THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

15 Assessment Designs for the Innovative Assessment Pilot

KnowledgeWorks

Center for Assessment

nellie mae EDUCATION FOUNDATION

www.InnovativeAssessments.org

SECTION 1204

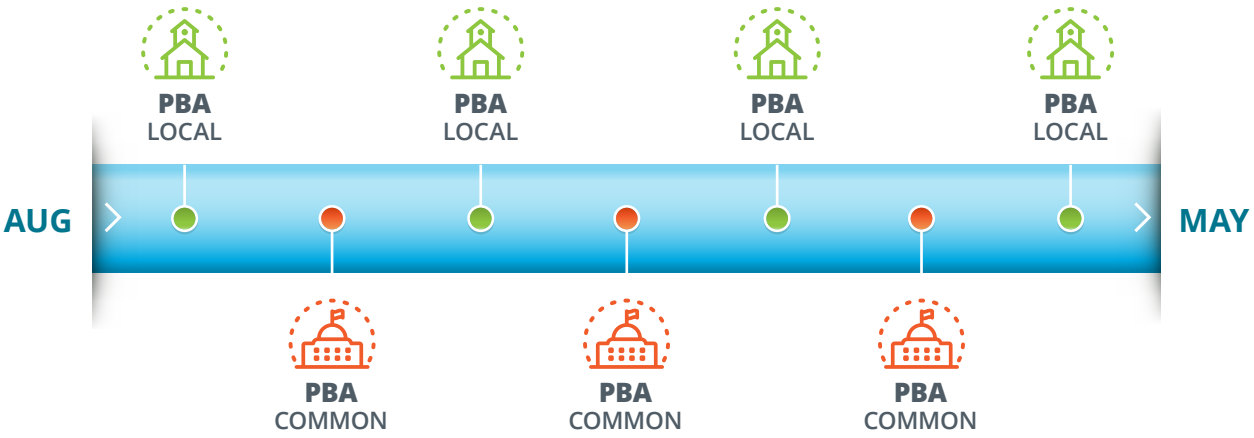
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Section 1204 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Innovative Assessment and Accountability Demonstration Authority, provides states with a unique opportunity to design innovative, student-centered assessment systems that provide stakeholders with meaningful information on student performance. Congress intended for the Demonstration Authority to be flexible so states would have the opportunity to pilot and scale unique approaches to assessment that will advance the field and inform policy and practice for years to come. Given this flexibility, interested states can consider a range of assessment designs to determine which approach is best aligned to the state's vision and theory of action for reform. This resource provides states with an overview of 15 possible assessment designs that are permissible under Section 1204, the Innovative Assessment and Accountability Demonstration Authority. While this resource does not represent every possible design permitted under the statute, these examples should spur discussion about different strategies for improving state assessment design.

MODEL 1

Common and Local Performance-Based Tasks That Assess All Standards

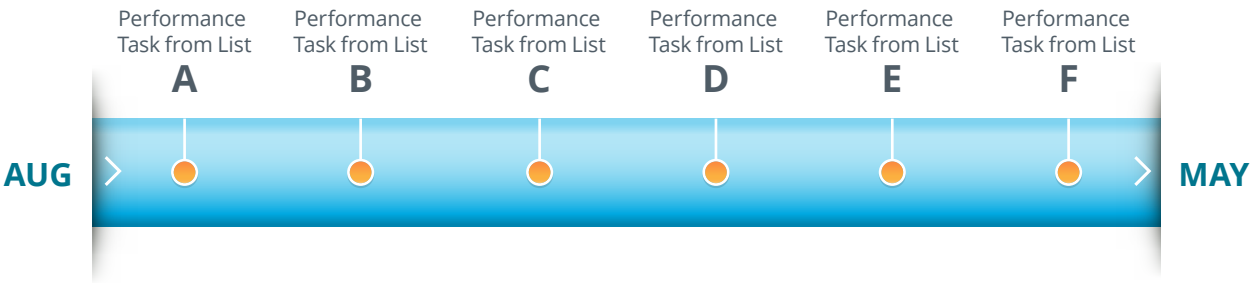
Model 1 is a comprehensive performance-based assessment (PBA) design that measures the full range of the State's challenging academic standards (and aligned competencies as applicable). Under this model, the State would work closely with districts to create an assessment system that consists of locally-selected or developed performance tasks and a set of common performance tasks administered across all districts to help stakeholders evaluate comparability in scoring. While districts would have considerable flexibility in the design of local assessments, the State must set up a number of quality control and auditing techniques to ensure that those assessments are of high quality and aligned to the full range and depth of the State standards. The State should play a role in the creation of common and/or local performance tasks and in the creation of rubrics that serve as a guide to districts to ensure alignment, consistency, and technical quality of performance tasks.



