



The Future of Utah's State Assessment System

*Recommendations from the Utah Assessment
Strategic Plan Work Group*

**A REPORT OF THE UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
NOVEMBER 2020**

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Utah State Board of Education

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Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning for the Utah State Board of Education, coordinated all activities of the Utah Assessment Strategic Plan Work Group and oversaw the entire Strategic Assessment Plan project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) convened an Assessment Strategic Plan Work Group (the Work Group), comprising key education stakeholders in Utah, to make recommendations for the future of Utah’s state assessment systems. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, USBE held a series of virtual meetings with the Work Group to discuss technical, policy, and practical issues associated with implementing an improved assessment system.

This work began in April 2020 with planning meetings involving USBE assessment leadership and professionals from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (Center for Assessment), leading up to the first meeting of the Work Group at the end of June 2020. Meetings of the Work Group continued through the end of October, and this report was finalized in November 2020.

The major tasks occurred over three phases. Each phase comprised three, 3-hour webinars. Following each set of webinars, the Center for Assessment drafted sections of the report for review by Work Group members. Phase 1 webinars focused on the state summative assessment system; Phase 2 addressed issues related to the state non-summative assessments (e.g. interim and benchmark tests); and Phase 3 included important conversations about USBE’s role in providing assessment support to major state initiatives, such as Personalized, Competency-Based Learning and Portrait of a Graduate. The Work Group had the opportunity to participate in 14 total webinars: an introductory webinar, three webinars for each phase, three for reviewing the report, and a “community conversations” webinar in which feedback and input was solicited from a broad group of stakeholders beyond the Work Group.

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The following recommendations represent a consensus of the Work Group, except for the recommendation regarding writing on the summative assessment (one member dissented).

Summative Assessment (Phase 1) Recommendations

The Work Group affirmed that the primary *purposes* of Utah’s summative assessments are to

- evaluate student performance against the Utah state content standards, and
- meet federal requirements for state standards and assessments¹ as well as state requirements for assessments as documented in the Utah Code.

The intended *uses* for the state summative assessments, particularly for grades 3-8 assessments, are to

- provide accountability indicators for both federal and state accountability systems to identify schools that need additional support to meet performance standards;
- monitor student achievement in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science using multiple metrics: scores, performance descriptions, and growth;

¹ See Section 1111 of the Every Student Succeeds Act: <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=ft>.

- inform school-improvement planning along with other important sources of information (independent of accountability requirements), including curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, feedback to parents and students regarding student and school performance, and the continuous improvement of teaching; and
- support evaluations of educational programs.

To inform the Request for Proposals for the next summative assessment contract for grades 3-8, the Work Group provided the following recommendations regarding assessment-design considerations.

- **Reporting:** The Work Group identified assessment information needed by different groups of users, including state-, district-, and school-level leaders; teachers; parents; and students. The Work Group also provided feedback on the Readiness Improvement Success Empowerment Assessment RISE reports, including the individual student reports, school roster reports, school-level performance summary, and the Data Gateway. Finally, the Work Group recommended that USBE consider, based on the advice of the Utah Technical Advisory Committee and the U.S. Department of Education, reducing or removing subscores on individual and school score reports. This could both reduce the length of the end-of-year summative assessments and encourage users to rely on resources such as the benchmark assessments for apprehending what students know and can do relative to subscore reporting categories. (This may require new baseline scores as a result of a new test blueprint.)
- **Items Types:** The Work Group prioritized the use of short constructed-response items (e.g., editing tasks, short-answer response items), citing the benefit of eliciting deep understanding of content knowledge while requiring less testing time and being more cost effective when compared with extended-response tasks. The Work Group also generally favored technology-enhanced items (e.g., equation response, grid, and hot-text items) and item clusters (e.g., evidence-based selected response, simulation tasks).
- **Writing:** The Work Group strongly recommended that the summative assessments include writing. Of the various options for assessing writing, the Work Group was most in favor of having a common writing prompt at each grade level, coupled with a variety of shorter writing prompts to improve score reliability. The Work Group also suggested a state-local partnership as a potential alternative. This would involve having several prompts throughout the year, administered optionally and in accordance with state guidelines, to support instructional uses and to provide rich school-level information. However, at least one Work Group member cautioned that the pressure for shorter summative testing times may conflict with the recommendation to include writing at every grade level.
- **Adaptive Testing:** The Work Group unanimously agreed that Utah should continue to prioritize adaptive testing for its grades 3-8 summative assessments, citing better measurement precision and a more equitable and meaningful test experience for students.

Non-Summative Assessment (Phase 2) Recommendation

The Work Group appreciated the considerable range of non-summative assessments in Utah. They believed the current interim assessment offerings are useful for predicting end-of-year summative assessment performance and for providing an opportunity for students to practice with the summative-assessment format.

Most Work Group members thought the benchmark assessments should be configured at a finer grain size (e.g., at the standard level) than is currently the case. Content area and curriculum experts from a variety of Utah school districts would need to inform such a design change, however. The Work Group also recommended that USBE provide even more communication and professional development, especially around test use and interpretation, to support multiple lines of assessment literacy.

Finally, several Work Group members felt the state should support non-summative assessment of content areas beyond ELA, mathematics, and science. The state, they believed, also should support flexibility at the local level in which non-summative assessments are implemented and used.

Support for Formative Assessment

The Work Group was asked to weigh in on the role of the USBE in supporting local formative assessment practices. Perhaps because of the long history in Utah of support for formative assessment, the Work Group recommended having USBE involved in supporting local formative assessment and assessment literacy efforts by

- offering related professional-development courses, either in-person or virtually;
- supporting statewide formative-assessment professional learning communities, targeting specific grade levels and content areas;
- supporting the development and use of tools, protocols, and other resources to support assessment literacy and formative-assessment use; and
- supporting the development of a shared understanding of proficiency in the assessed content areas.

The Work Group wanted USBE to continue supporting formative assessment and assessment literacy efforts, but only in a role unrelated to compliance and other requirements.

Innovative Assessment (Phase 3) Recommendations

The last set of webinars focused on USBE's role in providing assessment resources and other support for two major, related initiatives in Utah: Portrait of a Graduate, and Personalized, Competency-Based Learning.

Assessments Supporting Utah's Portrait of a Graduate

The purpose of Utah's Portrait of a Graduate is to identify the ideal characteristics of a Utah high school graduate after going through the K-12 system, such that, upon completion, all students can achieve USBE's vision of having the requisite knowledge and skills to learn, engage civically, and lead meaningful lives. The associated [Portrait of a Graduate competencies](#) are classified as

- mastery: the ability to demonstrate proficiency and deep understanding of key knowledge and skills;
- autonomy: the self-confidence and motivation to think and act independently; and
- purpose: for guiding life decisions, influencing behavior, shaping goals, offering a sense of direction, and creating meaning in life.

The Work Group recommended having USBE play an active role in helping local school districts determine how to assess these competencies. This role could include

- providing guidance for operationally defining the various competencies so they can be assessed;
- curating a resource bank, seeded with high-quality assessments;

- providing professional-development resources regarding performance-based assessments and other tools for assessing complex and hard-to-measure competencies; and
- convening district personnel to create assessments and develop other resources to support Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

Personalized, Competency-Based Learning (PCBL) in Utah

Utah developed a Personalized, Competency-Based Learning (PCBL) framework, which is intended to support implementation of the Portrait of a Graduate and other important learning goals. The PCBL framework calls for

- holding high expectations for all students,
- aligning from pre-K through higher education, and
- providing students with personalized opportunities to demonstrate competency.

The Work Group discussed the role that USBE should play in supporting PCBL and, in turn, made recommendations for how USBE can support local implementation of the PCBL framework.

The Work Group advocated a limited state role in the assessment of Portrait of a Graduate competencies so that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) retain authority over the implementation and assessment of these competencies. That said, the Work Group recommended state support that does not usurp, or conflict with, local authority, such as disseminating best practices, supporting professional learning communities, and providing professional development.

The Work Group was also asked to provide recommendations about the importance for the state, through the full state assessment system, to support the assessment principles associated with the PCBL framework:

- Assessments include authentic application of acquired knowledge, essential skills, and dispositions.
- Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do.
- Students are supported in demonstrating learning in multiple ways.
- Assessments have a performance component.
- Assessments are taken when the student is ready.
- Assessments provide descriptive feedback for guiding student learning.
- Assessments provide a positive and meaningful learning experience.

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Balanced System of Assessments

Balanced assessment systems are useful for addressing the multiple purposes and uses of assessments that stakeholders desire. The Work Group was charged to consider how these various assessment components can be leveraged in designing a balanced assessment system. Such a system serves students, educators, and parents, and it ultimately meets regulatory requirements at the federal, state, district, and school levels.

Utah’s assessment system includes interim and benchmark assessments procured with, and tied explicitly to, the state’s summative assessment in reading and math. USBE also offers formative tools in reading, mathematics, science, and writing. While such a system is not fully balanced, it is designed to eliminate incoherence between the state summative assessment and districts’ interim assessments.

The Work Group also was charged with making recommendations regarding the near and long term for improving the coherence of state and local assessment systems. Utah’s innovative assessment initiatives—the Portrait of a Graduate and PCBL—provide opportunities for supporting more balance in Utah’s state and district assessment systems. This report explores how USBE can support more balanced assessment systems and higher-quality local assessment systems.

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INTRODUCTION

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) sought to evaluate the state assessment system to ensure alignment with USBE's Strategic Direction and, in turn, make recommendations for the system's future. Toward this end, USBE convened an Assessment Strategic Plan Work Group (the Work Group) comprising key education stakeholders in Utah. USBE employed the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (Center for Assessment), a non-profit, non-partisan consulting firm, to facilitate the Work Group and provide assessment expertise throughout the process. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, USBE held a series of virtual meetings with the Work Group to deliberate over technical, policy, and practical issues associated with implementing an improved state assessment system.

The Work Group had two major goals. One goal was to provide recommendations to support the drafting of a new Request for Proposals (RFP) for Utah's next statewide summative assessment system. USBE's contract with Cambium Assessment lasts through the reporting of the 2021-2022 assessment results. Having a new (or continuing) assessment contractor in place for the 2022-2023 school year will require USBE assessment staff to write a new RFP by early 2021. The Work Group's second goal was to support the state's long-term vision for student learning and school organization, including Utah's education stakeholders' interests in two major initiatives: [Portrait of a Graduate](#) and [Personalized, Competency-Based Learning](#) (PCBL). This aspect of the work required discussions of assessment systems, assessment literacy, and local and state coordination of assessment resources.

This report presents the results of the Work Group's deliberations and its recommendations to USBE, as well as related considerations for the state's RFP for the next statewide summative assessment system.

This report presents the results of the Work Group's deliberations and its recommendations to USBE, as well as related considerations for the state's RFP for the next statewide summative assessment system. What follows reflects almost exclusively the consensus of Work Group members. Where consensus was not reached, decisions were based on an overwhelming majority of members.

Process

In early April 2020, Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning for USBE, discussed with the Center for Assessment the possibility of supporting the state's assessment strategic planning efforts under USBE's current contract with the Center. The Center's Executive Director, Scott Marion, shared with Mr. Nielsen related work that the Center had done in Wyoming, Alabama, and New Mexico. The Center agreed to support USBE in this effort, and proposed a structure and process for carrying out the work; planning continued through May and June 2020.

USBE leadership recruited a representative collection of education stakeholders and, in turn, used the Assessment and Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (AAPAC) to form the Work Group. In addition to ensuring geographic and demographic diversity, USBE secured representation from charter schools and schools engaging in innovative educational and assessment approaches, such as competency-based

and personalized-learning systems. Thirty-six education stakeholders and AAPAC members were invited to join the Work Group but 24 ended up participating in the Work Group activities.

Professionals from the Center for Assessment (Scott Marion, Leslie Keng, and Michelle Boyer) facilitated an initial meeting with a subset of the Work Group on June 22, 2020. The full Work Group convened beginning on July 1, 2020. The meetings were organized as three sets of webinars, with each set comprising three, 3-hour webinars. Following each set of webinars, the Center drafted sections of this report for review by the Work Group. After the final webinar for reviewing the draft report, the Center for Assessment and USBE finalized the report and prepared it for publication.

The first set of webinars focused on system goals, intended purposes and uses, guiding principles, and design considerations for the statewide summative assessment in grades 3-8. The second set of webinars focused on the non-summative components of Utah’s assessment system, including interim assessments and formative-assessment resources and supports. The Work Group considered Utah’s long-term vision for assessment to support various deeper-learning initiatives and to create a balanced system of assessments. The final set of webinars fleshed out the recommendations related to the long-term vision for Utah’s assessment system, particularly in terms of supporting the assessment needs associated with PCBL as well as the Portrait of a Graduate initiative.

The Center for Assessment prepared a set of technical briefs, referenced throughout this report, outlining critical issues associated with several key design considerations. These briefs allowed Center for Assessment facilitators and the Work Group to more quickly address key design considerations. The Center for Assessment then solicited feedback from Work Group members via whole and small-group discussions (using Zoom breakout rooms) and online polls during the webinars. Input from groups and individuals was captured in Google documents and related forms.

The recommendations presented in this report represent a consensus of Work Group members, with one exception: the recommendation regarding a writing component on the summative assessment (discussed below). Members were asked to weigh in on proposed recommendations throughout the process, but particularly during the three webinars dedicated to reviewing the various sections of the report. Work Group members were asked to affirm or reject the full set of recommendations presented in this report during the final webinar on October 26, 2020.

Balanced System of Assessments

Assessment systems are balanced when the various assessments in the system are *coherently* linked through a clear specification of the learning targets, they *comprehensively* provide multiple sources of evidence to support educational decision-making, and they *continuously* document student progress over time (NRC, 2001). These properties—coherence, continuity, and comprehensiveness—create a powerful image of a high-quality system of assessments, rooted in a common model of learning.

Each assessment is designed and validated to serve a limited number of purposes and uses. Explicit definitions in this regard serve as the foundation for all assessment-system design recommendations and decisions. Although many assessment stakeholders would like a single assessment to serve multiple and varied purposes, an assessment generally cannot be validated for such diverse uses. For this reason, balanced assessment systems are required to address the need for multiple purposes and

uses. The Work Group was charged to consider how these various individual assessments can be leveraged into the design of a balanced assessment system that serves students, educators, and parents, and ultimately meets regulatory requirements at the federal, state, district, and school levels.

Much of the discussion of assessment systems assumes that a state-led assessment system, having district, school, and classroom components, provides the only model of a balanced system of assessments. However, many researchers argue that districts should control the design of balanced assessment systems—because it is the district that controls curriculum, and a common curriculum is essential to a truly balanced assessment system.

However, a state can lead a “loosely coupled” system. Such systems have multiple levels of assessments, tied to the same general learning targets (e.g., content standards), and vision of learning to at least partially address the coherence criterion. In contrast, a fully balanced assessment system is more tightly coupled with the curriculum or learning progressions that guide instruction. In such systems, formative and classroom assessments are coherent with both the district and state assessments, but more importantly with the curriculum and instruction students experience. A loosely coupled system would not be as efficient as one in which information from one level (e.g., classroom) can be used to support purposes of another level (e.g., accountability), although the former represents an important step towards coherence.

Utah’s assessment system includes interim and benchmark assessments state procured, along with, and aligned to the states’ summative assessment in reading and math. USBE also offers formative tools in science and writing. Utah’s current system is designed to eliminate some incoherence between the state summative assessment and the various district-purchased interim assessments. This is a powerful example of how a state can support coherent assessment approaches.

The Work Group was charged with discussing how to improve the coherence of state and local assessment systems and making recommendations for both the near and long term. Utah’s innovative assessment initiatives—the Portrait of a Graduate and PCBL—may provide vehicles for expanding Utah’s assessment system. This report explores how USBE can support more balanced assessment systems and higher-quality local assessment systems.

Structure of the Report

We begin this report with a discussion of the guiding principles of the entire assessment system. These principles serve as touchstones for the design and implementation of

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the full system. The report then proceeds with a discussion of the Work Group’s recommendations regarding the design of Utah’s next large-scale summative assessment system. Following the discussion of the state summative assessment, the next section of the report presents the Work Group’s discussion and recommendations regarding the non-summative components of the state assessment system including benchmark and interim assessments. The report concludes with the Work Group’s recommendations for the ways in which USBE should support the assessment needs associated with two new major initiatives in Utah: Portrait of a Graduate and Personalized and Competency-Based Learning. The extensive appendices include the meeting materials and other resources.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR UTAH’S ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Assessment system design always is a case of optimization under constraints. In other words, designing Utah’s next-generation assessment will entail considerable tradeoffs. It is critical, therefore, to have agreed-upon touchstones to help guide these tough decisions. The Work Group crafted a set of guiding principles to inform the design and to serve as the foundation for the specific purposes and uses for the various components of the overall system. The Work Group believed it was important to ground these guiding principle, wherever possible, in existing law and regulation to provide a policy foundation for this work.

As stated in Utah law,² state assessments are given to determine the effectiveness of school districts and schools in providing students with the opportunity to master the fundamental educational skills named in the state’s content standards (see [Appendix A](#) for the assessment-related Utah Code referenced in this report). Assessment exists in many forms throughout the instructional cycle, and it is essential for providing feedback to both learners and teachers. State assessments, which are one component of an overall assessment system, are particularly important for (a) providing the multiple stakeholders with information to ensure that all students have equitable educational opportunities and (b) supporting continuous improvement for schools and programs. Given Utah law, the Work Group specified five guiding principles: equity, accessibility, mastery, utility, and transparency.

Equity

In the educational context, equity generally refers to all students receiving the support and resources needed to learn and develop so that every student leaves high school equipped to make productive life choices. An assessment system can support an equity agenda by providing evidence regarding the degree to which all students, and identified student groups, are meeting important achievement and growth targets. Equity is reflected in the commitment of educators to create the environments in which students are provided with the personalized support necessary for them to reach academic goals.

The Utah Constitution³ outlines the state’s commitment to equity by requiring that all Utah children have a right to a public education. Utah Code⁴ specifies that all students have the ability to learn.

² Utah Code [53E-4-301.5](#)

³ Utah Constitution [Article X, Section 1](#)

⁴ Utah Code [53E-2-302](#)

Further, the educational system must provide opportunities for all students to learn, think, reason, and work effectively, both individually and in groups. Finally, Utah Code requires that each student has a personalized education plan; that there is evidence regarding the degree to which all students and identified student groups are meeting the goals in their personalized education plans; and that the needs of identified student groups in attaining competencies and meeting growth targets are monitored.

Accessibility

Accessibility means that no student, regardless of ability, socioeconomic status, or culture, is prevented from fully participating in all learning and assessment opportunities. Toward this end, Utah Code⁵ requires that LEAs provide options to best meet each student’s personalized education needs, including high-quality personalized instruction and progress-based assessments. As such, an accessible assessment system is one for which all students are supported in demonstrating what they know and understand.

Mastery

Mastery involves rigor, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and the application of knowledge to novel situations. Utah Code⁶ requires providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate depth of knowledge and skill proficiency to help them excel in academic competencies. Further, the assessment system should be able to capture and document the annual progress students make in this regard. Excellence and mastery are addressed through a Portrait of a Graduate so that parents and educators will support students in being prepared to lead meaningful lives, consistent with the vision of the Utah State Board of Education. The assessment system must be designed to provide useful evidence here as well.

