

## **Guidance in the Appropriate Use of Published State Assessment Items (organized from most to least grounded in instruction)**

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**Overview:** Examples of Kansas Assessment Items for math, reading, science and social studies exist in a variety of places and for a number of purposes. There are formative test items, practice test items, operational or summative test items, and sample item stems available with item specification tables. Some materials, such as KCA formatives and KCA operational assessments, are labeled *not* for use in direct instruction. Other items are not labeled. To provide clarity in practice, the following guidelines are offered with a summary table to assist schools in the appropriate use of Kansas Assessment items. In general, actual or slightly altered items from the real test must not be used outside the actual test itself. KCA Formative Test items should not be used for direct instruction but reserved for checkpoint testing. Practice tests to familiarize students with the format and style of the assessments may be used as needed and instructional programs such as Blending Assessment with Instruction Program (BAIP) will use formative assessment items for instruction but do so in the context of concept development. BAIP is approved by KSDE and should be the model for how Learning Stations materials can be used for instruction. The best practice is to reserve all formative assessments, Learning Stations as well as KCA Formatives, for check point testing.

**Blending Assessment with Instructional Practice (BAIP) items:** As part of a KSDE funded and endorsed program of staff development and student remediation in Mathematics instruction focused on assessed indicators (grades 3-high school), CETE has included a tutorial in which some items used in the KCA formative assessments are presented for direct instruction. Once concepts have been addressed and instruction in the targeted indicators has occurred, students take a posttest. If they have responded incorrectly to the test items, they are offered a tutorial in which they are presented with the reason for why the distracter they chose is incorrect.

You SHOULD USE the BAIP for remediation and tutorial. You SHOULD USE the following instructional model with BAIP :

- pre-test with KCA Formative Assessment or the equivalent Learning Stations formative items (outside of BAIP),
- use the KCA Formative Item Analysis to pinpoint individual students and groups of students who have not mastered critical features of the concepts being taught
- use the distracters in the BAIP tutorial formative assessment items to instruct students directly in distinctions critical to understanding the concepts being taught
- DO NOT use formative assessment items for drill and practice, isolated from the context of concept development of a targeted standard, benchmark, or indicator.

**KCA Practice Items:** Before students take Kansas Formative Assessments or the Kansas Summative (operational or “real test”), CETE requires them to take on-line KCA Practice tests, which familiarize students with the format and style, but not the content, of Kansas assessments. Remember: Formative Tests are NOT Practice Tests.

You SHOULD USE the KCA Practice tests to prepare students in the operation, format, and style of Kansas online assessments.

**Item stems in Flip Charts and in KSDE and WestED Item Specification Charts:** With each assessed indicator, KSDE has published “item specifications” which WestED is required to follow in the construction of state assessment items. In addition, KSDE has supplied sample item stems to accompany these test specifications. The sample item stems are included in the “flip charts”

and intended to inform teachers and test writers about how the items themselves are to be written.

You MAY USE item stems to create items to help students understand critical features of concepts being taught. Although these sample item stems are not intended to be used to create items for student practice, they may be used as part of instruction when following the BAIP model above. The school district will not issue sanctions on their use if the above guidelines (BAIP Model) are followed and if schools do not create or teach items in isolation.

**Learning Stations Formative Assessment Items which Duplicate Existing KCA Formative Assessments But Which Do not Carry Any Caveats About their Use:** These are items released some years ago by KSDE to Learning Stations and which Learning Stations made available free to schools before CETE deployed them as KCA Formative Assessments and placed a label on them prohibiting their use for direct instruction. At that time the school district copied these items and distributed them to schools. The items were also posted in Compass as instructional resources. Neither KSDE nor CETE has control over these particular items and cannot require that they be labeled.

You MAY USE the Learning Stations Formative Assessment Items that duplicate existing KCA formative items but that do not carry the same caveat on their use. Although these formative assessment items were intended to be used as formative assessments, the unlabeled Learning Stations items may be used as part of instruction when following the BAIP model above. The school district will not issue sanctions on their use if the above guidelines (BAIP Model) are followed and if schools do not create or teach items in isolation. However, the school district advises schools in the best practice (below) of using the Learning Stations materials for formative assessment in the same way as KCA Formative Assessments should be used.

**KCA Formative Assessments Items:** CETE says that “formative assessments are intended to provide ongoing feedback about student acquisition of knowledge and skills expressed in the language of the targeted (tested) standards, benchmarks, and indicators (SBIs) Formative assessments focus on the CONTENT of the SBIs so that effective instructional intervention can occur. To be clear, generally they do not measure all the benchmarks.”

You SHOULD NOT USE KCA Formative Assessment items for direct instruction. CETE says that “Items that appear on the Kansas Formative Assessments are restricted. They should not be used for direct instruction.” CETE also says to “Keep in mind that there are no security requirements associated with access and use of the formative items.”

**Best Practice in the use of Formative Assessment:** Many of the KCA Formative Assessment items are duplicated in the Learning Stations materials, but they are not labeled with the same caveat against use in direct instruction. Our best practice advises schools to restrict the use of both the KCA Formatives and their duplicates in the Learning Stations materials. Use these assessments for checkpoints and not for direct instruction; however, because the Learning Stations materials are now independent and not labeled, neither KSDE nor CETE nor the school district imposes sanctions on their use. The school district does advise that if schools use in direct instruction those Learning Stations Formative Assessments which duplicate existing KCA Formative Assessments, the schools should follow the BAIP model of imbedding the use of the formative items in instructional as part of concept development. No items should be presented to students for practice and drill isolated from an instructional context.

The school district will not issue sanctions if the above guidelines are followed in the use of formative assessment items.

**“Cloned Items”:** Items which replicate existing stems, answers, and distracters on existing summative (“real”) tests are called “clones” if everything is copied from real test items but numbers or names. The Examiner’s Manual (Appendix A, Part 3) states “Don’t use actual or

altered test questions for practice or instruction. Similar or altered questions may not be used for practice or instruction.”

You MUST NOT use “cloned,” altered, or actual test items for direct instruction. Use of such items is a breach of test security and invalidates the test. These breaches of test security must be reported to the district assessment coordinator, who is required to report them to the state. Student re-testing may result. Incidents of such breaches are investigated and the results of the investigation reported to the school district Human Resources Assistant Superintendent.

**Operational KCA Test Items (“the Real Test”):** CETE says that “Summative or ‘operational’ assessments have to do with AYP accountability. The summative assessments are the assessments of record, aligned to the targeted standards, benchmarks, and indicators, and measuring their breadth and depth.” “Items that appear on the operational or ‘Real’ Kansas Assessments are secured and must not ever be used for direct instruction.”

You MUST NOT use items from the real test for instruction. Security of operational tests is required. Use of operational tests for instruction is a violation of test security and invalidates the test. These breaches of test security must be reported to the district assessment coordinator, who is required to report them to the state. Student re-testing may result. Incidents of such breaches are investigated and the results of the investigation reported to the school district Human Resources Assistant Superintendent.