MODEL 2

Common Performance Tasks: Choose One from Each List

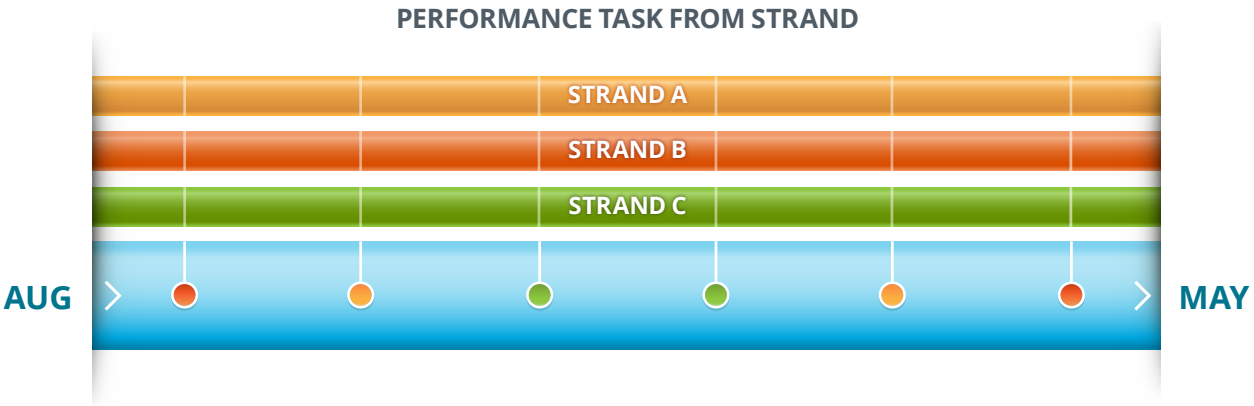
Model 2 is also a comprehensive PBA design where districts have the opportunity to select a State-approved performance task from each list that covers a group of standards (or aligned competency when applicable). When combined, the performance tasks would cover the full range and depth of the State's challenging academic standards. The State would need to pilot test each performance task within each list to ensure the tasks produce comparable determinations of what students know and can do relative to the standards. Districts would have the flexibility to administer the performance tasks from each list at a time that is most relevant to the local instructional calendar. At the conclusion of the school year, the student performance across tasks would be aggregated to calculate a summative score of each student's performance against a complete set of State standards.



MODEL 3

Common Performance Tasks: Choose a State-Approved Strand

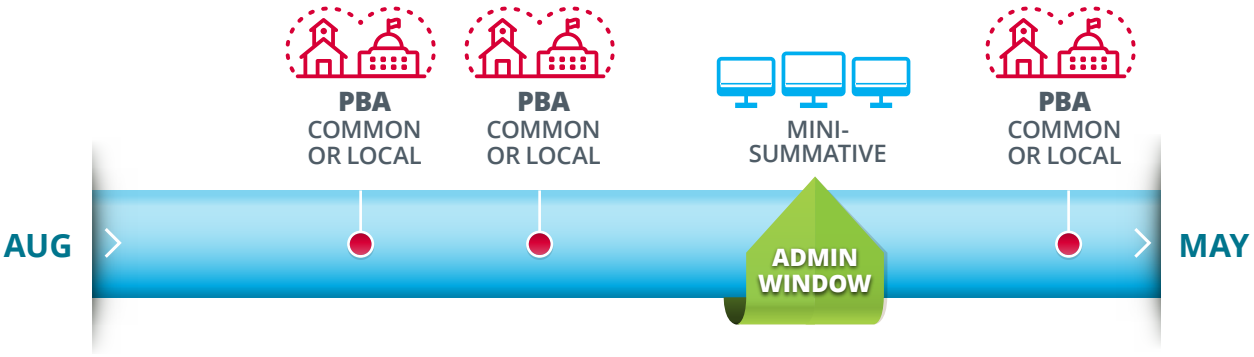
Model 3 is a comprehensive PBA model in which a State develops a set of performance task strands that consist of performance tasks aligned to the State's challenging academic standards. The strands could differ in the tasks administered, but more importantly, would differ in the order in which tasks are administered. Districts would have the flexibility to choose the strand with the sequence of performance tasks that best supports their local curriculum. This model is similar to model 2 but is a bit more restrictive to strengthen both task security and comparability. The State can carefully plan to equate the scores across the different strands to ensure comparability by including common performance tasks across the strands.



