



National Center and State Collaborative

National Center and State Collaborative General Supervision Enhancement Grant

About NCSC

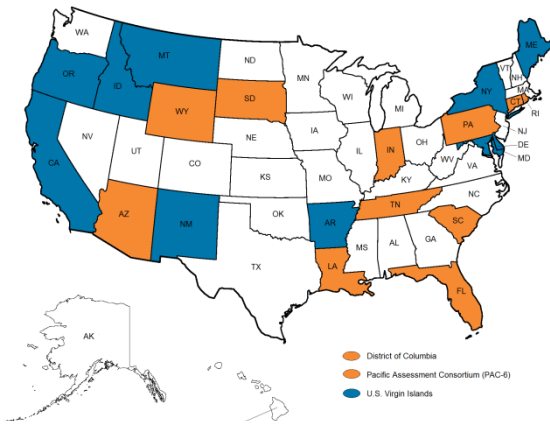
The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) is a project led by five centers and 24 states (13 core states and 11 Tier II states) charged with building an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The goal

of the NCSC project is to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options. A well-designed end-of-year test alone is not enough to achieve that goal. NCSC will also develop curriculum, instruction, and professional development support for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities. All partners share a commitment to the development of a comprehensive model of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and supportive professional development.

All partners share a commitment to the research-to-practice focus of the project, and to the development of a comprehensive model of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and supportive professional development.

The NCSC project represents:

- Best practices and lessons-learned from over a decade of research on assessment, academic instruction, communication, and learner characteristics of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities
- A collaborative effort that brings together experts and practitioners from a variety of fields including special education, assessment, curriculum and instruction, and communication sciences
- A practice-oriented approach designed to support administrators, teachers, and families
- An opportunity to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities benefit from the national movement toward Common Core State Standards designed to prepare all students for success in college and careers



Organizations

- National Center on Educational Outcomes
- National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment
- University of Kentucky
- University of North Carolina-Charlotte
- edCount, LLC

States

*Original partner states are orange in color and states that joined later are blue in color

Arizona	Connecticut	District of Columbia	Florida
Indiana	Louisiana	Pacific Assessment Consortium (PAC-6)	Pennsylvania
Rhode Island	South Carolina	South Dakota	Tennessee
Wyoming			

Tier II states (state partners that joined later in the project)

Arkansas, California, Delaware, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, and the US Virgin Islands

NCSC FAQs

Why do we need a new alternate assessment?

The national consensus around college and career ready standards based on real-world expectations presents an opportunity to raise expectations for all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities. As states build common general assessments that measure college and career readiness, as defined grade by grade in the Common Core State Standards, we need an alternate assessment based on the same foundation of rigorous real-world content, while taking into account these students' unique learner characteristics.

What is the format of the NCSC Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS)? The NCSC AA-AAS in mathematics and English language arts (ELA) will be on demand, item-based assessments of approximately 30 items that assess a set of approximately 10 prioritized content targets per grade level. A trained testing administrator familiar to the student (e.g., the student's teacher) will administer the items to the student over the course of one or more testing sessions, based on the student's needs. Testing sessions will be scheduled within a testing window of approximately two months. A variety of item types will appear in the assessments. A principled design approach, based on the evidence-centered design (ECD) literature, is being used to determine the appropriate item types for each assessed content target. The items are primarily selected response. Constructed response items are used when the principled design approach indicates they are needed to measure the intended content.

What grades and content will be assessed? What is the timeline for the operational test?

NCSC will deliver an AA-AAS in mathematics and in English language arts (both reading and writing), for grades 3-8 and 11. Prioritized content targets have been identified for all grades based on learning progressions and alignment to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), striking a balance between sufficiency of information to make inferences and sensitivity to time constraints for this population of students. The first full census operational test will be administered in spring 2015, with standards set as early as possible that summer so that results can be used for accountability purposes. See the attached timeline for specific development milestones including pre-pilot research fall 2013; pilot test to generate item statistics, refine design winter/spring 2014; field test of preliminary forms fall 2014; operational assessment spring 2015.

How will technology be used in the NCSC assessment?

Students will interact with the NCSC assessment in a variety of ways, depending on their needs. Some students will interact with the computer and the testing platform directly, with the test administrator monitoring their work. For other students, their test administrator may print out testing materials, administer the items, and enter student responses into the computer. The NCSC system architecture is designed to accommodate use of emerging technologies such as tablets. Training materials will introduce students and teachers to the technologies for the NCSC assessment. The assessment will be delivered through a technology platform that has been defined in the NCSC Technology Architecture Plan and Report. It can be downloaded at http://3f071e93aad6392d132c-25358a031817aa7f80c72ac2922ef9ef.r3.cf2.rackcdn.com/NCSC_TechArchReport_103112.pdf See pages 69-71 for hardware requirements for end users.

Will the NCSC assessment be available to all states?

Yes. While only the partner states will have the opportunity to shape the design of the assessment system, all states will have access to all NCSC products after the project ends. You can find more information on the NCSC website at www.ncscpartners.org or by contacting Project Director Rachel Quenemoen at quene003@umn.edu or 612-708-6960.



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NCSC Overall Timeline January 2011-October 2015

Year 1 (2011): Content Model Phase: Define model of domain learning in math/ELA for these students, identify prioritized content for assessment

Year 2 (2012): Principled Design Phase: Design Patterns, Task Templates, C/I/PD design and pilot; Technology architecture design

Year 3 (2013): Item and Test Development Phase: Task Template Tryouts, Item Specs/item development/item reviews, Student Interaction Studies (SIS), Draft grade level PLDs, finalize pilot/field design, Tech build

Year 4 (2014): Pilot, Field, Research Phase:

- **Pilot Phase 1: National Sample, generate item statistics Winter/Spring 2014,** Finalize blueprints, revise items, assemble forms
- **Phase 2: Field Test Forms Fall 2014,** finalize administration training and supports

Year 5 (2015): Operational administration of NCSC assessments

- Summer 2015: Set Standards
- Fall 2015: Technical reporting complete



Summative Assessment Products Following Grant

At the end of the project's grant funding by fall 2015, states will have:

- A minimum of two forms per grade and content area suitable for future operational use.
 - Information necessary to direct presentation of content in such a manner as to honor the test specifications, blueprints, and psychometric targets for the assessment.
 - Algorithms, rules, and/or tables necessary to produce overall scale scores and performance levels.
 - Rubrics for all human scored items as well as protocols for training scorers and implementing the scoring process.
- Design specifications for all static reports produced to include individual student reports.
- Ancillary material to support administration of summative assessment to include test administration manuals, resources to support training of test examiners, and score interpretation guide.
- Detailed technical documentation of process, procedures, and results from all test development activities.
- All test items developed for the NCSC assessments (i.e. the item bank) will be made available in a format that meets industry standards for interoperability.
- Specifications for certification and implementation of the technology system and training resources.

