCR assessments, they are addressing potential issues of increased time and cost.** New CCR assessments, such as those being developed by PARCC and Smarter Balanced, include a suite of assessments, including summative, formative, interim, and performance-based components, and they are designed to be more rigorous and useful in teaching and learning than current state assessments, covering more fully the range of cognitive complexity aligned to CCR standards. Each state needs to have a clear analysis of what CCR assessments cover relative to current state and local assessments they may replace – and what are the real time and cost implications. Further, states need to understand and be able to communicate the increased value and benefits that CCR assessments can bring in terms of better teaching, learning, and student outcomes.

Guiding Principles:
- States should fully and accurately determine the real time and costs associated with new CCR assessments relative to the range of current state and local assessments they may replace, and determine accurately if and how the transition does in fact increase testing time and/or cost.
- States should understand and be able to communicate the increased value associated with high-quality CCR assessments to teaching and learning (even if there is increased time or cost).
- States should partner with local districts to maximize value of new CCR assessments to teaching, learning, and student outcomes, while minimizing time and costs.

Sample Deep-Dive Questions on Time and Cost:

Questions	State Response
1. What is your state currently spending in terms of time and costs (per student) on state assessments? What are the **total time and costs being spent on state and local assessments** (broken down by grade and subject)? How does this relate to the real time and costs associated with new CCR assessments, including the suite of assessments? Has your state done this analysis statewide?	
2. What is the **value of new CCR assessment to teaching and learning** for the state, district, school, teachers, parents, and	

Questions	State Response
students? How do those returns compare to current state assessments in terms of alignment to CCR knowledge and skills, rigor, useful data, etc.?	
3. How is the state **communicating issues of value, time, and cost** to key stakeholders, including districts, educators, parents, etc.?	
4. How is the state **working with local districts** to ensure that district- and school-level assessments are aligned and not duplicative to the new CCR assessments - to promote coherence of assessments that drive instruction, to streamline total times spent on testing for students and to ensure cost-effectiveness in assessment spending?	
5. Other	

VI. Data and Technology Readiness

Issue: The move to new, high-quality, CCR assessments creates new challenges and opportunities for state and local data systems and technology. The goal for new CCR assessments, including the consortia assessments PARCC and Smarter Balanced, is to be delivered online, and to offer an array of timely data on student achievement that can be used to strengthen teaching and learning. According to recent state surveys and other information, this will require significant improvements in state and local technology and data systems (in terms of bandwidth, devices, training, and more) to support online administration of new CCR assessments and effective data use. This will also require new protocols for data use and privacy/security. More broadly, the investments made in technology and data to support new CCR assessments can be leveraged to advance greater benefits in teaching and learning, such as shifts to more personalized, competency-based models of teaching and learning.

Guiding Principles:
- States should have a clear vision for the technology infrastructure (bandwidth, devices, and personnel training, etc.) necessary from the state to local levels to ensure successful administration and use of new CCR assessments.
- States should have a plan in place to reach this vision, developed with stakeholders and broadly communicated to policymakers, educators, and the public, including identifying key gaps in current readiness, strategies to close those gaps, anticipated risks and mitigation strategies, and funding sources (e.g., E-Rate, blended funding streams, rural broadband programs).
- States should leverage enhancements to technology and data infrastructure to promote shifts in teaching and learning, and new school models, that can advance CCR outcomes.

Sample Deep-Dive Questions on Data and Technology:

Questions	State Response
1. Has your state thoroughly **analyzed your technology infrastructure** to support new CCR assessments? How many districts and schools have provided readiness data? What are the nature and degree of gaps in statewide infrastructure, and have you categorized districts and schools in that regard?	
2. Does your state have **a plan for enhancing technology infrastructure** and closing gaps, including communicating needs and benefits, identifying potential	

Questions	State Response
funding sources, etc.?	
3. Has your state developed a **plan for transition to online assessments**, identified potential problems that may emerge in this transition (including in field testing and/or initial implementation), and developed systems to mitigate risks?	
4. Has your state developed a **plan to improve state data systems** to incorporate new elements, share timely data with educators and others, and ensure policies and procedures related to data privacy/security?	
5. How can the advancement of technology and data systems related to new CCR assessments **advance the state's larger education reform agenda** on new, improved models of teaching and learning, particularly with regard to disadvantaged students?	
6. Other	

VII.   Other Policy Issues

There are several other important issues that states should consider and address as part of the move to CCR assessments. For example:

- **Accommodations and Alternative Pathways:** States should consider how to ensure that all students, particularly students with disabilities and English language learners, have the appropriate accommodations they need to meaningfully participate in CCR assessments, and what alternative pathways are appropriate. States will need to ensure that districts are familiar with new accommodations policies of consortia assessments or other new CCR tests and take appropriate steps (i.e. update IEPs, notify parents, etc.).
- **Postsecondary Alignment:** As states transition to CCR assessments in high school, it will be important to engage higher education, including community colleges, four-year colleges, and workforce training programs. CCR assessments should provide information that is useful to and used by postsecondary education for placement and other purposes, and CCR standards and assessments should be validated over time in that regard.
- **Early Learning Alignment:** State transition to CCR standards and assessments should align with and be informed by high-quality, birth-to-five early learning and student outcomes, including with regard to kindergarten readiness assessments, to ensure that students are on track early to CCR outcomes.