MODEL 4

Common or Local Performance Tasks with a Mini-Summative Assessment

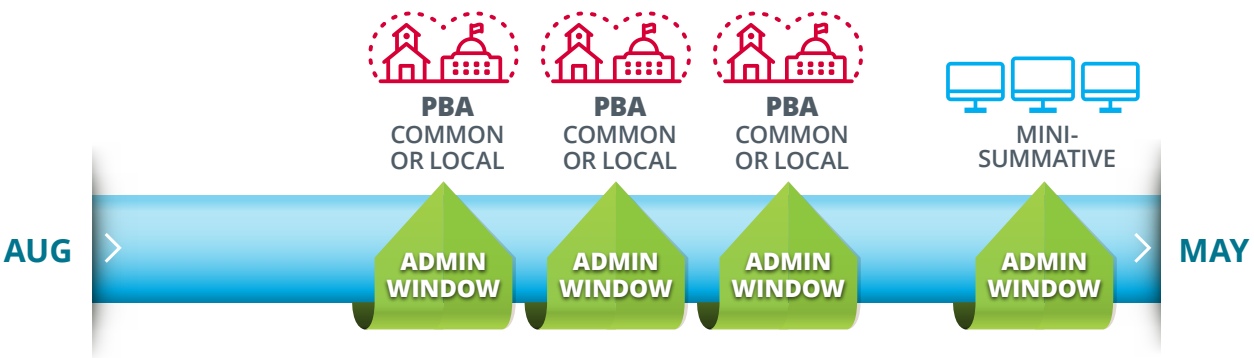
Model 4 is similar to Model 1 in that it is a comprehensive PBA design aligned to the full range of the State's challenging academic standards with district flexibility to create a State-approved local assessment system that consists of locally-selected or developed performance tasks and a set of common performance tasks. However, model 4 also includes a mini- summative assessment that measures student progress against State standards not covered by the local or common performance tasks. Under this model, districts would have the flexibility to administer local or common performance tasks at any point in the school year to ensure assessments are as curriculum-embedded as possible. The State should play a role in the creation of the common and/or local performance tasks and in the creation of rubrics that serve as a guide to districts to ensure alignment, consistency, and technical quality of performance tasks. The State can also use the mini-summative assessment as a tool to help evaluate comparability of the performance assessment results. This design is particularly strong for increasing the depth of knowledge measured by an assessment while maintaining some of the desirable technical features of a standardized assessment system.



MODEL 5

Scheduled Common or Local Performance Tasks with a Mini End-of-Year Summative

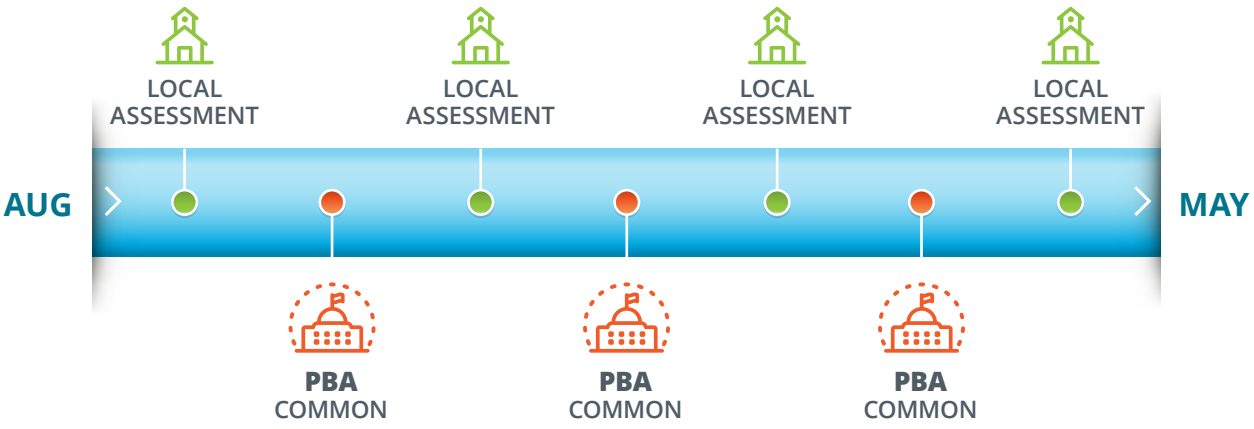
Model 5 is similar to model 4 in that it combines local or common performance tasks with a mini-summative assessment except it is more restrictive because it requires districts to administer common or local performance tasks within a State-determined timeframe. A State might prefer this design if it has a common scope and sequence across districts and wants the benefit of additional assessment task security. As in model 4, each district has the flexibility to create a local assessment system that consists of locally-selected or developed performance tasks and common performance tasks so long as all tasks are of high technical quality and aligned to the State's challenging academic standards. Each district would also administer a mini-summative assessment that measures student progress against State standards not covered by the local or common performance tasks. Under this model, districts would administer local or common performance tasks and the mini-summative according to a State-developed schedule. The State should play a role in the creation of the common and/or local performance tasks and in the creation of rubrics that serve as a guide to districts to ensure alignment, consistency, and technical quality of performance tasks. The State can also use the mini-summative assessment as a tool to help evaluate comparability of the performance assessment results.