Utility

All parts of the assessment system should serve the needs of specific stakeholders including and especially Utah’s students. Utility is addressed at multiple levels of the system. The state’s assessment system should support parents, students, and educators in meeting personalized education plans through high-quality monitoring and feedback. Utah Code⁷ requires feedback for Utah’s elected representatives and for district and school leaders that allows for monitoring progress towards the long-term goals for improved student outcomes included in the school’s comprehensive multi-year strategic plan. Further, an assessment system guided by the utility principle would provide data that can be used to direct additional resources to schools in the greatest need of support. This would be part of a reciprocal accountability system that guarantees both autonomy and flexibility while holding schools accountable for results.⁸ Finally, the reporting system is critical for supporting utility. Utah Code requires an information retrieval, or reporting, system that provides students, parents, and educators with reliable, useful, and timely data to support student progress.

Transparency

Assessment system results must be presented transparently to education stakeholders so they can determine the effectiveness of school districts and schools in providing meaningful learning

⁵ Utah Code 53E-2-203

⁶ Utah Code [53E-4-307-1](#) and [53E-4-202](#)

⁷ Utah Code [53E-2-202](#)

⁸ Utah Code [53E-2-301](#)

opportunities to students.⁹ For Utah’s assessment system, as specified in law,¹⁰ transparency requires that the state agency publish an annual report card for each school. This report card includes school- and district-level results for the state assessments, as well as tools for accessing and understanding these results. The same law also requires the provision of individualized student achievement reports for the respective parent(s). Transparency includes honest disclosure about how assessment results are used and who will have access to student data.¹¹

Finally, the Work Group emphasized that all state components of the assessment system must be constructed to protect the identities and ensure the privacy rights of all individual students.

TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

We began the Work Group’s deliberations by providing definitions of important concepts to ensure that members had a shared understanding of the purposes, uses, and potential constraints of various assessment types. Although there are several ways to categorize assessment types, we believe the distinctions among *summative*, *interim*, and *formative* assessments¹² are the most relevant to the Work Group. Toward that end, we provided Work Group members a technical brief about these assessment types and uses.

Although there are several ways to categorize assessment types, we believe the distinctions among *summative*, *interim*, and *formative* assessments¹² are the most relevant to the Work Group.

Formative assessment is inseparable from instruction and is a bridge between instruction and classroom assessment (Heritage, 2010, Shepard, in 2019). The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) defines formative assessment as

a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become self-directed learners (CCSSO, 2018, p. 2; emphasis added).

This definition makes clear that formative assessment is a process best regarded as part of the classroom instructional system, not the assessment system (Shepard, 2019; also see Sadler, 1989; Heritage, 2010).

Interim assessments are

administered during instruction to evaluate students’ knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of academic goals to inform policymaker or educator decisions at the classroom, school, or district level. (Perie, Marion, & Gong, 2009, p. 6)

⁹ Utah Code [53E-4-301.5](#)

¹⁰ Utah Code [53E-5-211](#)

¹¹ Utah Code [53E-9-202](#)

¹² In defining formative, interim, and summative assessment, this section borrows from three sources (Perie, Marion, & Gong, 2009; Michigan Department of Education, 2013; Wiley, 2008).

A key difference between interim and formative assessments is that results of interim assessments must be aggregable for reporting across students, occasions, or concepts. Interim assessments are generally used to support instructional, evaluative, or predictive purposes. While instructional purposes sounds similar to the purposes for formative assessment, interim assessments operate on a coarser grain size and longer time cycle than formative assessment. Importantly, interim assessments must be designed to fulfill the specific purposes and a single assessment generally cannot fulfill multiple purposes.

Finally, summative assessments are administered at the end of a meaningful interval, such as an instructional unit or school year, to evaluate students’ performance against a set of learning targets for that period. Because of its prominence in federal and state accountability, the state summative assessment typically plays a disproportionate role in most assessment systems. To be clear, *summative* does not pertain only to state-level tests: most district and classroom assessment systems have a summative component, such as for awarding grades and making competency determinations.

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OVERVIEW OF UTAH’S CURRENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM AND WORK-GROUP PROCESS

Current Utah Assessment Offerings

USBE offers a variety of assessments to serve several purposes and uses, which include providing accurate feedback for both the learner and teacher, ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all students, increasing transparency regarding school quality, and improving educational programs. Table 1 shows Utah’s current assessments. It was neither feasible nor essential to have Work Group members examine them all; those they did review are marked with an asterisk.

TABLE 1
UTAH’S CURRENT STATE PROVIDED/SUPPORTED ASSESSMENTS

UTAH ASSESSMENT	DESCRIPTION	SUBJECTS/GRADE LEVELS
Pre-Kindergarten Entry/Exit Profile (PEEP)	Pre-kindergarten academic preparedness/achievement assessment	Literacy and numeracy in pre-kindergarten
Kindergarten Entry/Exit Profile (KEEP)	Kindergarten academic preparedness/achievement assessment	Literacy and numeracy in kindergarten
Readiness Improvement Success Empowerment (RISE)*	End-of-year summative assessments of academic achievement in elementary and middle school	ELA, mathematics, science in grades 3-8

UTAH ASSESSMENT	DESCRIPTION	SUBJECTS/GRADE LEVELS
Utah Aspire Plus	End-of-year summative assessments of academic achievement in high school	ELA, mathematics, science in grades 9 and 10
ACT	Summative assessment of college readiness	ELA, mathematics, science in grade 11
ACCESS for ELLs	Summative English language proficiency assessment for English learners	Listening, speaking, reading, writing in all grade levels
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)	Summative assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities	ELA, mathematics, science in grades 3-11
Acadience	Benchmark reading assessment for progress monitoring	Reading in kindergarten to grade 3
Utah Compose*	Online, optional writing assessment with automated scoring	Writing in grades 3-6
Utah Test Item Pool Service (UTIPS)*	Online tool that allows educators to select or write their own assessment items	All content areas in kindergarten to grade 6
RISE Benchmark and Interim modules*	Non-summative assessments designed to measure individual standards, groups of standards, or summative reporting categories	ELA, mathematics, science in grades 3-8
High School Core Benchmarks*	Non-summative assessments designed to measure individual standards, groups of standards, or summative reporting categories	ELA, mathematics, science in grades 9-12
Shmoop	ACT test preparation tool	ELA, mathematics, science in grade 11
NAEP	Congressionally mandated assessment also referred to as The Nation's Report Card.	Reading, writing, mathematics, science in grades 4 & 8

Work Group Process

This section describes the ways in which the Work Group engaged in deliberations about the state assessment system. We outline the multiple sets of webinars that occurred throughout the summer and fall of 2020. We also describe the community engagement activities that helped the Work Group's deliberations.

Work-Group Webinars

USBE hosted nine 3-hour webinars, structured to guide the Work Group through key components of the Utah assessment system, across three phases. The three Phase 1 webinars focused on the state summative assessment system, whereas the three Phase 2 addressed issues related to the state non-summative assessments (interim and benchmark tests). Phase 3 included probing conversations about the role of USBE in providing assessment support for major innovations, such as PCBL and Utah's Portrait of a Graduate.

Additionally, USBE hosted an additional webinar after each phase to review relevant sections of the draft report. The webinars began the first week of July 2020 and continued through early October 2020. Prior to each webinar, the Center for Assessment provided the Work Group reading materials that would be discussed to inform the Work Group’s recommendations. We summarize below the reading materials shared with Work Group members before each webinar series.

PHASE 1 WEBINARS (JULY 2020)

Assessment literacy briefs on the following topics:

- Assessment Types and Uses
- Process/Timeline for Summative Assessments
- Writing and Content Coverage
- Item Types for Summative Assessments
- Adaptive Testing
- Balanced Systems of Assessment

PHASE 2 WEBINARS (AUGUST 2020)

Blogs and papers on the following topics:

- The Role of Interim Assessments
- Five Essential Features of Assessment for Learning
- Stop Training the Trainers
- Do Interim Assessments Have A Role in Balanced Systems of Assessment?
- How Can Every Educator Achieve Assessment Literacy?
- Formative Assessment and Next-Generation Assessment Systems: Are We Losing an Opportunity?
- Linking Formative Assessment to Scaffolding

PHASE 3 WEBINARS (SEPTEMBER 2020)

Blogs and papers on the following topics:

- Assessing 21st Century Skills
- How Much is Enough? Sufficiency Considerations for Competency-Based Assessment Systems
- Assessment to Support Competency-Based Pathways
- Utah’s Portrait of the Graduate Competencies
- Utah’s Personalized, Competency-Based Learning (PCBL) Framework

During each webinar, Center for Assessment professionals summarized key points from the reading materials and, in turn, conducted question-and-answer sessions before dividing Work Group members into breakout groups. In these breakout sessions, members engaged in structured activities to discuss, and provide recommendations about, Utah’s current and future assessment systems. [Appendix B](#) presents the agendas for all webinars.

Community Engagement

USBE and the Center for Assessment hosted a community engagement survey and webinar to collect information from a wider selection of education stakeholders across the state.

Community Engagement Survey

USBE administered the community engagement survey from September 3-18, 2020 (using Qualtrics). The survey link was distributed to the Utah School Boards Association, School Community Council Members, Utah Superintendents Association, Utah Parent Teacher Association, Utah Education Association, LEA heads, Assessment Directors, Title I Directors, Curriculum Directors, Special Education Directors, Career and Technical Education Directors, and through USBE’s social media. Survey questions pertained to the following assessment issues considered in Work Group deliberations:

- the purpose and use of Utah assessments,
- assessment-design considerations (e.g., content area, testing time, reporting),
- Utah’s current assessment offerings, both summative and non-summative,
- support for measuring Portrait of a Graduate competencies, and
- support for measuring principles of the PCBL framework.

At the beginning of the survey, respondents indicated their primary role in the Utah education system. Most survey questions were common across respondents, while some questions were tailored to the respondent’s primary role.

The survey was completed by 2,695 respondents. Table 2 shows the distribution of primary roles as reported by the respondents.

TABLE 2
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY STAKEHOLDER ROLE

UTAH ASSESSMENT	RESPONDENTS	
	Number	Percentage
Teachers	1,204	44.7
Parents	892	33.1
Administrators	431	16.0
Others	134	5.0
Policymakers	28	1.0
Students	6	0.2
Total	2,695	100

USBE and the Center for Assessment hosted a community engagement survey and webinar to collect information from a wider selection of education stakeholders across the state.

[Appendix C](#) provides a summary of the results. These results, along with the disaggregation for teachers (the dominant group),¹³ were shared with Work Group members during the Phase 3 webinars. The Work Group reviewed the results in breakout groups and had the opportunity to adjust any recommendations in the draft report based on the survey responses.

Stakeholder-Engagement Webinar

The stakeholder-engagement webinar was held on the evening of September 9, 2020. USBE and the Center for Assessment provided an overview of USBE’s strategic-planning process and presented highlights of the work of the Work Group, including a summary of the key recommendations for Utah’s assessment system to date. (Note this webinar occurred between the Phase 2 and Phase 3 webinars.) Participants were encouraged to ask questions about the processes and intended outcomes, as well as providing input on the recommendations. In preparation for the Phase 3 webinars, participants were asked to indicate how they were engaging in the Portrait of a Graduate and PCBL initiatives and, further, how they would like USBE to support the corresponding assessment demands. Finally, participants were encouraged to complete the community-engagement survey.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHASE 1

Again, Phase 1 of Utah’s strategic assessment plan focuses primarily on the statewide summative assessments in grades 3-8. At the time of the Work Group’s meetings, the Readiness Improvement Success Empowerment (RISE) assessments, administered by Cambium Assessment Inc., were the state’s summative assessment program for grades 3-8. The Work Group’s recommendations would inform the RFP for the next assessment contract, intended to begin in the 2022-2023 academic year. Center for Assessment facilitators helped the Work Group navigate key issues concerning the technical and practical implications of design specifications, which would inform the Work Group’s recommendations regarding the desired summative assessments for grades 3-8 and, ultimately, the RFP. These recommendations relate to

- purpose and use
- reporting
- item types
- writing assessment
- test adaptivity

Purpose and Use of Grades 3-8 Summative Assessments

The *purpose* of most state assessments is to provide an accurate measure of students’ knowledge and skills as defined by the state’s content standards. These assessments are *used* to support achievement and growth indicators as part of school-accountability determinations.

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¹³ The disaggregated results for teachers is available from USBE on request.

The Work Group affirmed that the two primary purposes of Utah’s summative assessments are to (a) evaluate performance against the state’s content standards and

(b) meet federal requirements for state standards and assessment systems as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act.¹⁴ Given these two primary purposes, the Work Group recommended the following uses for scores from the grades 3-8 state summative assessment:

- support the calculation of accountability indicators, for both federal and state accountability systems, to identify schools needing additional assistance to meet performance standards;
- monitor student achievement in ELA, mathematics, and science using multiple metrics: scores, performance descriptions, and growth measures;
- inform school improvement planning along with other relevant information (independent of accountability requirements), including curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, feedback to parents and students regarding progress of students and schools, and the continuous improvement of teaching; and
- support evaluations of educational programs.

Some Work Group members were concerned that, with the focus on ELA, mathematics, and science, resources within schools and districts tend to get allocated to these subjects at the expense of others. These members were not advocating for expanding the state assessment system to all content areas, but simply expressing their concern.

Reporting

Reporting is the only way tests scores are communicated to the public, but it often is the last concern attended to during assessment design. Heeding this important caution, the Work Group deliberated on reporting considerations early in the process. The Center for Assessment facilitator guided members through two small-group activities. First, they considered various stakeholders and, in turn, indicated what type of assessment outcome information each stakeholder group needs at the student, student-group, school, and district levels of reporting. The Work Group then examined sample reports for the grades 3-8 RISE assessments, providing suggestions for improvement.

Reporting is the only way tests scores are communicated to the public, but it often is the last concern attended to during assessment design. Heeding this important caution, the Work Group deliberated on reporting considerations early in the process.

Identified Reporting Needs

The Work Group offered the following recommendations regarding assessment information needed by different stakeholders:

- Leaders at the state level, such as policymakers and state education officers, generally need summary performance data (e.g., mean scale scores, percentage proficient) at the student-group, school and district levels. This information is best summarized in reporting tools, such as an accountability dashboard, to help these users identify “pockets of excellence” and areas of greatest need, particularly for traditionally low-performing student groups. This can inform policy decisions, allocation of funding, and distribution of resources.

¹⁴ See Section 1111 of the Every Student Succeeds Act: <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=ft>.

- District and school leaders also need summary performance data at the student-group and school levels for their respective locale and perhaps information regarding “comparable” districts or/and schools in the state to support the school improvement uses. In addition, subscores at these aggregate levels, such as mean scores by reporting categories or strands, can be helpful for evaluating the effectiveness of various programs and initiatives designed to close achievement gaps. These leaders can use this information to monitor trends across schools and over time; evaluate educational programs; and monitor, identify, and address resource needs for specific schools and student groups.
- Teachers need assessment information at a more granular level. For example, a list of their students’ total scores and subscores available from the previous year can inform the teacher’s instructional supports for each student. Although item-performance data may pinpoint areas for improvement in teachers’ curriculum and instruction, the Work Group nonetheless decided against extensive item releases because of the associated costs and the possibility for misinterpretation and overgeneralization of results. Summary performance data aggregated at various levels of the system—e.g., classroom, schools, student groups—can help drive teacher practice and facilitate professional-learning communities.
- Parents and students need achievement and growth information at the student level, coupled with school-, district-, and state-level summary statistics to provide context. The main focus, however, is to provide information to identify areas for improvement and remediation as the students prepare for learning at the next grade level or the next course.

Readiness Improvement Success Empowerment Reports

The Work Group reviewed, and provided feedback on, sample RISE reports including: individual student report, school roster report, school summary report. While not specifically a RISE report, the Work Group reviewed the Utah Data Gateway.

Individual Student Report. The Work Group found the information in this RISE report to be clear and helpful for the intended users: parents and students. However, they offered several recommendations for improvement:

- Clarify the distinctions among performance levels in the achievement-level descriptors.
- Include more contextual and comparative information, such as characteristics of the norm group, scores from the previous year, and results from local assessments to the extent practical.
- Explain the uncertainty of the information provided (i.e., standard error of measurement).
- Use positive language to celebrate what a child does well.
- Emphasize that this report is only one of many sources of information about student learning.

Although the Work Group reacted favorably to the current format of this report, they maintained an interest in designing shorter assessments to reduce summative testing times. Shorter assessments, however, also would reduce the reliability of subscores, if they continue to be reported at all. The Work Group therefore recommended that USBE, based on the advice of the Utah Technical Advisory Committee and the U.S. Department of Education, explore reducing, if not eliminating, subscores on individual score reports. This could reduce the length of the end-of-year summative assessments; it also would encourage users to consult other resources, such as benchmark assessments, for performance information relevant to subscore reporting categories. (This may require new baseline scores as a result of a new test blueprint.)

School Roster Report. The Work Group found this RISE report to clearly summarize student performance information. Recommendations for improvement included:

- Provide some explanation or context of student performance.
- Aggregate results by student group to help support school-improvement determinations.
- Aggregate results by class.
- Include cut-score information, and identify students falling close to the proficiency cut.

School Summary Report. The Work Group felt this RISE report was easy to read and provided helpful comparative information. Their recommendations for improvement were to

- include growth and longitudinal data,
- aggregate results by student groups and by class, and
- include additional comparison data to account for the unique circumstances of schools, such as information about student demographics, school-level factors (e.g., teacher experience), and community contexts.

Data Gateway. The Work Group regarded this as a comprehensive source of assessment information, but they felt it is underutilized. They recommended that the Data Gateway include more explanatory or supplemental information, such as how to interpret score differences in light of measurement error, so that the test score and related information is better understood by stakeholders. There also was concern that the current reporting carries negative unintended consequences, such as Data Gateway information appearing on the websites of real estate agencies. Further, more accessible reporting would make the data more meaningful to those using the information for school improvement. More clearly reporting test results on the Data Gateway should go hand-in-hand with better promoting this resource to more fully realize the site’s potential, including opportunities for local schools and districts to display their goals and accomplishments. Finally, the Work Group also wanted to see more robust reporting of ACT results on this site.

Item Types

Test items elicit student responses, which, in turn, are used to support inferences about what students know and can do. Therefore, item quality is a key contributor to the credibility of the assessment system as viewed by students, parents, teachers, and other educational stakeholders in the state.

Prior to the Work Group meeting about item types, the members read a technical brief on item types for statewide summative assessments. During the meeting, Center for Assessment facilitators reviewed key points from the brief and provided an overview of item types used on RISE, Utah’s current grades 3-8 summative assessment. Working in small groups, the Work Group was asked to evaluate potential item types for the future grades 3-8 summative assessments by having each small group assign a priority rating, with a corresponding rationale, for USBE consideration. A priority rating fell on a four-point scale—1 (very high), 2 (high), 3 (low), or 4 (very low)—the results for which are summarized in Table 3. This table is

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sorted by preference (from top to bottom), with the standard deviation conveying the spread of responses. (Note that not all six groups provided priority ratings for all item types.)

