

STUDENT ASSESSMENT INVENTORY FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Across the country, educators, parents, and students are saying that there is too much testing in our schools and that testing is taking valuable time away from teaching and learning. These concerns are legitimate and merit attention. School district officials have the opportunity to respond to concerns about over-testing by leading a conversation among educators and the broader community that directly addresses the amount of testing – and points the way toward a more coherent, educationally-sound approach to assessment.

Achieve's *Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts* is a tool district leaders can use to take stock of their assessments and assessment strategy, and do so from a student perspective. The tool supports a process by which districts evaluate the assessments students are taking, determine the minimum testing necessary to serve essential diagnostic, instructional and accountability purposes, and work to ensure that every district-mandated test is of high quality, is providing the information needed for specific school and district purposes, and is supported by structures and routines so that assessment results are actually used and action steps taken that will help students. We encourage local district leaders who use this inventory to discuss the outcome with parents and the school board. What tests have been eliminated? How will the remaining tests be used, and why are they important?

Before embarking on the inventory, districts should understand that this is a multi-stage and iterative process:

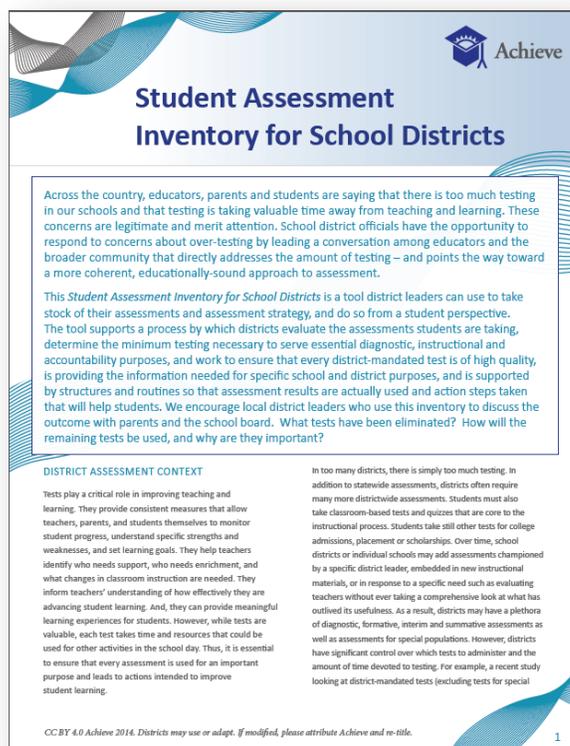
- ◆ Taking stock and then taking action requires **significant district commitment**.
- ◆ The inventory tool is **only one element of a thoughtful, longer process** that both productively engages with concerns about testing and leads to real changes in testing time.
- ◆ The inventory tool is a **suggested template**, but districts are free to modify the tool to better meet their needs.
- ◆ The inventory is **not a one-time event**. Districts should regularly re-examine their assessments in light of changing district needs and improvements in available assessments.

The assessment inventory tool envisions a four-stage process in districts:

Reflect and Plan: A set of **guiding questions** that districts use to initiate the planning process.

Conduct the Inventory: The Inventory Table is designed to capture information the district collects about the assessments. **It is openly licensed**, which allows for modifications as needed to suit the district's goals and context.

Analyze the Inventory: In analyzing the inventory, it is critical to perform several levels of analysis, including: Developing a **student-level perspective** by looking across all assessments students take at a particular grade level or grade band, and then by particular student needs and characteristics; Identifying assessments that district will **continue** to administer, and clarify if any need changes to ensure they are helpful for intended uses; Identifying the assessments that seem to be on the table for **elimination or significant changes, and**; Helping districts **build toward recommendations** while reengaging with key stakeholders to review potential options and decision points.



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Number	Recommendation	Rationale	Authority	Timing of Recommendation	Action Steps
Example	Discontinue use of PLACE ELA beginning in January 2015	Redundant with ELA Grow test	Superintendent	Sept. cabinet meeting	Need to write proposal memo with supporting evidence
1					
2					
3					
4					

Make Recommendations: Based on the inventory analysis, what recommendations will the district make to streamline and/or strengthen its assessment program?

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- ◆ There are three types of questions being asked in the table: **Basic information questions, Use/purpose questions, and Operational questions.**
- ◆ Some information to complete the table will not be directly available from test specifications and may require communicating with users of the assessment, especially with respect to issues of assessment use. A short survey or set of focus groups may be appropriate in such circumstances.



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Inventory Table



Name of individual(s) completing the table				
Date				
Optional Category: English Language Arts (e.g., grade level, subject)				
Name of assessment	(Example) PLACE ELA			
Entity requiring assessment <i>state – SEA or other agency; district; or school</i>	District			
Grade(s) tested	5-8			
Course(s) or subjects tested	ELA			
Which students are eligible or required to take assessment?	All students in these grades who are also required to take regular state assessment			
Type of assessment <i>summative; interim/benchmark; formative; diagnostic</i>	Benchmark			

To download, please go to: www.achieve.org/assessmentinventory