MODEL 6

Common Performance Tasks with the Option of Supplementary Local Assessment Tasks

Model 6 is a PBA design in which the State establishes a sequence of common performance tasks aligned to the State's challenging academic standards that districts will administer throughout the year. The scores from the performance tasks would be supplemented with local assessment information to inform the summative end-of-year score for each student. The State would play a role in the development of common performance tasks and rubrics and would provide aligned professional development to support implementation of performance tasks and, importantly, implementation of high quality local assessments. All districts will have to submit the local assessment plan or blueprint to the State for review and, upon approval, must agree to participate in State audits to ensure technical quality and alignment to the State standards. The State must ensure that each district administers a sufficient number of common performance tasks so the State can evaluate the comparability of local scoring procedures.

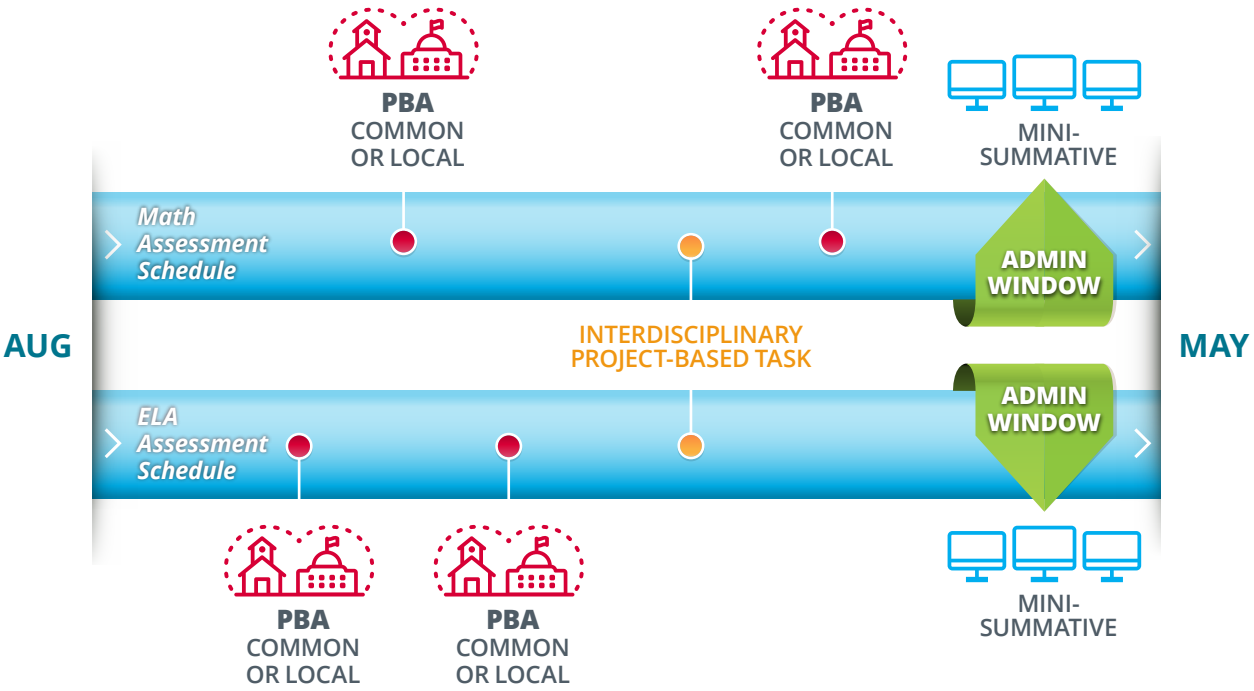


MODEL 7

Common or Local Interdisciplinary Performance Tasks

Model 7 includes one, or a series, of common or local inter-disciplinary performance tasks administered throughout the year that a State can integrate into any of the permissible assessment designs included in this resource. An inter-disciplinary performance task assesses student achievement of multiple content areas simultaneously, such as a set of standards for math and English language arts. A State would play a role in the development of these performance tasks and rubrics and would provide aligned professional development to ensure high quality information. This model will provide districts with rich assessment experiences and is most feasible when the State is planning a large shift in the instructional model. The following illustration depicts a State assessment system with a combination of common or local PBAs, a mini-summative assessment administered at the end-of-the-year, and an interdisciplinary project-based task for math and English language arts administered mid-way through the year.