TABLE 3
WORK GROUP PRIORITY RATINGS FOR TYPES OF ITEMS FOR STATE
GRADES 3-8 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

ITEM TYPE	# OF RATINGS	AVERAGE RATING	STANDARD DEVIATION
Short constructed response	5	1.4	0.42
Technology enhanced	5	1.9	0.74
Item cluster	4	2.1	0.85
Multiple choice	5	2.4	0.96
Extended constructed response	5	2.7	0.97
Multi-select multiple choice	4	3.1	0.25

Overall, the Work Group prioritized short constructed-response items (e.g., editing tasks, short-answer items), citing the benefit of eliciting deeper content knowledge when compared with selected-response items, while entailing less testing time and less expensive scoring when compared with extended constructed-response tasks. The standard deviation for short constructed-response item type is markedly lower than that for most other item types, indicating considerable agreement among the six groups regarding this top rating.

Larger standard deviations notwithstanding, ratings were generally favorable for technology-enhanced items (e.g., equation response, grid, hot text items) and item clusters (e.g., evidence-based selected response, simulation tasks). The Work Group felt that both item types are more engaging and authentic and, further, provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate deeper understanding. That said, many Work Group members questioned whether these items were worth either the added expense or the negative effects for students who are unfamiliar with these item types. In light of these concerns, the Work Group recommended that these item types be employed only when it is the best way to measure the learning target or there is no alternative.

The six groups, on average, assigned the poorest rating to multi-select multiple choice items for use on the grades 3-8 summative assessments. And the standard deviation—the smallest of the six—indicates the exceedingly high level of agreement among these groups in rating this item type. They felt that the corresponding scoring rules are unnecessarily complex and can make the item-level results difficult to interpret and summarize. They also were concerned that this item type can adversely impact student confidence while taking the test. And because of unequal opportunity to practice for this item type, equity concerns surfaced as well.

Assessing Writing

The Work Group discussed whether authentic writing should be included in Utah’s grades 3-8 statewide summative assessments. To be sure, many states employ extended tasks as the primary way to assess writing. If a measure of writing achievement is desired, it makes sense to have students write! Further,

the inclusion of direct writing in a state assessment can result in more writing in the classroom (e.g., Lumley & Yan, 2001), at least in the grades for which writing is assessed, which speaks to the consequential validity of the writing component. Similarly, newer approaches to writing tasks, based on grade-level standards, often ask students to cite evidence from reading passages, rather than respond to low-level questions from contrived narrative prompts. This, too, can incentivize such practices in classrooms.

However, there are measurement challenges associated with the use of a single writing prompt. Even though student-response times can range from 30 to 90 minutes, the score from a single writing task contributes very little “test information” to an overall English language arts score. “Item information” refers to the amount of unique score data generated by the item to an overall test score. For example, writing tasks generally are scored with a 4- or 6-point rubric, in which case a 45-minute writing task would generate up to six score points on the test. In contrast, students could respond to 20-25 short-answer or selected-response items in this same time, with each item able to contribute one or two points to the student’s score (depending on the point value of each question); this yields considerably more test information. Additionally, a single writing prompt can compromise the generalizability of results. In other words, because prompts often are not directly comparable—they may address different topics, reference different sources of evidence, call for different writing genres—and students perform differently as prompts vary, it is difficult to make valid inferences about individual student writing achievement from a single prompt. Unfortunately, the solution to this problem—administering two or more writing tasks to each student—is rarely practical because of the increased testing time required.

As part of the webinar discussion addressing item types, the Work Group reviewed Utah’s history of assessing writing at the state level. From the early 2000s through 2013, Utah’s state assessment system included the Direct Writing Assessment: a single writing task, given in grades 5 and 8, and scored with a 6-point rubric. When Utah shifted in 2014 to the Student Assessment of Growth and Excellence (SAGE) assessment system, students at each grade level were given two writing prompts, representing different writing genres. This increase in state-required writing reportedly resulted in appreciably more writing in the classroom. Because of concerns about testing time, however, USBE asked the state office in 2016 to reduce writing to a single student prompt at each grade level; this lasted through the 2018 administration of SAGE. However, continued pressure to reduce writing on the new RISE state assessment led to limiting writing assessment to grades 5 and 8, beginning in 2019. This necessitated the elimination of writing from the ELA vertical score scale. This means that the ELA score students receive is based almost exclusively on reading. In short, Utah had come full circle in its statewide assessment of writing!

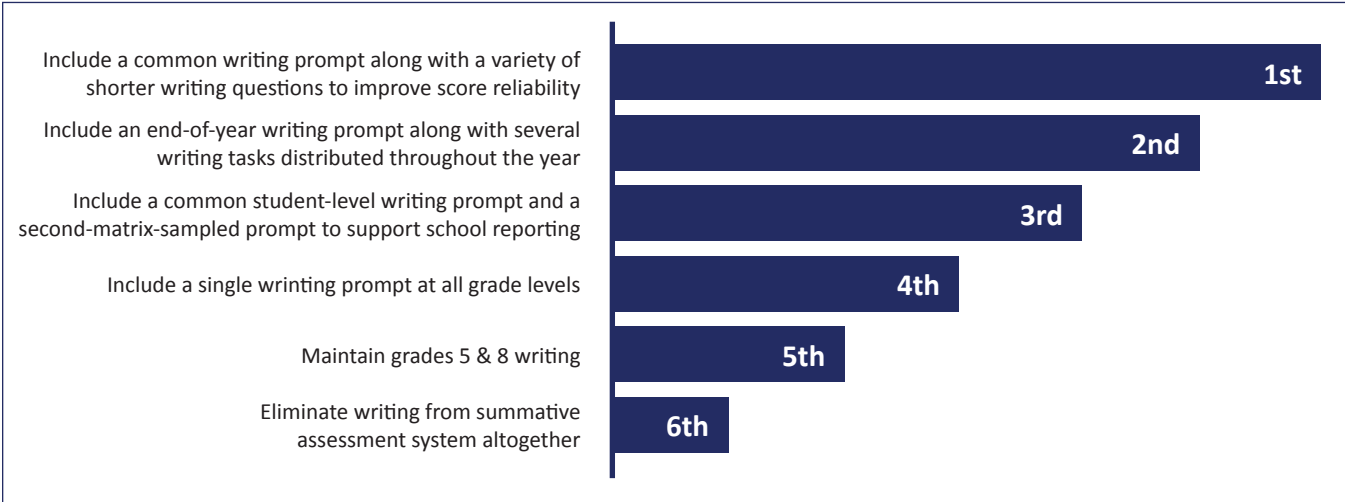
Given this history, and the opportunities and challenges associated with including writing on the statewide assessment, the Work Group wrestled with several options for assessing writing in a meaningful, practical way. They first discussed whether to include writing on the assessment at all, with members overwhelmingly supporting its inclusion because of the important signal this sends to teachers and school leaders and, in turn, the positive impact on consequential validity. The Work Group saw this as a proverbial two-edged sword, however: If teachers simply mimic the type of writing included on the summative assessment, they will be shortchanging their students. But, in the end, most members argued for the more complete assessment of ELA domain, believing the importance of doing so outweighed the risks. With this decision made, Center facilitators presented a range of options for assessing writing at the state level.

The facilitators discussed the options associated with prioritizing student-level versus school-level scores. Focusing on school-level information does not mean that the state would forsake student-level scores, but it does render student scores less descriptive—providing a writing score, for example, but not a narrative-writing score. That said, a school-level focus where students complete different writing prompts—up to eight or so (called matrix sampling)—yields robust information at the school level that can support writing subscores (e.g., narrative writing). The trade-off is that student-level scores are less comparable as a consequence. However, including both a common student writing prompt and a matrix-sample prompt provides for both comparable student scores and rich school-level information (but it also means students complete two writing prompts).

The Center for Assessment facilitators discussed ways to improve the validity of individual writing scores, including having students respond both to short writing questions and to a single, extended writing task. These short questions could be tied to a particular content area, such as science. Students also could complete additional writing tasks through the school year to provide further evidence of writing competence. These additional tasks could be administered on a flexible basis (i.e., in an order that makes sense locally).

After this whole-group presentation and discussion, the facilitators asked Work Group members to indicate their preferred options on a poll (see Figure 1) and then break into groups to discuss their preferences and ideas in their small groups.

FIGURE 1
RANK ORDER PREFERENCE FOR HOW TO ASSESS
WRITING ON THE STATE SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT



As Figure 1 shows, Work Group members strongly preferred including writing at every grade level and using approaches to bolster the reliability and validity of student scores. Very few people suggested eliminating writing altogether (6th place in Figure 1).

In subsequent discussions, some Work Group members felt that the second option in Figure 1—which includes giving several prompts throughout the year—could work as a state-local partnership, with the

through-year prompts administered optionally but following state guidelines to support instructional use and provide rich, school-level information.

With one exception, Work Group members supported the inclusion of direct-writing tasks at least with one prompt at each grade level. The one member who dissented believed this conflicted with the Work Group’s recommendation to shorten the state summative assessment. This is a legitimate concern, and it will require additional discussion involving state policymakers and assessment specialists.

Work Group members supported the inclusion of direct-writing tasks at least with one prompt at each grade level.

Adaptive Testing

Adaptive testing is an approach that takes into account how students perform on each item or set of items in order to provide the next set of questions for the student at the appropriate level of challenge. Adaptive testing approaches provide items that are closer to the student’s level of proficiency than is the case with a traditional, fixed-form test. Adaptive tests also have greater measurement precision for the highest- and lowest-performing students. And because students see different sets of items, these tests are more secure.

Utah has employed an adaptive testing approach to summative assessment in grades 3-8 since the beginning of the SAGE assessment program in 2014. SAGE was administered as an “item-adaptive” test: the student’s proficiency is estimated after every item, which determines the next item that is administered. In its only operational administration to date in 2019, the grades 3-8 RISE assessments were “stage-adaptive” tests, where the point of adaptation occurs after students complete a set, or stage, of predetermined test items. USBE had planned to return to an item-adaptive test in 2020 with the change in assessment providers; most Work Group members, therefore, were familiar with adaptive testing. In addition, the Work Group was provided with a technical brief on computer-adaptive testing in statewide summative assessments as part of the advance reading materials.

During the Work Group meeting, Center for Assessment facilitators provided an overview of adaptive testing and compared its pros and cons with those of fixed-form tests. The facilitators also contrasted the strengths and weaknesses of item- and stage-adaptive tests. In small groups, Work Group members were asked to recall any feedback they have received from their constituents regarding adaptive testing, and to provide input on whether Utah should continue to prioritize adaptive testing for its grades 3-8 summative assessments.

Common themes of the feedback received by Work Group members included a general lack of understanding about adaptive testing by teachers and parents, the belief that some misconceptions about adaptive testing could be attributed to the political dialogue surrounding high-stakes summative assessments, and concerns for high-performing students who may find adaptive tests more stressful because of the perception that such tests are more difficult (and such students therefore may not enjoy the level of success to which they were accustomed). All groups agreed that Utah should continue to prioritize adaptive testing for its grades 3-8 summative assessments, citing better measurement precision and a more equitable and meaningful test experience for students. Finally, with respect to deciding between item- and stage-adaptive tests, the Work Group recommended that USBE first specify

the intended goals for its assessments (e.g., fully adaptive to all students in the grade, allow student to change previous responses in a test session, efficient use of items in the bank) and then let potential test vendors propose adaptive-testing solutions that best meet these goals.

Summative Assessment Summary

The Work Group affirmed that the primary *purposes* of Utah’s summative assessments are to

- evaluate performance against the Utah state content standards, and
- meet both state and the federal standards and assessment requirements in support of federal and state accountability system.

The intended *uses* for state summative assessments, particularly for the assessments in grades 3-8, are to

- support the calculation of indicators for both federal and state accountability systems to identify schools that need additional support to meet performance standards;
- monitor student achievement in ELA, mathematics, and science using multiple metrics: scores, performance descriptions, and growth,
- inform school-improvement planning (independent of accountability requirements), including curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, feedback to parents and students regarding student and school progress, and the continuous improvement of teaching; and
- support evaluations of educational programs.

To inform the RFP for the next summative assessment contract for grades 3-8, the Work Group provided the following recommendations regarding design considerations.

- **Reporting:** The Work Group identified assessment information needed by different groups of report users, including state-, district-, and school-level leaders; teachers; parents; and students. The Work Group also provided feedback on the RISE reports (individual student reports, school roster reports, school-level performance summary) and the Data Gateway. Finally, the Work Group recommended that, based on the advice of the Utah Technical Advisory Committee and the U.S. Department of Education, USBE consider reducing or removing subscores on individual and the multiple school score reports. This could both reduce the length of the end-of-year summative assessments and encourage users to rely on resources such as the benchmark assessments for apprehending what students know and can do relative to subscore reporting categories. (This may require new baseline scores as a result of a new test blueprint.)
- **Items types:** The Work Group prioritized the use of short constructed-response items (e.g., editing tasks and short-answer response items), citing the benefit of eliciting deep understanding of content knowledge while requiring less testing time and being more cost effective when compared with extended-response tasks. The Work Group also generally favored technology-enhanced items (e.g., equation response, grid, and hot text items) and item clusters (e.g., evidence-based selected response and simulation tasks), as long as the cost and time can be offset by noticeable measurement advantages (e.g., more appropriately measuring the intended learning outcomes).
- **Writing:** The Work Group strongly recommended that the summative assessments include writing. Of the various options for assessing writing, the Work Group was most in favor of having a common writing prompt at each grade level, coupled with a variety of shorter writing prompts to improve score reliability. The Work Group also suggested an alternative, operating as a state-local partnership: having several prompts throughout the year, administered optionally and in

accordance with state guidelines to support instructional uses and to provide rich school-level information.

- **Adaptive Testing:** The Work Group agreed that Utah should continue to prioritize adaptive testing for its grades 3-8 summative assessments, citing better measurement precision and a more equitable and meaningful test experience for students.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHASE 2

Non-summative assessments provided the focus for two Phase 2 webinars. Such assessments¹⁵ range from formative practices occurring as part of daily interactions between students and teachers, to large-scale interim assessments administered across all schools in a district throughout the school year.

The Work Group engaged in use-case exercises to clarify how various stakeholders use non-summative assessments (see [Appendix D](#) for Activities 3, 4, and 5 in Webinar Series #2). Work Group members were divided into three groups to consider use cases associated with teachers, principals, and parents—deemed the primary consumers of non-summative assessment results. Work Group members were asked to define the general uses for each stakeholder group and then provide additional details by responding to the question, “What is the user going to do, and what does the assessment need to do?”

Intended Uses

We summarize below the primary use cases for each stakeholder group. Defining the intended uses for each user group is the first step in identifying design considerations.

Teachers

The Work Group identified three primary intended uses of non-summative assessments for teachers. The first is to understand students’ domain-specific knowledge and skills in order to form instructional groups, determine interventions for struggling students, and provide actionable information for all students. The second primary use for teachers is to help students understand where, and how, they can improve their learning. Finally, the thoughtful consideration of non-summative assessment results increases teachers’ assessment literacy as well as their knowledge of instruction and student learning.

Principals

The Work Group identified two primary uses for principals. First, they can use results from non-summative assessments to monitor student performance toward grade-level expectations. As the Work Group pointed out, non-summative assessment items therefore should probe the same depth of understanding as items on the state summative assessment so principals can more accurately monitor performance of student groups and, further, to predict end-of-year performance in order to prescribe interventions for struggling students. Principals also can use these results to inform parents about their student’s achievement and if any interventions are needed.

¹⁵ We purposefully refer to these assessments as ‘non-summative’ rather than more commonly used terms such as benchmark, interim, diagnostic, and other names because these labels often promote more confusion than clarification.

A second primary use of non-summative assessments for principals is to support the latter’s role as instructional and assessment leaders in their buildings. Non-summative assessments can create a shared understanding of the criteria for success relative to state content standards; improve assessment literacy; and, relatedly, support teacher professional growth using rich, common tasks to support discussion of student work.

Parents

The Work Group identified two primary uses for parents. First, the non-summative assessment results can help parents understand their child’s academic achievement and growth, relative to both local and state expectations. The assessment reports should help parents understand these expectations and, further, inform them of any support or enrichment their child may need. Second, parents need support and feedback to help their child progress in their learning. The Work Group emphasized that this must be more than score information and include descriptive information tied to student work samples based on high-quality performance assessments and other extended tasks so parents can better understand what students are expected to learn. Assessment information should be presented to parents in language they understand, which will require that reports have embedded assessment-literacy supports for parents.

Design Considerations

Following the use-case exercise, Work Group members worked through design requirements for non-summative assessments, such as grain size, item type, frequency of administration, and security; this was done for each potential use case and user. The discussion focused largely on Utah’s interim and benchmark assessments. Recall that these interim assessments measure the same standards at the same level of representation as found on the end-of-year summative tests (which is why they also are called “mini-summative” assessments). In contrast, the benchmark assessments are tied to specific content domains and are designed to inform instruction.

The Work Group thought the grain size of the interim assessments was appropriate for the intended purposes. Grain size refers to the breadth and depth of the learning target intended to be assessed. Initially, the Work Group felt the grain size of benchmark assessments should be at the standard level or finer. The Work Group emphasized the need for non-summative assessments that directly support teachers in the classroom—that there are clear and useful connections between the assessment information and the teacher’s needs related to instruction and learning. But with further discussion, Work Group members recognized that it might be inadvisable to specify a standard-level grain size insofar as this is not necessarily how instruction and curriculum is organized, in that instruction may focus on groups of standards or on component pieces of standards. In many cases, the instruction will spiral—i.e., the teacher will return to that content throughout the year—and in other cases, it will not. All agreed that the grain size of benchmark assessments should be informed by content and curriculum experts (e.g., grade-level teachers).

The Work Group generally favored selected-response items (e.g. multiple-choice), for benchmark assessments, but they also recognized the need for open-response items, particularly short constructed items. In addition to their potential for assessing deeper content knowledge and consequently increasing students’ cognitive expectations, open-response items also provide the productive occasion for teachers to collaborate in the examination of student work.

The Work Group felt strongly that the frequency of administration of the various assessments should be determined locally, in many cases by the individual teacher, depending on use.

The Work Group recognized that for certain purposes and for certain types of non-summative assessments, items may need to remain secure for financial reasons (e.g., it costs a lot to develop new items) and to avoid inappropriate testing behaviors, such as having teachers practice operational items with students prior to testing. However, the Work Group felt that for most of the use cases, especially those focusing on improving student and teacher learning, it would be important for educators (and perhaps students) to see the items when reviewing assessment results.

Evaluating Utah’s Current Non-Summative Offerings

Work Group members considered the use-case discussions and then evaluated their desired assessment characteristics (e.g., grain size, item types) against Utah’s current non-summative assessments. USBE currently offers interim and benchmark assessments as part of its contracts with Cambium Assessment International and Pearson. Because these interim assessments are linked to the state summative assessment, using a fall interim assessment along with the summative test could provide districts with a within-year student-growth measure. The benchmark assessments are designed to measure small clusters of standards. USBE reported that there were at least 750,000 unique administrations of benchmark assessments in the shortened 2019-2020 school year. To help ground the discussion, members of the Work Group were invited to “take the test” by completing one or more benchmark assessments.