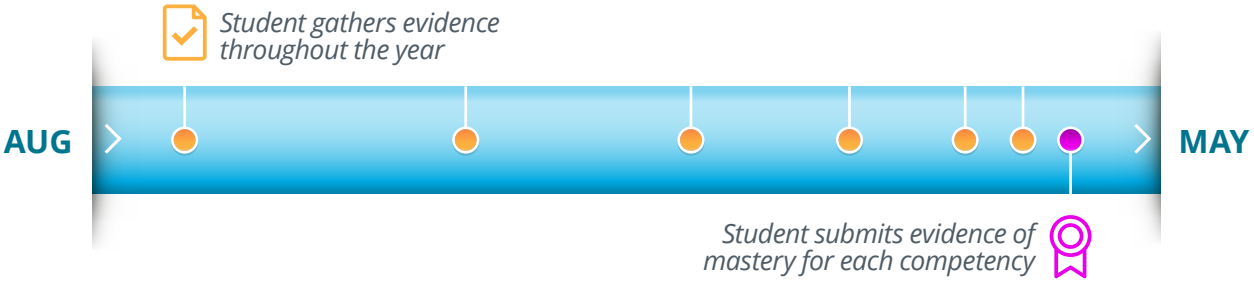
Example for Math & English Language Arts



MODEL 8

Student-Generated Evidence of Mastery

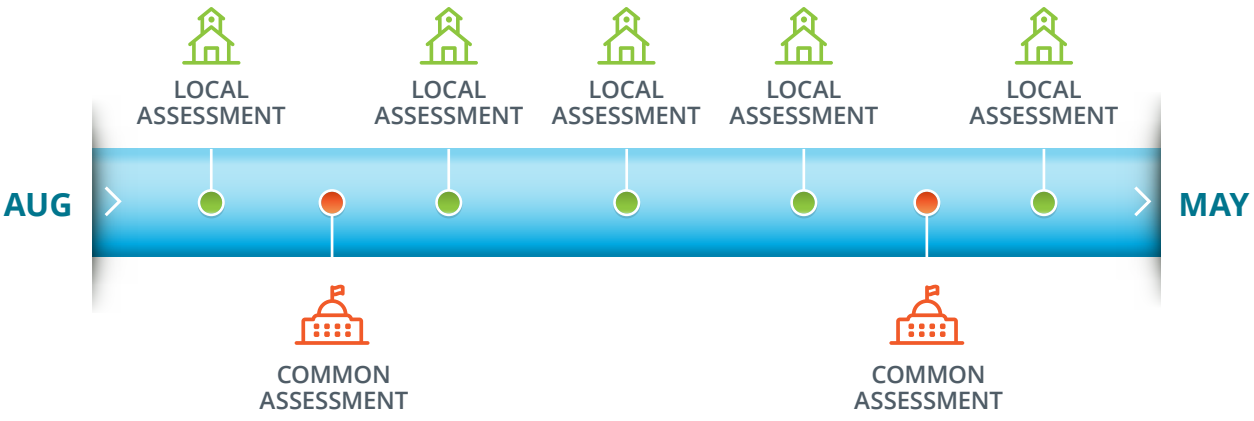
Model 8 is a student portfolio approach to assessment where students produce evidence of mastery against each of the State's challenging academic standards. Under this model, the State would play a strong monitoring role to ensure quality, rigor, and alignment of evidence. Districts would need to establish strong policies for ensuring consistency in scoring and all portfolios would be subject to State audit. This model promotes student agency and has the potential to measure State standards that are not currently assessed by standardized assessments including listening and speaking. States may consider this model if they are interested in personalized learning models of instruction, have districts with initiated computer-based portfolio systems, or have established State policies that include portfolio-based graduation requirements.



MODEL 9

Classroom Assessments and Common Assessments

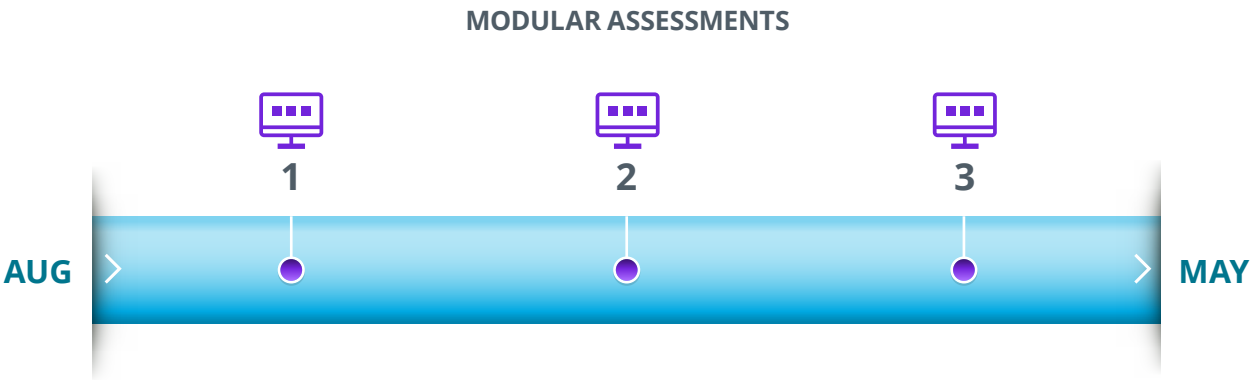
Model 9 would enable districts to establish a State-approved local assessment system that combines classroom-based assignments or assessment tasks and common assessments to produce sufficient information to validate mastery of the State's challenging academic standards. Under this model, local and common assessments can vary in assessment type and may include extended projects, exams, quizzes or performance tasks. The State would play an extensive role in building professional capacity to ensure classroom assessment practices are sufficient for generating comparable evidence of student achievement relative to the State standards. The first few years of implementation would involve intensive partnerships between participating districts and the State to create comprehensive systems of assessment within each district that can be used to support State accountability decisions as well as local uses of assessment information. The State would conduct robust auditing procedures to ensure sufficient alignment, quality and rigor of local assessments and would play a role in the development of common assessments and scoring rubrics to ensure their alignment, quality, and rigor.



MODEL 10

Modular Assessments that Cover Different Standards

Model 10 would provide states with the opportunity to break an end-of-year summative assessment into shorter, modular assessments to be administered throughout the year that cover subsets of the State standards. This approach would enable a State to more evenly distribute State testing time throughout the year and provide feedback on student performance in a more-timely manner so stakeholders can make informed decisions to continuously improve the teaching and learning system. Under this model, a State could establish the same assessment windows for all students in the State or provide districts with the flexibility to choose when they will administer each assessment to students (e.g., so that the order and timing of assessments align with local curricula). If a State decides to establish the same assessment windows for all students, then it does not need to apply for the Demonstration Authority. A State only needs the Demonstration Authority if it wants to give districts the authority to decide when to assess students.

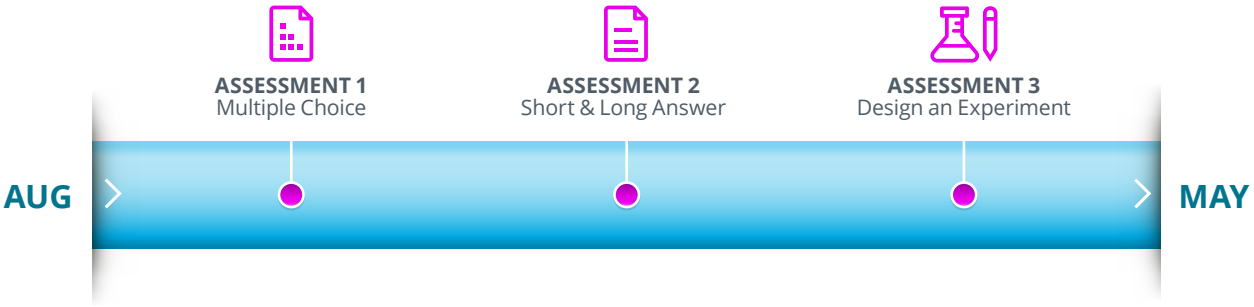


MODEL 11

A Series of Assessments that Increase in Depth

Model 11 includes a series of assessments that each cover the full set of the State's challenging academic standards but assess deeper levels of knowledge as students advance through the series. Under this model, a State may, for example, administer three assessments throughout the year where the depth at which the same set of standards are measured increases with each assessment. This model would incorporate innovative item types such as extended performance tasks or project-based assessments in order to assess deeper levels of knowledge as students advance to the end of the school year. This assessment model aligns to the learning theory that students must achieve familiarity and understanding of academic content before they can apply and extend their knowledge. Under this model, a State could establish the same assessment windows for all students in the State or provide districts with the flexibility to choose when they will administer each assessment to students. A State does not need to apply for the Demonstration Authority if it intends to administer the same assessment to all students. A State only needs the Demonstration Authority if it wants to give districts the authority to use different assessments, for example, allow for some element of choice in the third assessment that is administered.