USBE also supports Utah Compose, an optional online writing assessment with automated scoring that teachers and students can use for instructional purposes. USBE continues to offer Utah Test Item Pool Service (UTIPS), a tool educators use to select or write their own assessment items using a variety of item types. An equation editor is available for teachers and students as well. There is automated scoring for all item types except writing. Assessments can be shared across classrooms, schools, and the state. Reports have been updated and provide detailed results that can be used to inform instruction and to assist students in setting learning goals

In general, the Work Group appreciated the considerable range of non-summative offerings in Utah. Most group members appreciated the utility of tools like Utah Compose and UTIPS. They also believed the current interim assessment offerings were useful for predicting end-of-year summative assessment performance and for providing an opportunity for students to practice with the summative assessment format.

Finally, Work Group members recognized that while the state assessment contracts focus on ELA, mathematics, and science, they wanted the state to encourage non-summative offerings in content areas other than these three and, further, to support local flexibility in their implementation. The Work Group members indicated that greater emphasis on, and support for, non-summative assessments would enhance their status compared with summative assessments.

Most Work Group members appreciated having the benchmark assessments, and it is clear these assessments are valued by the field. But most members, as noted above, believed benchmark assessments should be configured at a finer grain size than is currently the case. However, when it was pointed out that such a configuration might work for mathematics and science but not ELA and other content areas, the Work Group acknowledged that content area and curriculum experts from across the state would need to inform such a design.

Work Group members recognized the tradeoffs with including open-response items in benchmark assessments. They appreciated the scoring and administration efficiency with using only selected-response items but felt strongly that open-response tasks, with their ability to examine student work, was the best, if not only, way to support certain use cases.

Members of the Work Group recognized that USBE provides helpful communication support regarding assessments, but they saw need for considerably more professional development and communication support around use cases, including those regarding the proper interpretation and use of assessment results.

Finally, Work Group members recognized that while the state assessment contracts focus on ELA, mathematics, and science, they wanted the state to encourage non-summative offerings in content areas other than these three and, further, to support local flexibility in their implementation. The Work Group members indicated that greater emphasis on, and support for, non-summative assessments would enhance their status compared with summative assessments.

Support for Formative Assessment

The Work Group weighed in on the role of USBE in supporting local formative assessment practices. In other states, similar work groups have recommended leaving all aspects of formative assessment, including assessment literacy, to local school districts. But perhaps in view of the state's long history of supporting formative assessment practices, the Work Group recommended having USBE involved in supporting local formative-assessment efforts.

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When asked about the role of the state, Work Group members recognized that USBE can pool resources and expertise to help in a variety of ways:

- offering professional-development courses on assessment literacy and related topics, either in-person or virtual;
- supporting statewide formative-assessment professional learning communities, targeted to specific grade levels and content areas;
- developing tools, protocols, and other resources for assessment literacy and formative assessment use; and
- developing a shared understanding of proficiency in the assessed content areas.

The Work Group wanted USBE to continue supporting formative assessment and assessment literacy efforts, but only in a supportive role unrelated to compliance or other requirements.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHASE 3

The Phase 3 webinars focused on USBE's role in the Portrait of a Graduate and PCBL initiatives.

Recommendations for Assessments Supporting Utah's Portrait of a Graduate

Portrait of a Graduate identifies the intended student outcomes of a Utah graduate after going through the K-12 system: graduates who are prepared to succeed and lead by having the knowledge and skills to learn, engage civically, and lead meaningful lives. The Portrait of a Graduate competencies fall within three categories:

- **Mastery:** the ability to demonstrate depth of knowledge and skill proficiency
 - academic mastery
 - civic, financial and economic literacy
 - wellness
 - digital literacy
- **Autonomy:** the self-confidence and motivation to think and act independently
 - communication
 - critical thinking and problem solving
 - creativity and innovation
 - collaboration and teamwork
- **Purpose:** guides life decisions, influencing behavior, shaping goals, offering a sense of direction, and creating meaning in life
 - honesty, integrity and responsibility
 - hard work and resilience
 - lifelong learning and personal growth
 - service
 - respect

The Work Group was asked to make recommendations about USBE's role in either assessing these competencies or supporting local educators in doing so. In general, the Work Group recommended having USBE play an active, but supportive, role regarding Portrait of a Graduate competencies. This could include

- providing guidance for operationally defining the various competencies so they can be assessed;
- curating a resource bank, seeded with high-quality assessments;
- providing professional-development resources regarding performance-based assessments and other tools for assessing complex and hard-to-measure competencies; and
- convening district personnel to create assessments and develop other resources to support Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

In general, the Work Group recommended having USBE play an active, but supportive, role regarding Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

Tables 4-6 presents a more detailed account of these recommendations.

TABLE 4
MASTERY COMPETENCIES

COMPETENCY	ROLE OF USBE
Academic Mastery	The state should continue to provide these assessments in ELA, math, and science to meet federal accountability needs. The results of these assessments may support determinations of academic mastery, but local school districts would have to develop approaches for assessing content areas not tested by the state.
Civic, Financial and Economic Literacy	Guidance from the state would be useful, but the Work Group believed these competencies would be harder to measure with standardized assessments. Therefore, the state should provide guidance, resources, and minimum requirements, but assessments should be LEA-driven and developed. As part of guidance, the state could help LEAs understand how to identify the most important elements of the competencies, and how to ensure that access to competency development is equitable. Guidance also should recognize current exemplary practices. Finally, financial literacy and its assessment were held in high regard by survey respondents, so this may present an opportunity for USBE to support the assessment of financial literacy as part of the Portrait of Graduate system.
Wellness	The Work Group recommended that state support for hard-to-assess competencies, such as wellness, should focus on assessment approaches that rely on less formal and likely longer-term data collection processes (e.g., documentation of observations) since it is unlikely that something as personal and challenging to measure can be evaluated with a single end-of-year test.
Digital Literacy	Work Group members indicated that the state first address access and equity before moving to any student-level assessment.

TABLE 5
AUTONOMY COMPETENCIES

COMPETENCY	RECOMMENDED USBE ROLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Critical Thinking and Problem Solving • Creativity and Innovation • Collaboration and Teamwork 	<p>The Work Group recommended that the state could help create rich materials that can be used optionally by teachers for both instruction and assessment. This would help in developing a shared understanding of these competencies and the corresponding criteria for success.</p> <p>The Work Group recommended that the state could help curate open-source resources and programs in a library with high-quality materials that support instruction and assessment.</p> <p>However, the Work Group believed the state should tread carefully in these sorts of domains so as not to be seen as driving specific views of these competencies. That said, the Work Group did support having the state highlight exemplary practices in local districts and serve as a resource in curating potential tools (e.g., informal rating systems).</p>

TABLE 6
PURPOSE COMPETENCIES

COMPETENCY	RECOMMENDED USBE ROLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty, Integrity and Responsibility • Hard Work and Resilience • Lifelong Learning and Personal Growth • Service • Respect 	<p>The Work Group recommended that the state provide resources to help districts conceptualize and implement these competencies in classrooms through training, frameworks, and best practices for implementation. Hard work and resilience, for example, are strongly related to learning challenging content such as higher-level mathematics.</p> <p>The Work Group also recommended that any state support for assessment recognize the developmental nature of many of these competencies.</p> <p>Finally, the Work Group recommended that the state help districts and schools understand how to use formative assessment practices for providing actionable feedback to students about their developing competence and, further, for helping teachers learn how students’ competence develops and how they can support student growth.</p>

Recommendations for Personalized, Competency-Based Learning in Utah

Utah State Code 53F-5-501 defines Competency-Based Education (CBE) as “a system where a student advances to higher levels of learning when the student demonstrates competency of concepts and skills regardless of time, place, or pace” (p. 1). State law views the student characteristics gained through CBE as aspirational and not in need of quantification or measurement. Nevertheless, the law acknowledges that for all Utah students to achieve the USBE vision to be able to succeed and lead, clear competencies—pre-K through higher education—must be prioritized and available to Utah educators and students. Accordingly Utah developed Portrait of a Graduate competencies under a [Personalized, Competency Based Learning \(PCBL\) framework](#) that:

- hold high expectations for all students,
- align from pre-K through higher education, and
- provide students personalized opportunities to demonstrate competency.

The Work Group made recommendations for how USBE can support local implementation of the PCBL framework. The Work Group generally believed the state should have a limited role in the assessment of the PCBL framework in order to retain the authority and autonomy of LEAs in this regard. Examples of a welcomed state role are identifying and highlighting best practices, supporting professional learning communities, and providing professional development opportunities.

The Work Group also was asked to provide recommendations regarding the importance for the state, through the

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assessment system, to support the following assessment principles associated with the PCBL framework:

- Assessments include authentic application of acquired knowledge, essential skills, and dispositions;
- Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do;
- Support students demonstrating learning in multiple ways;
- Assessments include a performance component;
- Assessments are taken when the student is ready;
- Assessments provide descriptive feedback that can guide student learning; and
- Assessments provide a meaningful and positive learning experience.

The Work Group indicated that the full system of state-provided assessments, along with local assessment systems, should support multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know and can do, allow students to test when they are ready, and include performance assessment components. Similarly, the Work Group desired state support of system components that provide a meaningful and positive learning experience. This means that students understand the role of assessment in allowing them to connect to and improve their learning. A positive and meaningful learning experience means that the student can understand the role of assessment in supporting their learning.

The Work Group emphasized the challenges resulting from assessment being viewed as an accountability tool and, further, the importance of communicating that assessments, particularly components of the state assessment system, are designed to help students learn. For example, a bottom-up focus communicates a collaborative and supportive assessment purpose whereas a top-down system communicates that assessments are imposed for the benefit of the state. Table 7 presents the specific recommendations from the Work Group.

TABLE 7
WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POTENTIAL PCBL SUPPORTS

POTENTIAL SUPPORT	RECOMMENDED USBE ROLE
The state assessment system offers opportunities for students to take assessment when they are ready.	High level of support needed if it is in the summative portion. The RFP will need to specify to vendors that their solutions should address these needs.
The state assessment system offers opportunities for students to demonstrate authentic application of acquired knowledge, essential skills, and dispositions.	Provide rich assessment materials that can be instructionally embedded for a variety of content areas and school contexts.
The state assessment system includes performance components.	Provide performance-task banks, and guidance for for districts and teachers to develop such tasks, that allow students to show their knowledge, skills, and abilities, in multiple ways.

POTENTIAL SUPPORT	RECOMMENDED USBE ROLE
The state assessment system provides students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do.	High level of support is needed if it is in the summative portion. The RFP will need to specify to vendors that their solutions should address these needs. Further, the state will need to create strict rules specifying which assessment “counts” for federal and state accountability purposes.
The state assessment system includes components that provide descriptive feedback that can guide student learning.	Some support needed, particularly for understanding the value of different forms of human and machine feedback from summative and non-summative assessments for specific uses (e.g. placement decisions, diagnosis, instruction). Communication support is needed for making assessments more meaningful and understandable.
The state assessment system includes components that provide a meaningful and positive learning experience.	Communication support for helping students understanding the purpose of the assessment and how each assessment influences their own learning.
The state assessment system includes components that support students demonstrating learning in multiple ways.	High level of support needed if it is in the summative portion. RFP will need to specify to vendors that their solutions should address these needs. Similar to the multiple opportunities, the state will need to create strict rules specifying which assessment “counts” for federal and state accountability purposes.

BALANCING UTAH’S ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Balanced systems of assessment have been the Holy Grail of educational measurement for at least 20 years. Unfortunately, there are many structural, political, and capacity barriers to the design and implementation of such systems, especially ones that span the state office to the classroom (Marion, Thompson, Evans, Martineau, & Dadey, 2019). Recall that assessment systems are balanced when the various assessments in the system are coherently linked through a clear specification of the learning targets, they comprehensively provide multiple sources of evidence to support educational decision-making, and they continuously document student progress over time (NRC, 2001).

In states having a strong local-control ethic, like Utah, the largest obstacle to a fully coherent assessment system is when curriculum and local assessments are under district control while the state assessment and content standards are controlled by the state. Undaunted, the Work Group wished to move toward a more balanced state assessment systems without compromising local control.

The Work Group appreciated Utah’s current non-summative assessments, and they offered several recommendations regarding state support for the Portrait of a Graduate and PCBL initiatives.

As noted earlier, Utah has moved toward a loosely coupled system that includes interim and benchmark assessments the state procures, along with, and tied explicitly to, the states' summative assessment in reading and math. The Work Group appreciated Utah's current non-summative assessments, and they offered several recommendations regarding state support for the Portrait of a Graduate and PCBL initiatives. In part, supporting school districts should involve assessment-system literacy, which goes beyond typical assessment literacy efforts. Assessment-system literacy is focused on helping local assessment leaders create coherent, comprehensive, and continuous assessment systems at the district and school level. Additionally, district leaders will have to take care to create local assessment systems that are efficient, allowing no extraneous or redundant assessments. This is challenging design work, to be sure, so resources and expertise should be pooled to not "reinvent the wheel."

Closing Thoughts on Accountability Policies

The Work Group recognized that its charge focused on educational assessment. However, it is almost impossible to separate accountability from assessment when discussing statewide summative assessment. The Work Group was an experienced group of participants, but the Work Group reported that many of their respective peers conflated assessment and accountability.

Many Work Group members felt they would be remiss if this report did not acknowledge the role accountability requirements have had on the design and implementation of balanced assessment systems. Accountability pressures can shift leaders' focus from long-term strategies, such as building teachers' formative assessment skills, to quick-fix approaches for improving scores on the state test.

Reducing the time devoted to the state summative assessment, as the Work Group suggested, will not necessarily rebalance the statewide assessment system if the same accountability pressures remain. Therefore, state leaders interested in promoting balanced assessment systems should examine possible unintended consequences of state accountability policies. There are many ways to address these accountability pressures, such as relying on a broader set of indicators, but that discussion is beyond the scope of this Work Group. Nevertheless, the Work Group encourages Utah policymakers to evaluate how Utah's accountability systems may be resulting in assessment systems having an inordinate weight on the single state summative assessment given at the end of the year.

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The Work Group encourages Utah policymakers to evaluate how Utah's accountability systems may be resulting in assessment systems having an inordinate weight on the single state summative assessment given at the end of the year.

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APPENDIX A: REFERENCES TO UTAH LAW IN THE REPORT

Utah Constitution

Article X, Section 1. [Free nonsectarian schools.]

The Legislature shall provide for the establishment and maintenance of the state's education systems including: (a) a public education system, which shall be open to all children of the state; and (b) a higher education system. Both systems shall be free from sectarian control.

Utah Code

53E-2-202. Planning for Utah's public education system.

The state board shall:

- (1) create, maintain, and review on a regular basis a statewide, comprehensive multi-year strategic plan that includes long-term goals for improved student outcomes; and
- (2) report annually to the Education Interim Committee on or before the committee's November meeting on the strategic plan described in Subsection (1), including progress toward achieving long-term goals.

53E-2-301. Public education's vision and mission.

- (1) The Legislature envisions an educated citizenry that encompasses the following foundational principles:
 - (a) citizen participation in civic and political affairs;
 - (b) economic prosperity for the state by graduating students who are college and career ready;
 - (c) strong moral and social values; and
 - (d) loyalty and commitment to constitutional government.
- (2) The Legislature recognizes that public education's mission is to assure Utah the best educated citizenry in the world and each individual the training to succeed in a global society by providing students with:
 - (a) learning and occupational skills;
 - (b) character development;
 - (c) literacy and numeracy;
 - (d) high quality instruction;
 - (e) curriculum based on high standards and relevance; and
 - (f) effective assessment to inform high quality instruction and accountability.
- (3) The Legislature:
 - (a) recognizes that parents are a child's first teachers and are responsible for the education of their children;
 - (b) encourages family engagement and adequate preparation so that students enter the public education system ready to learn; and
 - (c) intends that the mission detailed in Subsection (2) be carried out through a responsive educational system that guarantees local school communities autonomy, flexibility, and client choice, while holding them accountable for results.
- (4) This section will be applied consistent with Section 53G-10-204.

53E-2-302. Characteristics of public education system.

The Legislature shall assist in maintaining a public education system that has the following characteristics:

- (1) assumes that all students have the ability to learn and that each student departing the system will be prepared to achieve success in productive employment, further education, or both;
- (2) provides a personalized education plan or personalized education occupation plan for each student, which involves the student, the student's parent, and school personnel in establishing the plan;
- (3) provides students with the knowledge and skills to take responsibility for their decisions and to make appropriate choices;
- (4) provides opportunities for students to exhibit the capacity to learn, think, reason, and work effectively, individually and in groups;
- (5) offers world-class core standards that enable students to successfully compete in a global society, and to succeed as citizens of a constitutional republic;
- (6) incorporates an information retrieval system that provides students, parents, and educators with reliable, useful, and timely data on the progress of each student;
- (7) attracts, prepares, inducts, and retains excellent teachers for every classroom in large part through collaborative efforts among the state board, the Utah Board of Higher Education, and school districts, provides effective ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to improve their teaching skills, and provides recognition, rewards, and compensation for their excellence;
- (8) empowers each school district and public school to create its own vision and plan to achieve results consistent with the objectives outlined in this part;
- (9) uses technology to improve teaching and learning processes and for the delivery of educational services;
- (10) promotes ongoing research and development projects at the district and the school level that are directed at improving or enhancing public education;
- (11) offers a public school choice program, which gives students and their parents options to best meet the student's personalized education needs;
- (12) emphasizes the involvement of educators, parents, business partnerships, and the community at large in the educational process by allowing them to be involved in establishing and implementing educational goals and participating in decision-making at the school site; and
- (13) emphasizes competency-based standards and progress-based assessments, including tracking and measurement systems.

53E-4-202. Core standards for Utah public schools.

- (1) (a) In establishing minimum standards related to curriculum and instruction requirements under Section 53E-3-501, the state board shall, in consultation with local school boards, school superintendents, teachers, employers, and parents implement core standards for Utah public schools that will enable students to, among other objectives:
 - (i) communicate effectively, both verbally and through written communication;
 - (ii) apply mathematics; and
 - (iii) access, analyze, and apply information.
- (b) Except as provided in this public education code, the state board may recommend but may not require a local school board or charter school governing board to use:

- (i) a particular curriculum or instructional material; or
 - (ii) a model curriculum or instructional material.
- (2) The state board shall, in establishing the core standards for Utah public schools:
 - (a) identify the basic knowledge, skills, and competencies each student is expected to acquire or master as the student advances through the public education system; and
 - (b) align with each other the core standards for Utah public schools and the assessments described in Section 53E-4-303.
- (3) The basic knowledge, skills, and competencies identified pursuant to Subsection (2)(a) shall increase in depth and complexity from year to year and focus on consistent and continual progress within and between grade levels and courses in the basic academic areas of:
 - (a) English, including explicit phonics, spelling, grammar, reading, writing, vocabulary, speech, and listening; and
 - (b) mathematics, including basic computational skills.
- (4) Before adopting core standards for Utah public schools, the state board shall:
 - (a) publicize draft core standards for Utah public schools on the state board's website and the Utah Public Notice website created under Section 63F-1-701;
 - (b) invite public comment on the draft core standards for Utah public schools for a period of not less than 90 days; and
 - (c) conduct three public hearings that are held in different regions of the state on the draft core standards for Utah public schools.
- (5) LEA governing boards shall design their school programs, that are supported by generally accepted scientific standards of evidence, to focus on the core standards for Utah public schools with the expectation that each program will enhance or help achieve mastery of the core standards for Utah public schools.
- (6) Except as provided in Section 53G-10-402, each school may select instructional materials and methods of teaching, that are supported by generally accepted scientific standards of evidence, that the school considers most appropriate to meet the core standards for Utah public schools.
- (7) The state may exit any agreement, contract, memorandum of understanding, or consortium that cedes control of the core standards for Utah public schools to any other entity, including a federal agency or consortium, for any reason, including:
 - (a) the cost of developing or implementing the core standards for Utah public schools;
 - (b) the proposed core standards for Utah public schools are inconsistent with community values; or
 - (c) the agreement, contract, memorandum of understanding, or consortium:
 - (i) was entered into in violation of Chapter 3, Part 8, Implementing Federal or National Education Programs, or Title 63J, Chapter 5, Federal Funds Procedures Act;
 - (ii) conflicts with Utah law;
 - (iii) requires Utah student data to be included in a national or multi-state database;
 - (iv) requires records of teacher performance to be included in a national or multi-state database; or
 - (v) imposes curriculum, assessment, or data tracking requirements on home school or private school students.
- (8) The state board shall submit a report in accordance with Section 53E-1-203 on the development and implementation of the core standards for Utah public schools, including the time line established for the review of the core standards for Utah public schools by a standards review committee and the recommendations of a standards review committee established under Section 53E-4-203.

53E-4-301.5. Legislative intent.

- (1) In enacting this part, the Legislature intends to determine the effectiveness of school districts and schools in assisting students to master the fundamental educational skills toward which instruction is directed.
- (2) The state board shall ensure that a statewide assessment provides the public, the Legislature, the state board, school districts, public schools, and school teachers with:
 - (a) evaluative information regarding the various levels of proficiency achieved by students, so that they may have an additional tool to plan, measure, and evaluate the effectiveness of programs in the public schools; and
 - (b) information to recognize excellence and to identify the need for additional resources or to reallocate educational resources in a manner to ensure educational opportunities for all students and to improve existing programs.

53E-5-211. Reporting.

- (1) The state board shall annually publish on the state board's website a report card that includes for each school:
 - (a) the school's overall rating described in Subsection 53E-5-204(1);
 - (b) the school's performance on each indicator described in:
 - (i) Section 53E-5-205, for an elementary school or a middle school; or
 - (ii) Section 53E-5-206, for a high school;
 - (c) information comparing the school's performance on each indicator described in Subsection (1)(b) with:
 - (i) the average school performance; and
 - (ii) the school's performance in all previous years for which data is available;
 - (d) the percentage of students who participated in statewide assessments;
 - (e) for an elementary school, the percentage of students who read on grade level in grades 1 through 3; and
 - (f) for a high school, performance on Advanced Placement exams.
- (2) A school may include in the school's report card described in Subsection (1) up to two self-reported school quality indicators that:
 - (a) are approved by the state board for inclusion; and
 - (b) may include process or input indicators.
- (3)
 - (a) The state board shall develop an individualized student achievement report that includes:
 - (i) information on the student's level of proficiency as measured by a statewide assessment; and
 - (ii) a comparison of the student's academic growth target and actual academic growth as measured by a statewide assessment.
 - (b) The state board shall, subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1232g, make the individualized student achievement report described in Subsection (3)(a) available for a school district or charter school to access electronically.
 - (c) A school district or charter school shall distribute an individualized student achievement report to the parent of the student to whom the report applies.

53E-9-202. Application of state and federal law to the administration and operation of public schools – Local school board and charter school governing board policies.

- (1) As used in this section “education entity” means:
 - (a) the state board;
 - (b) a local school board or charter school governing board;
 - (c) a school district;
 - (d) a public school; or
 - (e) the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.
- (2) An education entity and an employee, student aide, volunteer, third party contractor, or other agent of an education entity shall protect the privacy of a student, the student’s parents, and the student’s family and support parental involvement in the education of their children through compliance with the protections provided for family and student privacy under this part and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and related provisions under 20 U.S.C. Secs. 1232g and 1232h, in the administration and operation of all public school programs, regardless of the source of funding.
- (3) A local school board or charter school governing board shall enact policies governing the protection of family and student privacy as required by this part.

53G-10-204. Civic and character education – Definitions – Legislative finding – Elements – Reporting requirements.

- (1) As used in this section:
 - (a) “Character education” means reaffirming values and qualities of character which promote an upright and desirable citizenry.
 - (b) “Civic education” means the cultivation of informed, responsible participation in political life by competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of representative democracy in Utah and the United States.
 - (c) “Civics engagement pilot program” means the pilot program described in Subsection (7).
 - (d) “Civics engagement project” means the civics engagement project described in Subsection (7), which a student enrolled in a participating LEA may complete.
 - (e) “Participating LEA” means an LEA that meets the eligibility criteria, and is selected by the state board, to participate in the civics engagement pilot program.
 - (f) “Values” means time-established principles or standards of worth.
- (2) The Legislature recognizes that:
 - (a) Civic and character education are fundamental elements of the public education system’s core mission as originally intended and established under Article X of the Utah Constitution;
 - (b) Civic and character education are fundamental elements of the constitutional responsibility of public education and shall be a continuing emphasis and focus in public schools;
 - (c) the cultivation of a continuing understanding and appreciation of a constitutional republic and principles of representative democracy in Utah and the United States among succeeding generations of educated and responsible citizens is important to the nation and state;
 - (d) the primary responsibility for the education of children within the state resides with their parents and that the role of state and local governments is to support and assist parents in fulfilling that responsibility;
 - (e) public schools fulfill a vital purpose in the preparation of succeeding generations of informed and responsible citizens who are deeply attached to essential democratic values and institutions; and

- (f) the happiness and security of American society relies upon the public virtue of its citizens which requires a united commitment to a moral social order where self-interests are willingly subordinated to the greater common good.
- (3) Through an integrated curriculum, students shall be taught in connection with regular school work:
- (a) honesty, integrity, morality, civility, duty, honor, service, and obedience to law;
 - (b) respect for and an understanding of the Declaration of Independence and the constitutions of the United States and of the state of Utah;
 - (c) Utah history, including territorial and pre-territorial development to the present;
 - (d) the essentials and benefits of the free enterprise system;
 - (e) respect for parents, home, and family;
 - (f) the dignity and necessity of honest labor; and
 - (g) other skills, habits, and qualities of character which will promote an upright and desirable citizenry and better prepare students to recognize and accept responsibility for preserving and defending the blessings of liberty inherited from prior generations and secured by the constitution.
- (4) Local school boards and school administrators may provide training, direction, and encouragement, as needed, to accomplish the intent and requirements of this section and to effectively emphasize civic and character education in the course of regular instruction in the public schools.
- (5) Civic and character education in public schools are:
- (a) not intended to be separate programs in need of special funding or added specialists to be accomplished; and
 - (b) core principles which reflect the shared values of the citizens of Utah and the founding principles upon which representative democracy in the United States and the state of Utah are based.
- (6) In accordance with Section 53E-1-203, the state board shall report to the Education Interim Committee the methods used, and the results being achieved, to instruct and prepare students to become informed and responsible citizens through an integrated curriculum taught in connection with regular school work as required in this section.
- (7)
- (a) In accordance with this section, subject to appropriations by the Legislature for this purpose, beginning with the 2020-21 school year, the state board shall administer a three-year civics engagement pilot program to assess the benefits of, and methods for, implementing a requirement to complete a civics engagement project as a condition for receiving a high school diploma.
 - (b) The state board shall:
 - (i) make rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act:
 - (A) to create a civics engagement project that complies with core standards for Utah public education for social studies and prepares students for lifelong civic motivation and participation through applied learning of civics content;
 - (B) to establish eligibility requirements for participating LEAs;
 - (C) to create an application process for LEAs to apply to participate in the pilot program; and
 - (D) for a report that a participating LEA is required to submit to the state board at the end of the pilot program;

-
- (ii) select participating LEAs:
 - (A) from diverse geographic areas within the state; and
 - (B) with a range of student population sizes; and
 - (iii) subject to appropriations by the Legislature for this purpose, in cooperation with school districts, charter schools, and interested private and nonprofit entities, provide training that prepares teachers in a participating LEA to assist students to successfully complete the civics engagement project.
 - (c) A participating LEA shall submit a report to the state board in accordance with the rules described in Subsection (7)(b)(i)(D).

APPENDIX B: UTAH ASSESSMENT WORK GROUP WEBINAR SERIES AGENDAS

Webinar Series #1

Objective

The purpose of this first set of webinars is for the Utah Assessment Work Group to clarify the goals, purposes and uses of Utah's assessment system. The group will discuss design priorities and considerations for Utah's 3-8 summative assessments that will help establish an initial framework for the more in-depth work on the assessment component in the upcoming webinars.

Part 1 (Wednesday, July 1, 2020 1:00-4:00 MT)

1:00 Welcome and Introductions (15 minutes)

- ✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
 - USBE welcomes the members of the Work Group
 - Work Group members, who were not at the 6/22 meeting, introduce themselves

1:15 Setting the Stage: Timeline, Goals and Guiding Principles (30 minutes)

- ✓ Leslie Keng, Center for Assessment
 - The Center clarifies the primary goals of this meeting given the specified timeline and walk through the agenda for this initial three-part webinar.
 - The Center goes over the results from the pre-meeting exercise about assessment concepts and introduces the idea of assessment purpose and use.
 - The Center suggests guiding principles that should drive the design of Utah's assessment system. These principles represent a theory of action as to what is necessary to ensure the state's vision for education can be achieved.
 - Equity
 - Accessibility (vis a vis equity, not technical accessibility)
 - Relevance (e.g., relevant to Utah students in preparing them for postsecondary endeavors, as specified in Utah's Portrait of Graduate)
 - Rigor (i.e., performance expectations are competitive)
 - Usability (stakeholder needs; policymakers, educational leaders and administrators, educators, students, parents)

1:45 Setting the Stage: Assessment Types and Uses (30 minutes)

- ✓ Michelle Boyer, Center for Assessment
 - The Center walks through the high points of Brief #1.
 - The goal is to establish a common language and understanding related to the components and characteristics of assessments and to reiterate that any single assessment can only serve limited uses.
 - Form breakout groups and provide instructions for the Activity #1, which will commence after the break.

2:15 Break (15 minutes)

- 2:30 Activity #1: Purpose and Use of Utah Assessments (45 minutes)
- ✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
 - The Work Group members work in breakout groups to prioritize the specific purposes, uses and score-based interpretations that should be addressed at different levels of the state’s assessment system (e.g., summative, interim, and formative).
 - Each breakout group should designate a facilitator and note taker.
 - Facilitator = group member whose first letter of their last name is earliest in the alphabet
 - Note taker = group member whose first letter of their last name is latest in the alphabet
 - Time permitting, we will ask each breakout group to summarize its key discussion points when we reconvene in the large group.
- 3:15 Setting the Stage: Balanced System of Assessments (45 minutes)
- ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
 - The Center provides an overview about the promise and design of balanced assessment systems.
- 4:00 Adjourn

Part 2 (Thursday, July 2, 2020 9:00-12:00 MT)

- 9:00 Recap and Overview (5 minutes)
- ✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
 - ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
 - USBE welcomes back the Work Group and introduces any members who may have missed Part 1.
 - The Center recaps what was covered in Part 1 and provides an overview of today’s meeting.
 - The Center sets the stage and provides instructions for Activity #2.
- 9:05 Activity #2: Introduction to Design Characteristics (45 minutes)
- ✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
 - The work group members reconvene in the same breakout groups as the first activity to consider assessment design characteristics and prioritize the use cases they identified in Activity #1.
 - The designated facilitator and notetaker for the group should continue their roles during the discussion.
 - Facilitator = group member whose first letter of their last name is earliest in the alphabet
 - Notetaker = group member whose first letter of their last name is latest in the alphabet

- 9:50 Setting the Stage: Design Priorities for Summative Assessments (20 minutes)
- ✓ Michelle Boyer, Center for Assessment
 - The Center presents the high points of Brief #2 to help the work group understand the typical tasks and timelines involved in developing and administering statewide summative assessments.
 - The Center then outlines state and federal requirements for the state summative assessment as a means of clarifying constraints and highlights areas where guidance from the Work Group is needed.
- 10:10 Break (15 minutes)
- 10:25 Design Considerations: Reporting (5 minutes)
- ✓ Leslie Keng, Center for Assessment
 - The Center presents reporting considerations for Utah’s 3-8 summative assessments to set up the next breakout group activity.
- 10:30 Activity #3: Design Considerations for Reporting (Part 1) (30 minutes)
- ✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
 - The Work Group members convene in new breakout groups to discuss reporting considerations for Utah’s 3-8 summative assessments.
 - Each breakout group should designate a facilitator and notetaker.
 - Facilitator = group member whose birthday is closest to today
 - Notetaker = group member whose birthday is furthest from today
- 11:00 Design Considerations: Reporting (continued) (20 minutes)
- ✓ Leslie Keng, Center for Assessment
 - The Center continues to present reporting considerations for Utah’s 3-8 summative assessments to set up the next breakout group activity.
- 11:20 Activity #4: Design Considerations for Reporting (Part 2) (30 minutes)
- ✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
 - The Work Group members convene in new breakout groups to discuss reporting considerations for Utah’s 3-8 summative assessments.
 - The facilitator and notetaker should be the same as the previous activity.
- 11:50 Next Steps (10 minutes)
- ✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
 - ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
 - The Center provides the Work Group with a preview of the 3-8 summative assessment design considerations it will consider in Part 3.
 - USBE thanks the Work Group members for their participation.
- 12:00 Adjourn

Part 3 (Tuesday, July 7, 2020 1:00-4:00 MT)

1:00 Recap and Overview (10 minutes)

- ✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
- ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
 - USBE welcomes back the Work Group.
 - The Center recaps what was covered in the first two parts.

1:10 Design Considerations: Item Types (15 minutes)

- ✓ Leslie Keng, Center for Assessment
 - The Center presents considerations for item types on Utah's 3-8 summative assessments to set up the next breakout group activity.

1:25 Activity #5: Design Considerations for Item Types (30 minutes)

- ✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
 - The Work Group members convene in new breakout groups to discuss considerations for item types on Utah's 3-8 summative assessments.
 - Each breakout group should designate a new facilitator and notetaker for today's activities (i.e., someone who has not taken on these roles so far).

1:55 Design Considerations: Writing (15 minutes)

- ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
 - The Center presents considerations for including writing on Utah's 3-8 summative assessments to set up the next breakout group activity.

2:10 Break (15 minutes)

2:25 Activity #6: Design Considerations for Writing (20 minutes)

- ✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
 - The Work Group members reconvene in breakout groups to discuss considerations for including writing on Utah's 3-8 summative assessments.

2:45 Design Considerations: Adaptivity (15 minutes)

- ✓ Michelle Boyer, Center for Assessment
 - The Center presents considerations for test adaptivity on Utah's 3-8 summative assessments to set up the next breakout group activity.

3:00 Activity #7: Design Considerations for Adaptivity (20 minutes)

- ✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
 - The Work Group members reconvene in breakout groups to discuss considerations for test adaptivity on Utah's 3-8 summative assessments.

- 3:20 Group Discussion: 3-8 Summative Assessment Design Considerations (30 minutes)
- ✓ Utah Assessment Work Group
 - ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
 - The Center facilitates a discussion with the entire Work Group to recap highlights from the breakout group conversations, to check for understanding, and to identify points of consensus and divergence across the groups.
 - The designated notetaker from each breakout group should provide a summary of the group's key discussion points.
- 3:50 Next Steps and Wrap Up (10 minutes)
- ✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
 - ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
 - The Center provides a summary of the first webinar series and previews what the Work Group can expect next.
 - USBE thanks the Work Group members for their participation.
- 4:00 Adjourn

Webinar Series #2

Objectives

The second set of webinars for the Utah Assessment Work Group is to focus on the non-summative aspects of the Utah assessment system. We will discuss how to move from a collection of assessments to a system with as much balance as possible. The specific objectives for this second series of webinars are:

1. Confirm the Work Group's recommendations for Utah's 3-8 summative assessments (Part 1)
2. Discuss plans for the upcoming Community Conversations (Part 1)
3. Clearly articulate the use cases for existing and potential non-summative assessments for various stakeholders in the system (Part 2)
4. Discuss what it takes for assessments to be instructionally useful (Part 2)
5. Discuss how/if the state should support high-quality assessment literacy and formative/classroom assessments (Part 2)
6. Discuss the design considerations associated with the various non-summative assessments to best fulfill the intended uses and purposes (Part 3)
7. Evaluate Utah's current non-summative offerings in light of intended/desired use cases specified above (Part 3)

Part 1 (Monday, August 3, 2020 1:00-4:00 MT)

- 1:00 Recap and Overview (10 minutes)
- ✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
 - ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
 - Reconceptualizing the introduction to the report
 - Guiding principles
 - Constraints and requirements
 - Purposes and Uses by Stakeholder Group by Assessment Component
 - Design Considerations and Choices

- 1:10 Introduction to the Review of Phase 1 Recommendations (10 minutes)
✓ Center for Assessment
- The Center shares a summary of the currently crafted key recommendations for Utah’s 3-8 summative assessments as captured in the Work Group’s report. We will not focus on all recommendations, just those that require additional discussion and confirmation.
- 1:20 Activity #1: Work Group Recommendations for Phase 1 (60 minutes)
✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
- The Work Group members convene in new breakout groups to discuss recommendations for the 3-8 summative assessments.
- 2:20 Break (15 minutes)
- 2:35 Group Discussion: Community Conversations (20 minutes)
✓ Center for Assessment
✓ As part of our promise to collect information from a wider selection of education stakeholders, we had planned to host “Community Conversations.” This large group discussion is designed to solicit your input on both the timing and nature of the conversations. What follows is our initial thinking:
- Create and distribute a survey as widely as possible based on the most updated information and recommendations from the Work Group as possible.
 - Target date for survey distribution is August 31-September 13
 - Community Conversation would occur on Wednesday, September 9th which would allow us time to analyze responses to the survey to date in order to identify the main topics for the community discussion
- 2:55 Activity #1: Full Group Sharing (50 minutes)
✓ Center for Assessment
- During the break and the Community Conversation discussion, one of the Center for Assessment team members will have reviewed each of the Google docs from the breakout groups earlier to identify the areas where consensus has not been achieved. For those items, representatives from the groups representing different perspectives on the recommendation will present their viewpoint prior to a full group discussion.
- 3:45 Take the Test!
✓ Cydnee Carter, USBE
- Instructions on how to access and take one or more of the practice Benchmark tests.
 - All Work Group members are encouraged to complete at least one or more Benchmark tests to support our discussions next week.
- 3:55 Wrap up and next steps
✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
- 4:00 Adjourn

Part 2 (Wednesday, August 5, 2020 1:00-4:00 MT)

1:00 Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)

- ✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
- ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
 - USBE welcomes back the members of the Work Group

1:10 What's in a Name? (15 minutes)

- ✓ Center for Assessment
 - The Center team members will review the various names and confusion over names of such assessments as "interim," "benchmark," "diagnostic," "formative," among others. We will discuss the importance of spelling out clear use cases, focusing on descriptions and avoiding vague labels.