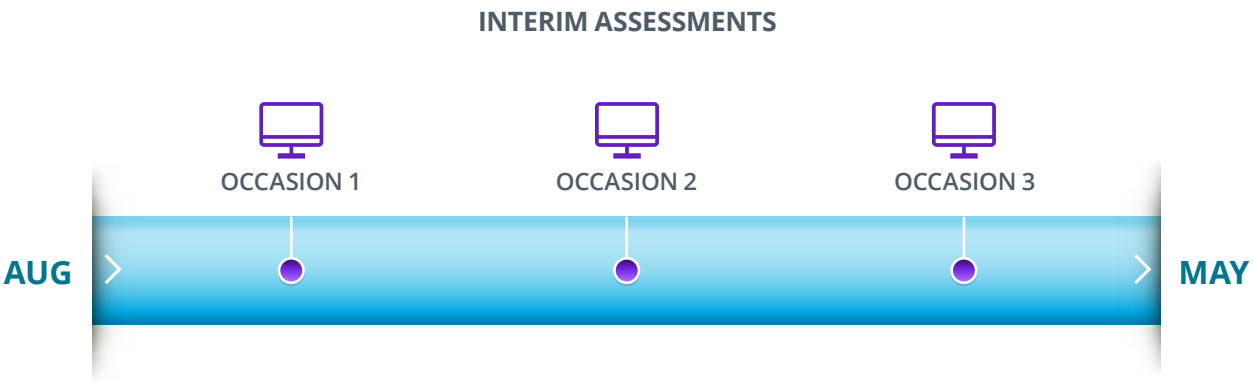
Example for Science



MODEL 12

Computer-Adaptive Interim Assessments

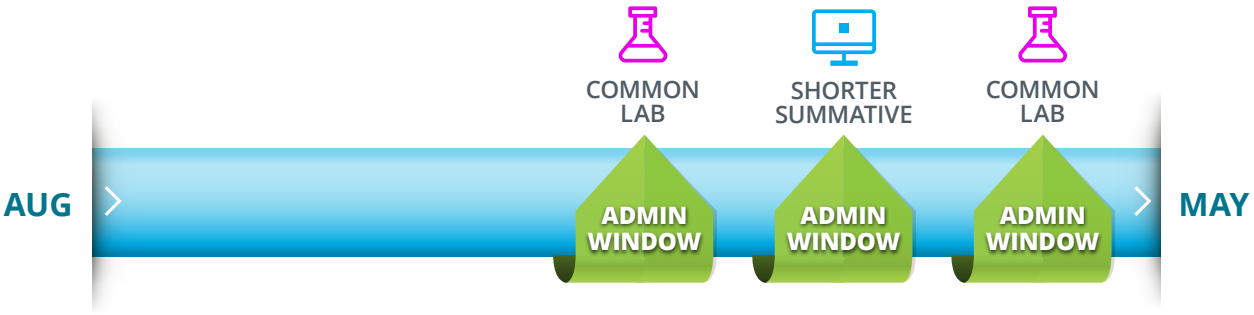
Model 12 would enable a State to incorporate computer-adaptive technology into a set of interim assessments aligned to the State's challenging academic standards that are administered throughout the year so stakeholders receive timely information about a student's current performance level in addition to information about within-year growth. Under this model, states could adopt a common set of interim assessments or districts could choose different interim assessment programs as long as there are psychometrically-sound ways to evaluate the score comparability across the assessments. A State may supplement the adaptive assessments with richer assessment tasks to ensure the assessment system measures deeper levels of knowledge. Given the adaptive nature of the exams, students could participate in the assessment multiple times throughout the year without compromising security. A State only needs the Demonstration Authority if it would like to allow districts to choose their own interim assessments or if the State is interested in piloting this model with a subset of districts before expanding statewide.



MODEL 13

Shortened Summative Assessment Supplemented with Common Science Labs

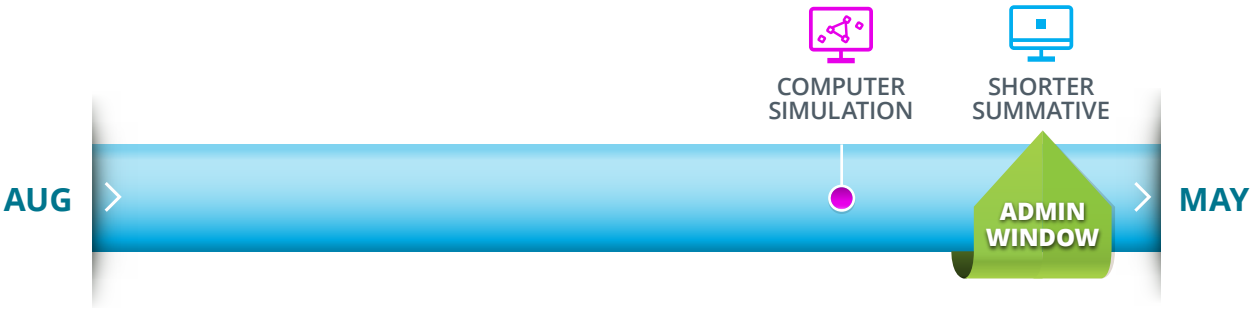
Model 13 is a combination of a shortened statewide summative assessment and common performance-based science labs that together cover the full range of the State's challenging academic standards in Science. Common labs provide states with a way to integrate innovative assessment tasks into a traditional assessment system while also reducing State reliance on one style of assessment for evaluating student performance. The State could administer science labs during a common administration window to improve test security, or they could be administered on a rotating schedule if the State will provide lab materials. The State only needs to apply for the Demonstration Authority for this model if there is some degree of local flexibility in which labs are administered or if the State is interested in piloting this model with a subset of districts before expanding statewide.