1:25 Activity #2: Who are our users and what information do they need? (40 minutes)

- ✓ Center for Assessment
 - Members will be divided into breakout groups to work through use cases for various non-summative assessment stakeholders.
 - A new facilitator and notetaker should be identified to record the group's consensus (we hope) recommendations. These will be collected via Google docs.

2:05 Setting the Stage: Formative and Classroom Assessments (15 minutes)

- ✓ Center for Assessment
 - The Center walks through the high points of the advanced reading material.
 - The Center gives examples of formative/classroom assessment supports that have been provided in other states/programs.

2:20 Break (15 minutes)

2:35 What do we mean by assessment literacy and how do we get it at a large scale? (15 minutes)

- ✓ Center for Assessment
 - The Center walks through the high points of the advanced reading material.
 - The Center gives examples of high-quality assessment literacy supports that have been provided in other states/programs.

2:50 Activity #3: Assessment Literacy to Support Improved Formative and Classroom Assessment Practices in Utah (40 minutes)

- ✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
 - The Work Group members reconvene in their breakout groups to discuss assessment literacy needs and the role of USBE in supporting assessment literacy around formative and classroom assessment in Utah.
 - The groups should select a facilitator and notetaker.

3:30 Activity #3: Group Sharing (25 minutes)

✓ Utah Assessment Work Group

✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment

- The Center facilitates a discussion with the entire Work Group to recap highlights from the breakout group conversations, to check for understanding, and to identify points of consensus and divergence across the groups.
- The designated notetaker from each breakout group should provide a summary of the group's key discussion points.

3:55 Wrap up and next steps

✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE

✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment

4:00 Adjourn

Part 3 (Monday, August 10, 2020 1:00-4:00 MT)

1:00 Recap and Overview (10 minutes)

✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE

✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment

- USBE welcomes back the Work Group.
- The Center briefly summarizes what was covered in the first two webinars.

1:10 Recapping our Use Case Discussion with an Eye Toward Interim and Benchmark Assessments (10 minutes)

✓ Center for Assessment

- Reviewing the key points from the Use Case activity and discussion

1:20 Setting the Stage: Design Considerations for Non-Summative Assessments (20 minutes)

✓ Center for Assessment

- The Center walks through the high points of the advanced reading material.
- The Center discusses examples of non-summative assessments and their purposes and uses.
- The Center presents design considerations for non-summative assessments so we are able to get the information we need to support our use cases, including:
 - Grain size/focus
 - Item types
 - Adaptive or fixed
 - Secure or open
 - Scoring
 - Reporting
 - Frequency
 - Administration (optional/required)
- The Center and/or USBE provides an overview of Utah's current interim and benchmark assessments.
- A note about item banks.
- The goal is to set the stage for Activity #2.

- 1:40 Activity #4: Design Considerations for Non-Summative Assessments (60 minutes)
✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
- The Work Group members convene in their breakout groups to discuss design considerations for non-summative assessments in Utah.
 - The facilitator and notetaker should be the same as the previous activity.
- 2:40 Break (10 minutes)
- 2:50 Brief Overview of Utah’s Current Non-Summative Assessments (15 minutes)
✓ Cydnee Carter, USBE
✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
- 3:05 Activity #5: Reviewing Utah’s Current Non-Summative Assessments (45 minutes)
✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
- The Work Group members convene in their breakout groups to review Utah’s current non-summative assessments including members’ experience taking the practice test.
 - The facilitator and notetaker should be the same as the previous activity.
- 3:55 Wrap up and next steps
✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
- 4:00 Adjourn

Webinar Series #3

Objectives

The purpose of the third set of webinars for the Utah Assessment Work Group is to discuss and make recommendations about how the Utah State Board of Education can best support new educational initiatives in Utah, specifically competency-based education, personalized learning, and the Portrait of a Graduate. Additionally, the last webinar in this series (October 5th) will involve reviewing the feedback from the survey of Utah education stakeholders. The specific objectives for this final series of webinars are:

1. Gain an understanding of the current innovative initiatives being supported by Utah school districts and USBE (Part 1)
2. Discuss assessment opportunities and considerations for the various competencies and skills outlined in various documents (Part 1)
3. Clarify and make recommendations regarding USBE’s role in assessing and/or supporting the assessment of these competencies and skills (Part 2)
4. Make recommendations for how USBE should prioritize and allocate resources to support these innovative assessment initiatives (Part 2).
5. Consider how supporting the assessment needs associated with personalized and competency-based learning enhances the development and implementation of balanced systems of assessment (Parts 1 & 2).

6. Review and consider how best to incorporate the viewpoints of Utah education stakeholder, as expressed through the Qualtrics survey (Part 3)

Part 1 (Thursday, September 24, 2020 1:00-4:00 MT)

- 1:00 Recap and Overview (10 minutes)
- ✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
 - ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
 - Review plans for Series 3 webinars
 1. Learning about key innovative assessment initiatives
 2. Discussing and prioritizing the role of the state (USBE) in supporting the assessment aspects of these initiatives
 3. Reviewing the results of the community survey
- 1:10 Introduction to Personalized and Competency-Based Education in Utah (25-minute presentation; 10-minute Q&A)
- ✓ Sarah Young and Jennifer Thronsdon, USBE
 - USBE's leaders of the competency-based education and personalized learning initiatives will provide an overview of these initiatives to the Work Group.
- 1:45 Introduction to the Portrait of a Graduate in Utah (25-minute presentation; 10-minute Q&A)
- ✓ Sarah Young and Jennifer Thronsdon, USBE
 - USBE's leaders of the Portrait of a Graduate initiative will provide an overview of this initiative to the Work Group.
- 2:20 Break (15 minutes)
- 2:35 Activity #1: Evaluating the Importance of USBE's Role in Assessing Portrait of a Graduate Competencies (60 minutes)
- ✓ Utah Assessment Work Group (in breakout groups)
 - The Work Group members convene in breakout groups to discuss the role of USBE in supporting the measurement of the Portrait of a Graduate Competencies.
- 3:35 Full Group Debrief of Activity #1 (20 minutes)
- 3:55 Wrap up and next steps (5 minutes)
- ✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
 - ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
- 4:00 Adjourn

Part 2 (Wednesday, September 30, 2020 1:00-4:00 MT)

- 1:00 Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)
- ✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
 - ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
 - USBE welcomes back the members of the Work Group

- 1:10 Activity #2: Elements of Personalized and Competency-Based Education (50 minutes)
✓ Center for Assessment
- Members will be divided into breakout groups to work through what role, if any, Utah’s assessment system should play in supporting personalized and competency-based education in Utah.
- 2:00 Full Group Debrief of Activity #2 (15 minutes)
- 2:15 Quick break (10 minutes)
- 2:25 Revisiting Balanced Assessment Systems (20 minutes)
✓ Center for Assessment
- We will quickly review the concepts and criteria of balanced systems of assessment
- 2:45 Discussion of the balanced assessment systems in Utah (60 minutes)
✓ Center for Assessment
- We intend to have an open (and perhaps initial) discussion about how USBE can and should support a statewide balanced assessment and/or support districts in developing local balanced assessment systems.
- 3:45 Wrap up and next steps (15 minutes)
✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
- 4:00 Adjourn

Part 3 (Monday, October 5, 2020 1:00-4:00 MT)

- 1:00 Recap and Overview (10 minutes)
✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
- USBE welcomes back the Work Group.
- 1:10 Review Community Engagement Survey Results (20 minutes)
✓ Center for Assessment
- Reviewing the key findings from the Community Survey
- 1:30 Activity #3: Small Group Discussion of Survey Results (45 minutes)
✓ Center for Assessment
- The Work Group will, in small groups, discuss key aspects of the Community Survey results to discuss how these results should be reflected in the Work Group final report.
- 2:15 Full Group Debrief (15 minutes)
✓ Center for Assessment
- The goal of this final session will be to arrive at consensus about how best to characterize and include the Community Survey results into the Work Group report.

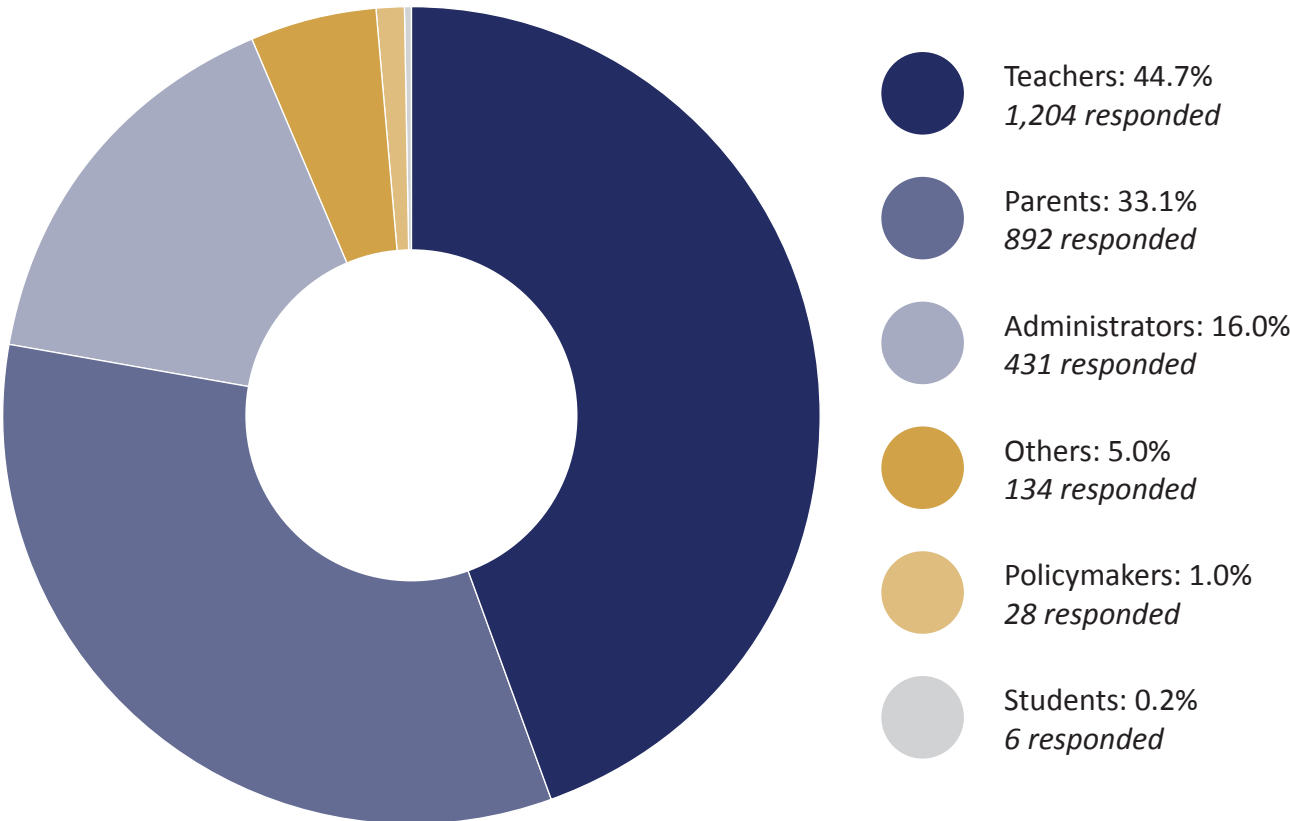
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- 2:30 Break (10 minutes)
- 2:45 Continue discussion of the balanced assessment systems in Utah (60 minutes)
- ✓ Center for Assessment
 - We will continue the open discussion from Part 2 about how USBE can and should support a statewide balanced assessment and/or support districts in developing local balanced assessment systems.
- 3:45 Wrap up and next steps
- ✓ Darin Nielsen, Assistant Superintendent of Student Learning, USBE
 - ✓ Scott Marion, Center for Assessment
- 4:00 Adjourn

APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY ON ASSESSMENT

Survey Information

- Survey window: September 3-18, 2020
- Survey link: https://usbe.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8pNtLP0eW9yEimp

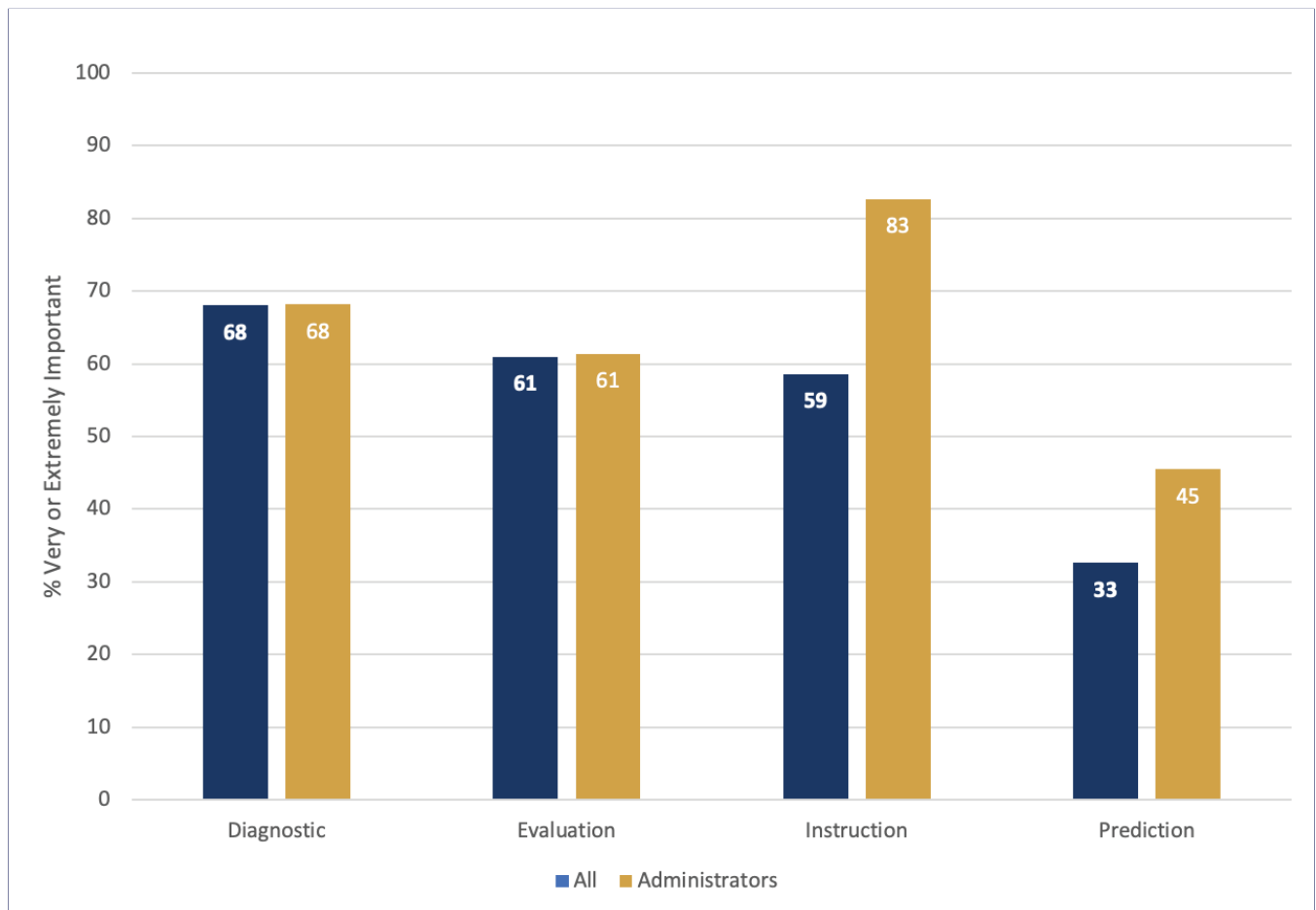
QUESTION: Please select the option that best represents your role in the Utah education system.



QUESTION: How important is it to you that the assessments offered by the Utah State Board of Education support the following purposes? (Extremely important, Very important, Moderately important, Slightly important, Not at all important)

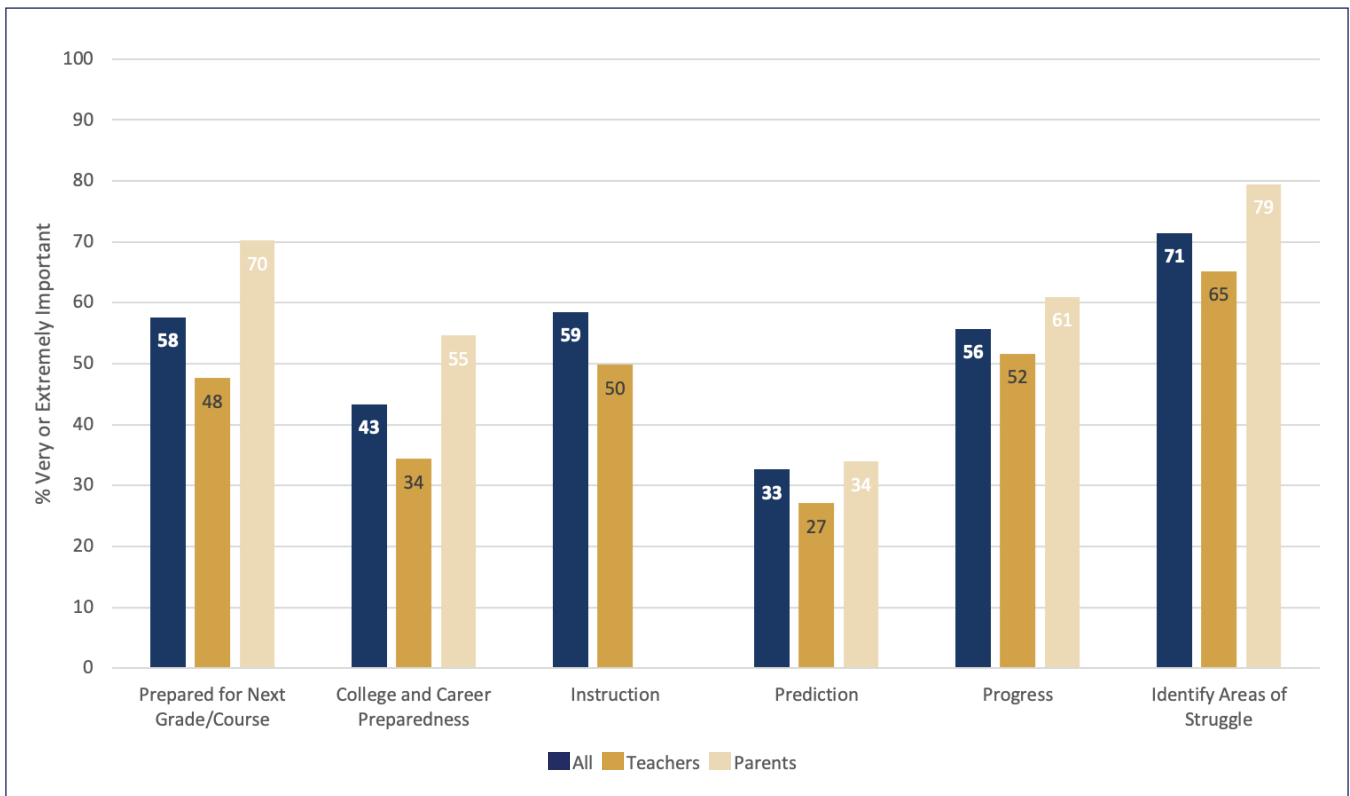
For Administrators

- **Diagnosis.** Identifying the cause or nature of something through deeper examination
- **Evaluation.** Making judgements about the value or merit about something (such as program effectiveness, instructional quality, or student learning)
- **Instruction.** Informing the teaching and learning process (“All” results also include responses from policymakers, teachers, parents, and students)
- **Prediction.** Making a statement about a future event; signaling need for further investigation (“All” results also include responses from policymakers, teachers, parents, and students)

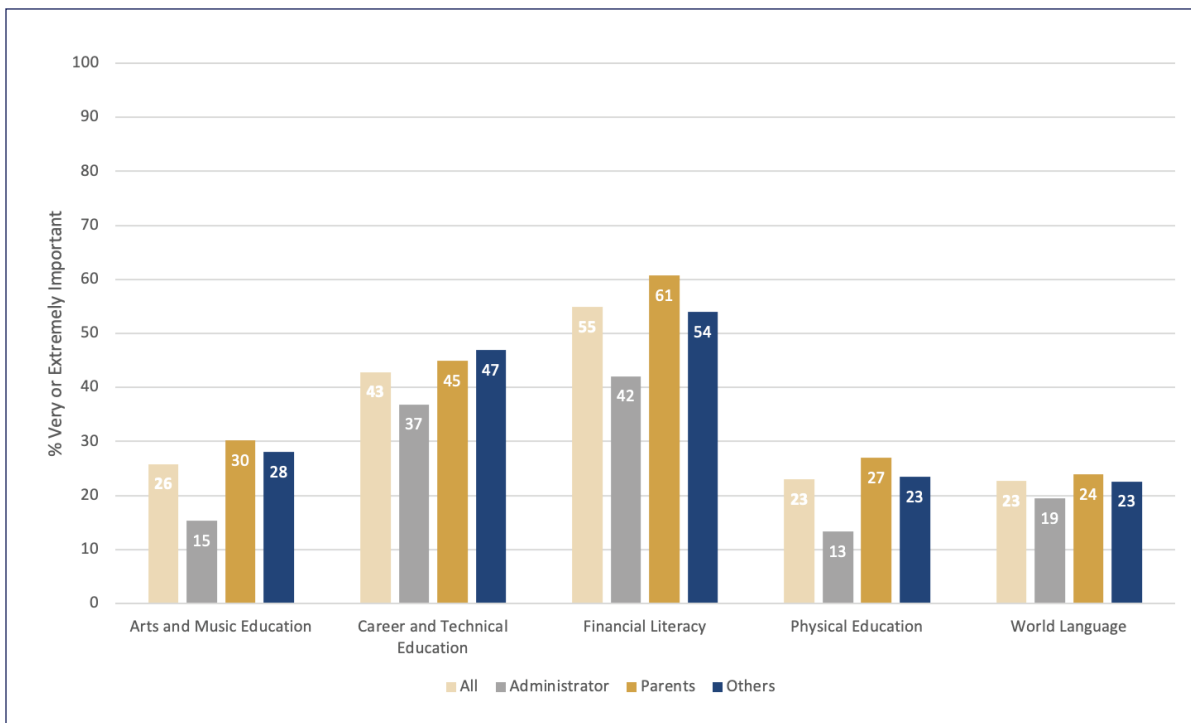
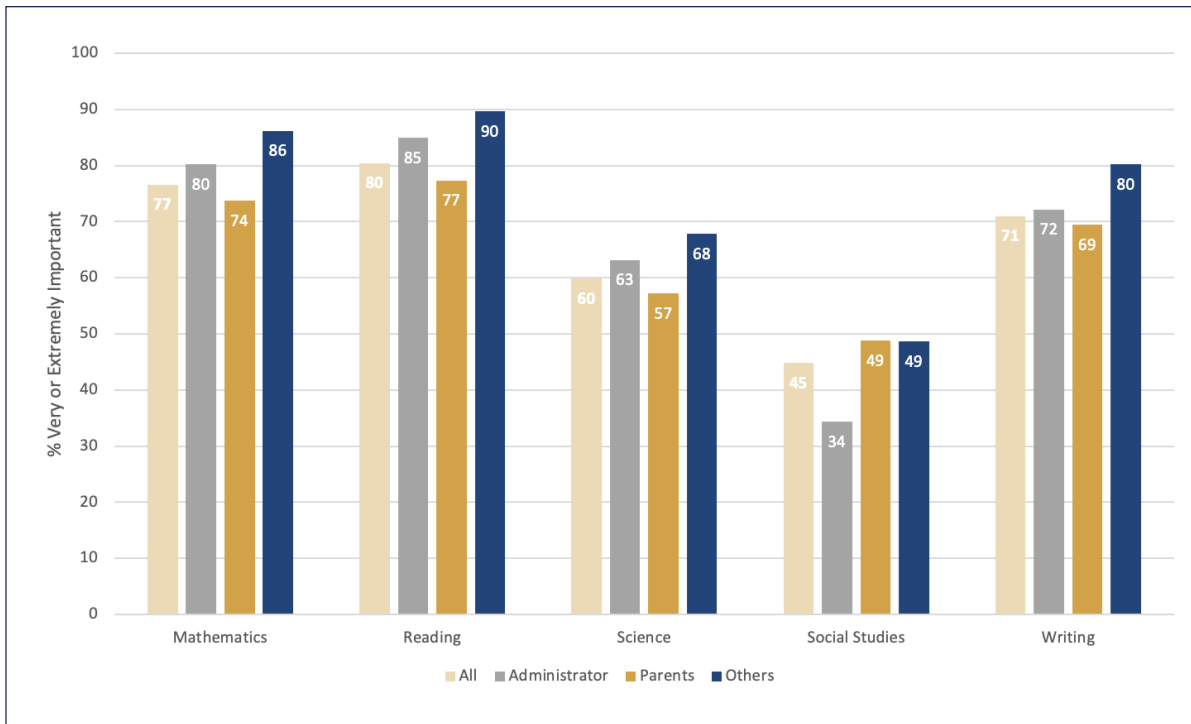


For Teachers and Parents

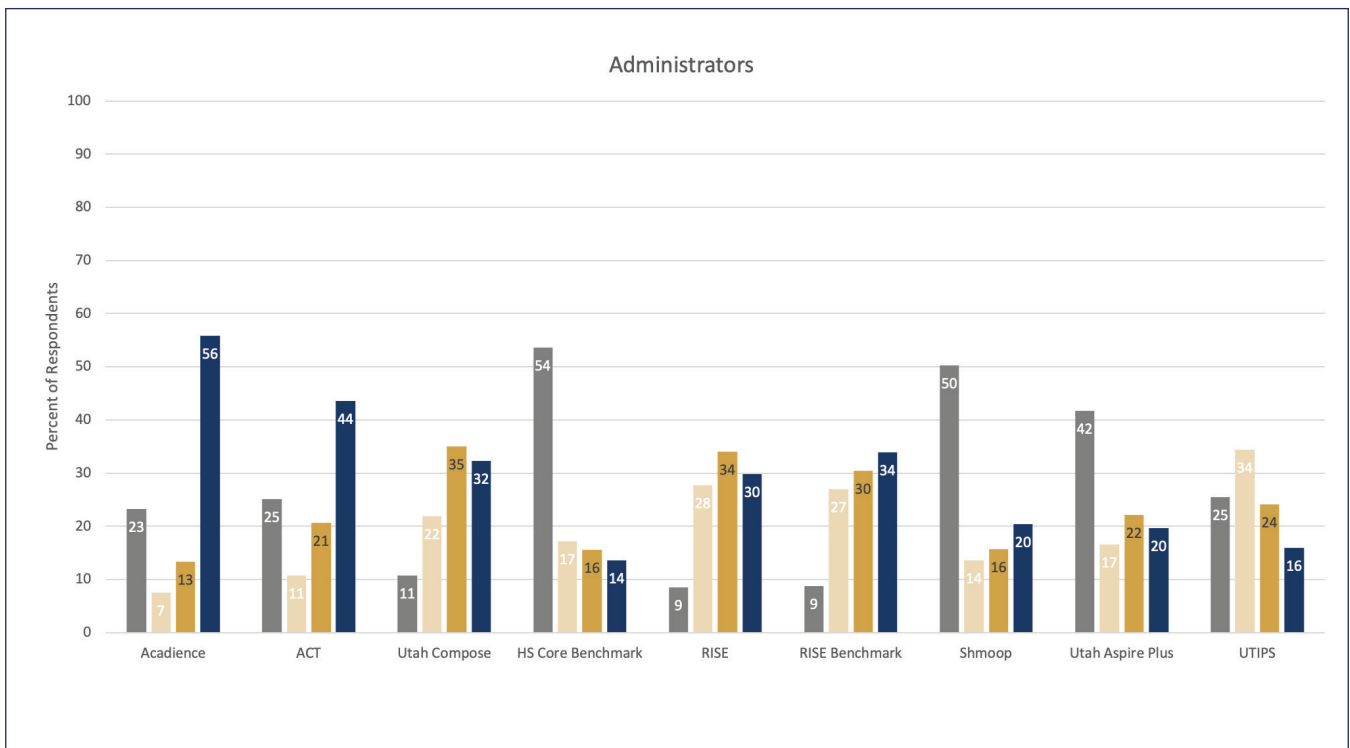
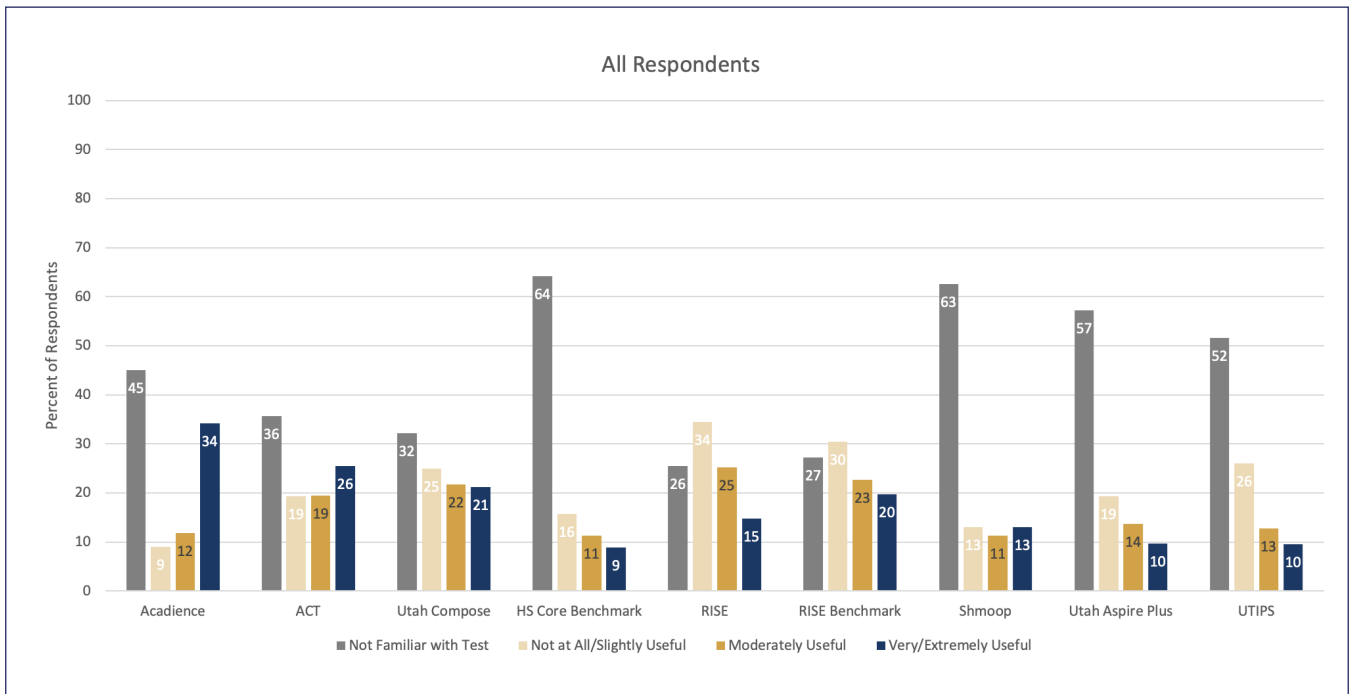
- To evaluate how well my students are prepared for the next unit or course
- To evaluate how well my students are prepared for postsecondary opportunities (such as college or the workforce)
- To inform my daily instruction or educational support
- To predict how well my students will do on a future test (such as the end-of-year statewide assessments or ACT)
- To measure the amount of academic progress that my students have made since the previous year
- To identify specific areas in which my students are struggling

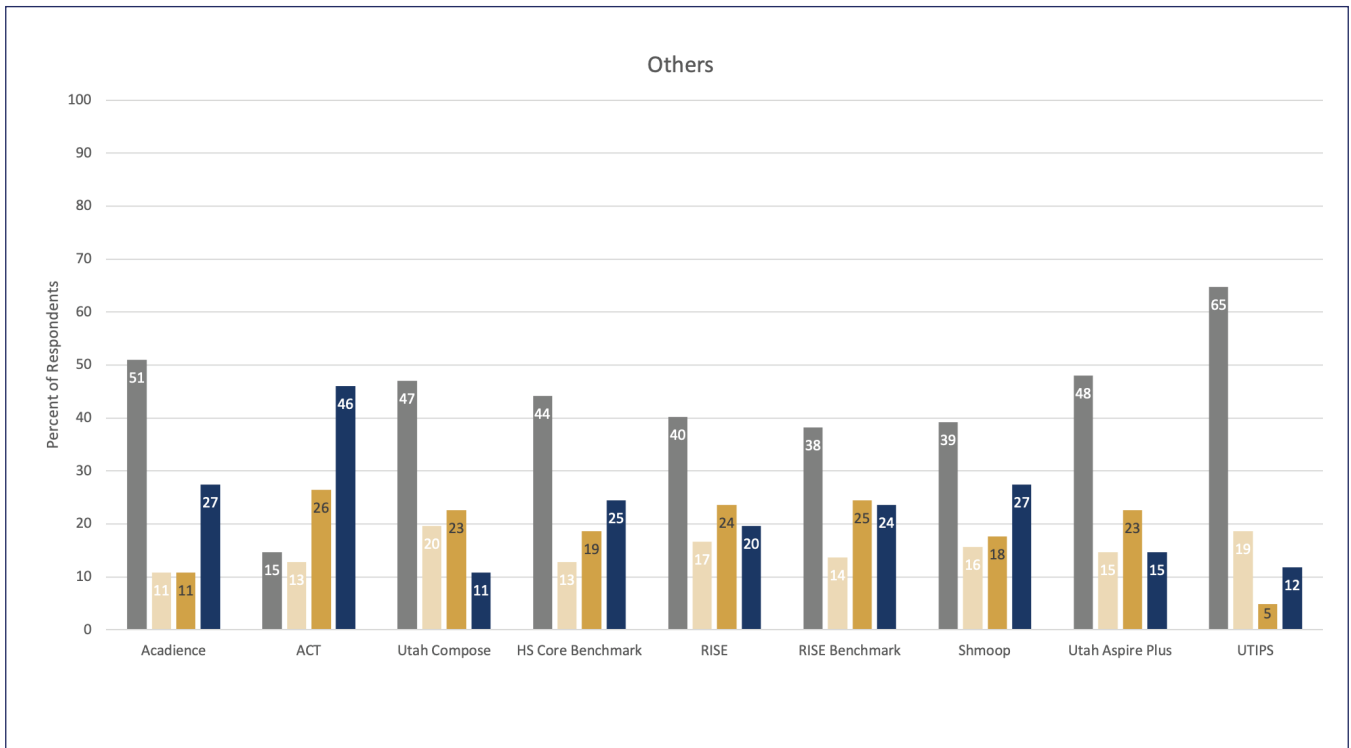
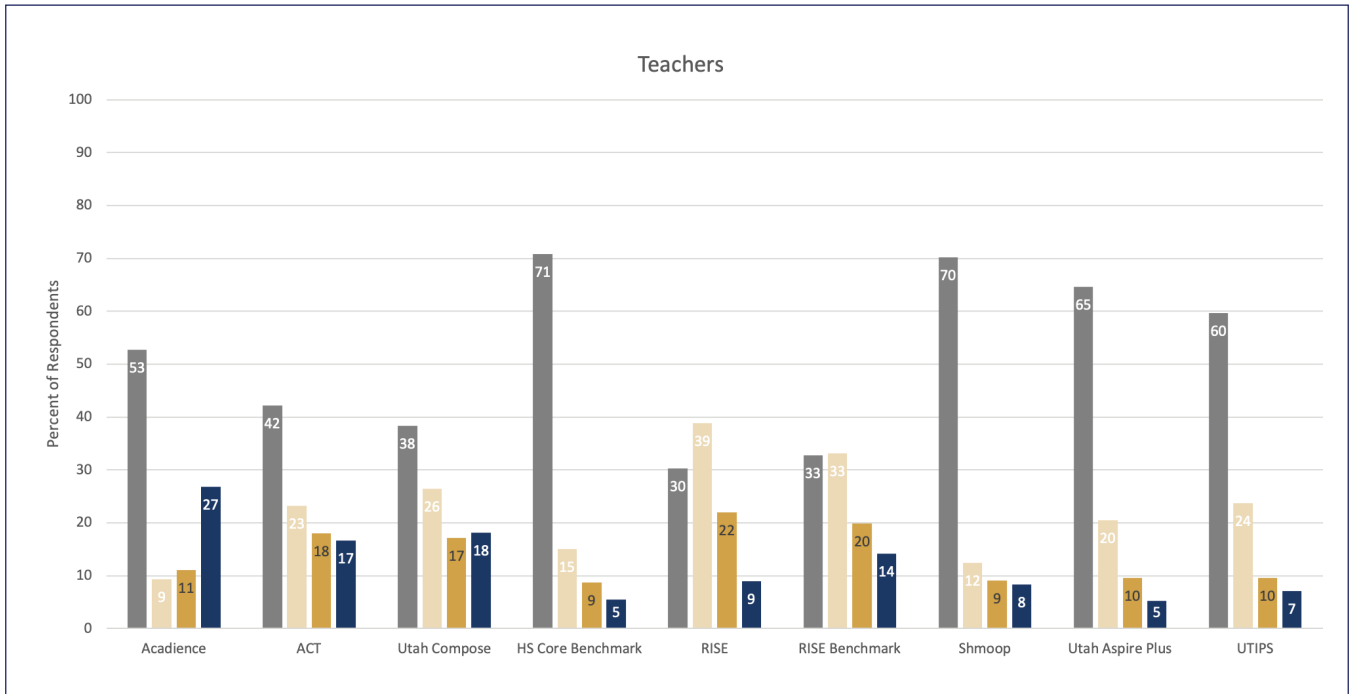