MODEL 14

Computer Simulation Science Assessments

Model 14 is a computer simulation approach to assessment where students interact with simulated lab or other science-related environments to complete an experiment or task aligned to the State's challenging academic standards for science. Rather than relying on only response data, computer simulations can provide interaction data which may lead to improvements in scoring accuracy and precision. While advances in computer technology allow for new frontiers in assessment environment, particularly for science, this area of assessment is nascent. A State will need to likely need to dedicate significant capital investment to design and implement this type of innovation. Since computer simulations are not likely to cover all standards, a State will need to supplement this model with a shorter summative assessment as in Model 13.

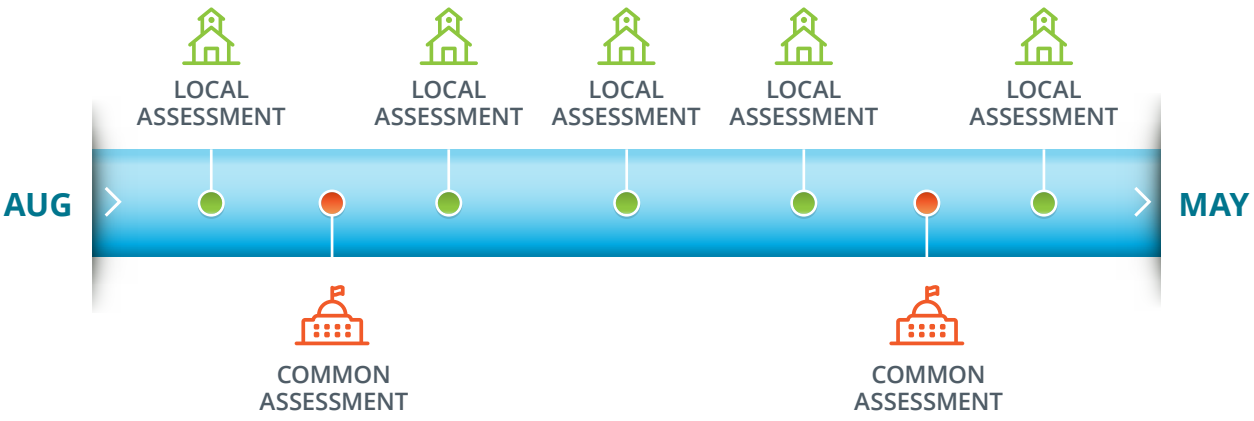


MODEL 15

District-Developed Common Assessments

Model 15 is similar to Model 9 in that it combines local classroom work and common performance assessment tasks, except this model only permits districts to report information from the district-developed common assessment tasks to the State for integration with the State's accountability system. Since many districts already have a set of common assessments for every course, a State could permit districts to submit maps of their assessment systems, their assessment development and review procedures, and samples of the assessments themselves to ensure common assessments are high quality, rigorous, and aligned to the State's standards. A State with districts already engaging in common assessment designs should expect minimal burden beyond the first few years of implementation.

The State could establish a rotating schedule for common assessments as a calibration tool for evaluating comparability in scoring. This model would require the State to invest in local assessment capacity and to establish a State mechanism for reviewing assessment-related materials and scores to ensure alignment, quality, and rigor.



Conclusion

Each of these assessment designs holds significant promise for helping states establish next generation systems of assessment that provide a rich picture of student learning. They offer states greater flexibility for designing a system around the needs of students and they emphasize mastery of deeper levels of knowledge that are critical to college and career readiness. While this is not meant to be an exhaustive list, states should consider the benefits and challenges of each model as they engage in statewide conversations about the best strategy to improve assessment policies and practice in their State. ESSA provides states with many options for innovative assessment design. This resource is an important first step in uncovering the possibility for significant student-centered education reform.