QUESTION: How important is it to you for the Utah State Board of Education to offer assessments that measure achievement and growth in the following content areas? (Extremely important, Very important, Moderately important, Slightly important, Not at all important)



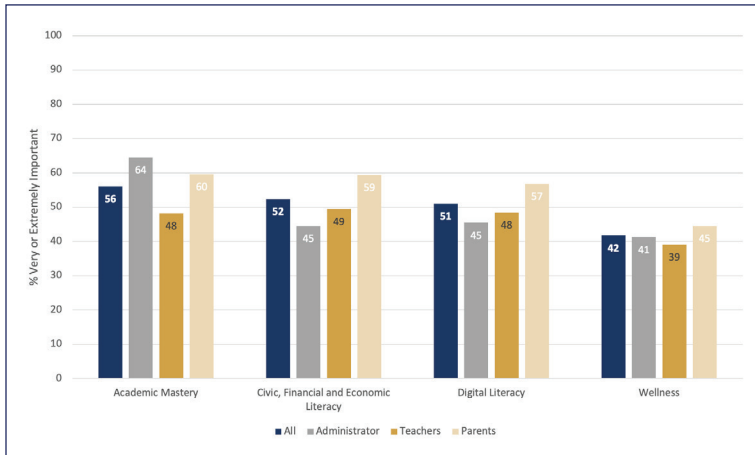
QUESTION: The following is a list of assessments or assessment tools currently offered by the Utah State Board of Education. Please indicate the usefulness of the results from each assessment. (N/A , Extremely useful, Very useful, Moderately useful, Slightly useful, Not at all useful)



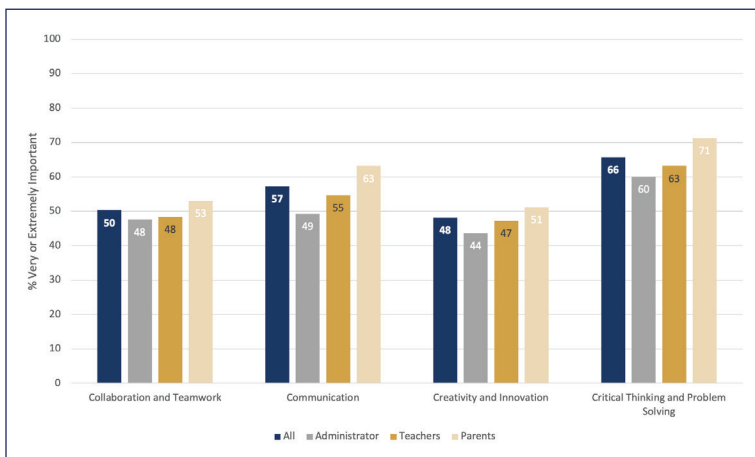


QUESTION: How important is it to you for the Utah State Board of Education to play a role in measuring the following student competencies (as indicated in Utah’s Portrait of a Graduate)? (Extremely important, Very important, Moderately important, Slightly important, Not at all important)

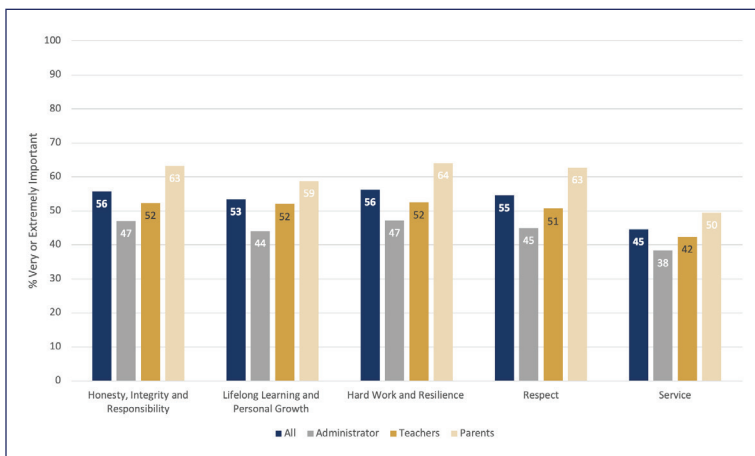
Mastery Competencies



Autonomy Competencies



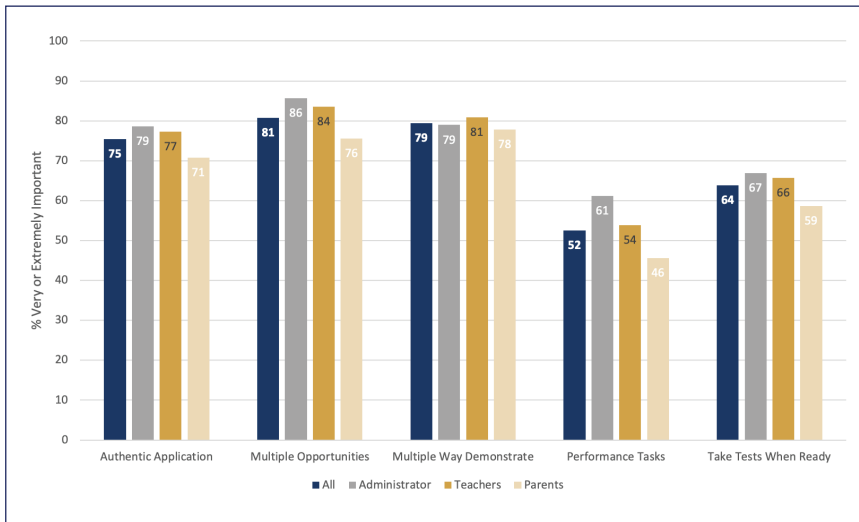
Purpose Competencies



QUESTION: How important is it to you that the Utah State Board of Education adjust assessments, where possible, to match the principles of Utah’s Competency-Based Education Framework? (Extremely important, Very important, Moderately important, Slightly important, Not at all important)

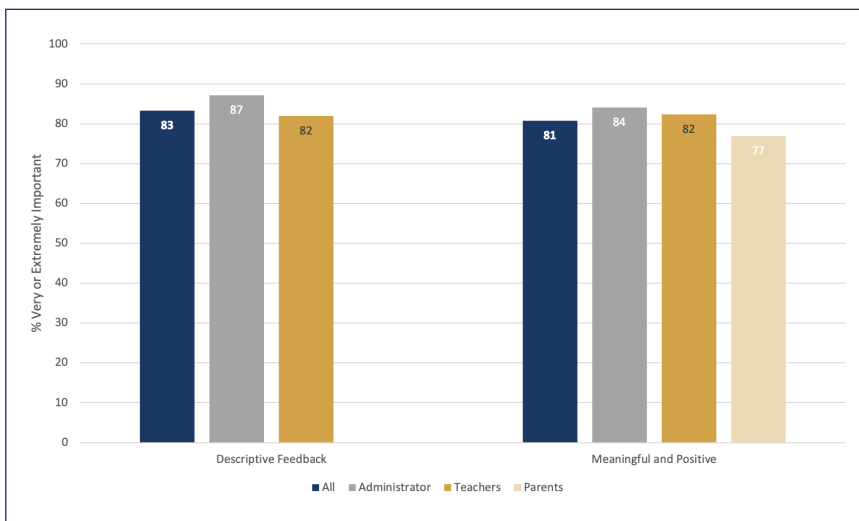
Demonstration Principles

- Assessments include authentic application of acquired knowledge, essential skills, and dispositions
- Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do
- Support students demonstrating learning in multiple ways
- Assessments include a performance component
- Assessments are taken when the student is ready



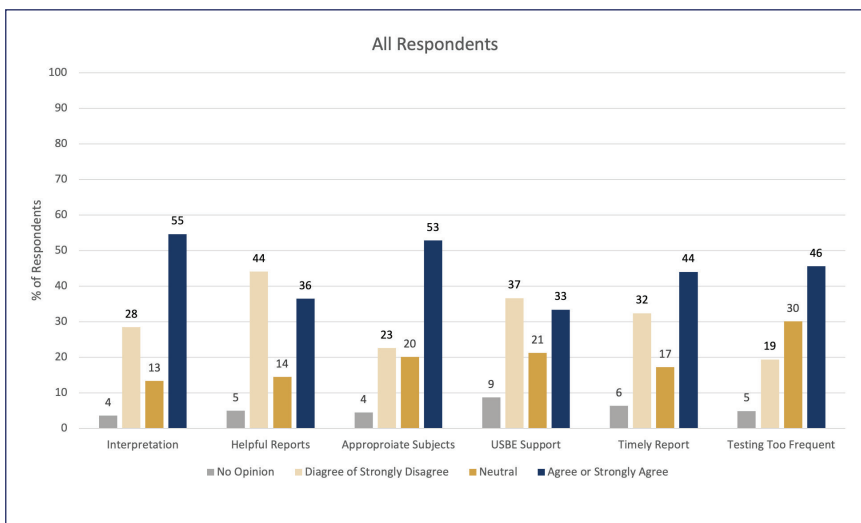
Feedback Principles

- Assessments provide descriptive feedback that can guide student learning
- Assessments provide a meaningful and positive learning experience

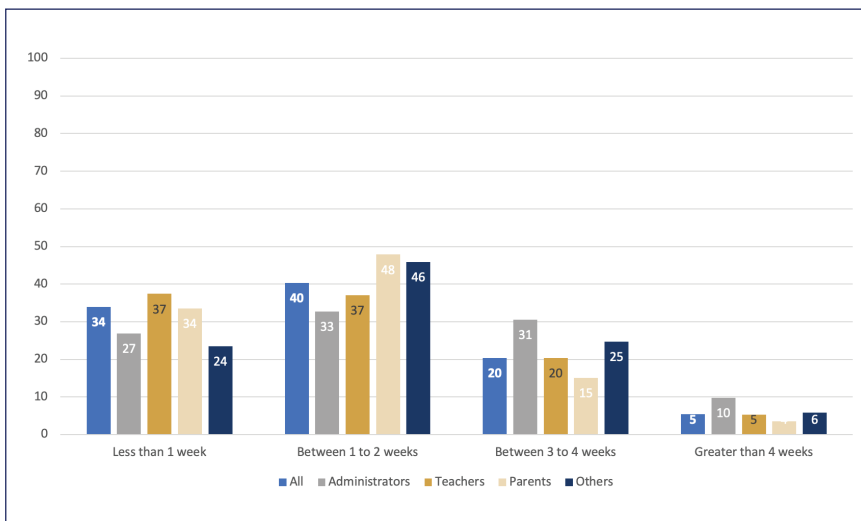


QUESTION: Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements. (No opinion, Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree or disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree)

- Interpretation. My (child’s) teacher, counselor, or administrator discuss my child’s assessment scores and help me understand the results. (Parents and students only)
- Helpful Reports. The score reports provided for the assessments offered by the state are useful in helping me understand how well my child/children/I is/are/am doing academically. (Parents and students only)
- Appropriate Subjects. Assessments currently required by the state are given in the appropriate subject areas.
- USBE Support. The state currently offers sufficient assessment support for my child/children.
- Timely Report. I am provided my child’s assessment score reports in a timely manner. (Parents and students only)
- Testing Too Frequently. Assessments currently required by the state are given too frequently

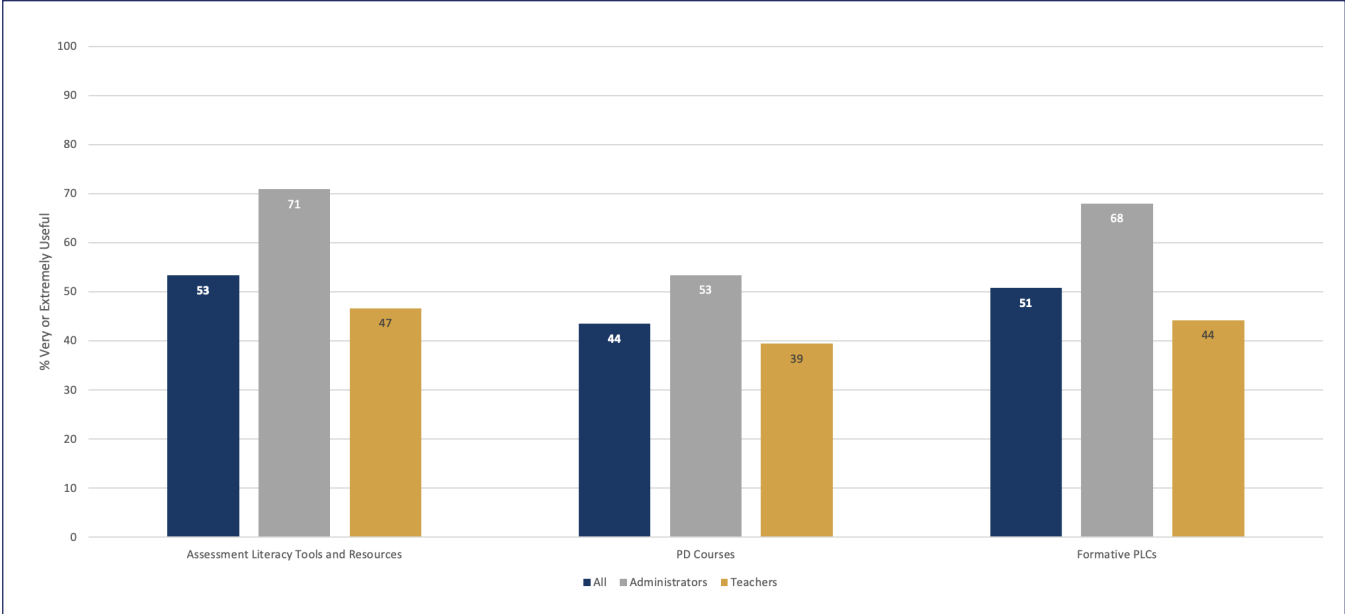


QUESTION: An appropriate amount of time that should be used for the administration of the end-of-year or end-of-course statewide assessments is:



QUESTION: Below are assessment resources and expertise that the Utah State Board of Education could offer to districts, schools, and/or teachers. Please indicate how useful you feel these assessment supports would be. (Extremely useful, Very useful, Moderately useful, Slightly useful, Not at all useful)

- Assessment Literacy Tools and Resources. Support for the development and use of tools, protocols, or other resources to promote assessment literacy and formative assessment use.
- PD Courses. Professional development courses or related offerings either in-person or virtual.
- Formative PLCs. Support for statewide formative assessment professional learning communities (PLC) targeted to specific grade levels and content areas.



APPENDIX D: WEBINAR SERIES #2, ACTIVITIES #3, 4, AND 5

Activity #3: Assessment Literacy to Support Improved Formative and Classroom Assessment Practices in Utah

This is more of an open-ended activity than many of the others we have done and will do, but it is important for USBE and Center for Assessment facilitators to understand the Work Group's desires regarding the State's involvement in formative assessment and assessment literacy.

Quick review of the reading. If you have not had a chance to review these blogs, take a few minutes—**no more than 5 minutes**—to read them:

1. Stop Training the Trainers: <https://www.nciea.org/blog/assessment/stop-training-trainers>
2. Five Essential Features of Assessment for Learning: <https://www.nciea.org/blog/innovative-assessment/five-essential-features-assessment-learning>
3. How Can Every Educator Achieve Assessment Literacy? <https://www.nciea.org/blog/assessment/how-can-every-educator-achieve-assessment-literacy>

Reminder: We are adhering to the following definition for “formative assessment” as excerpted from the Work Group draft report.

***Formative assessment** is inseparable from instruction and can be thought of as a bridge between instruction and classroom assessment (Heritage, 2010, Shepard, in 2019). It has been defined as ...a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become self-directed learners (CCSSO, 2018, p. 2).*

This definition makes clear that formative assessment is a process better thought of as part of the classroom instructional system, rather than as part of the assessment system (Shepard, 2019). This view follows from the work of Sadler (1989) and Heritage (2010) and makes sense, because for formative assessment to be formative, it must be inseparable from instruction.

Discussion and recommendations: As a group, please discuss and respond to the following questions. Please offer as much detail as possible in your responses.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	WORK GROUP RESPONSE
<p>1. It is clear that formative assessment is part of the instructional process that occurs between students and teachers. Therefore, should the state have a role in supporting local formative assessment practices?</p>	
<p>2. If you answered no, what is your rationale?</p>	
<p>3. If you answered yes, please describe what types of actions, supports, and/or resources the state should provide to enhance the quality of formative assessment, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Professional development courses or related offerings either in-person or virtual, b. Statewide formative assessment professional learning communities (PLC) targeted to specific grade levels and content areas, c. Tools, protocols, or other resources (please be as specific as possible), d. Model curriculum units with embedded formative assessment probes. 	

Activity #4: Design Considerations for Non-Summative Assessments

Directions:

1. Your breakout group has been asked to consider the use cases for **parents/teachers/principals**.
2. To the best of your ability and **as specifically as possible**, please provide responses regarding each of the five design considerations for each use case. For example, depending on the use case, you might indicate for grain size, content area, domain, cluster, standard, lesson or some other category of content.

PARENT USE CASE SUMMARY	GRAIN SIZE	ITEM TYPES	FREQUENCY	SECURITY?	OPTIONAL/REQUIRED?
<p>Parents need to know their child's progress, both growth and achievement, toward both local and state expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are differences between state and local expectations? If so, why? • The information should inform parents about advocating for additional support or enrichment and/or to understand how to support their child's learning 					
<p>Parents need support and feedback to help their child grow/improve learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should include descriptive examples of student work based on performance and related assessments • Should include assessment literacy supports, including language supports, embedded in the reports to parents 					

TEACHER USE CASE SUMMARY	GRAIN SIZE	ITEM TYPES	FREQUENCY	SECURITY?	OPTIONAL/REQUIRED?
Understand students' current levels of knowledge and skills in specific domains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to help teachers form instructional groups • help determine interventions for struggling students • provide actionable information for all students 					
Assessment results should be used to help students understand where and how they can improve their learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formative assessments must not feel punitive to students 					
Assessment results should support teacher learning about assessment (literacy), student learning, and instruction					

PRINCIPAL USE CASE SUMMARY	GRAIN SIZE	ITEM TYPES	FREQUENCY	SECURITY?	OPTIONAL/REQUIRED?
Assessments results are used to monitor student performance toward grade-level expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used to monitor subgroup performance • used to predict end-of-year performance (for intervention) • same depth of standards as state summative • provide information to parents on student achievement and if interventions or special services are needed 					
Assessments should be used by the principal to support teacher professional growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using rich, common assignments/tasks to support discussions of student work • to establish shared understand of criteria for success • used to improve teachers' and leaders' assessment literacy 					

Activity #5: Reviewing Utah’s Current Non-Summative Assessments

This follows from Activity #4, so you will need to draw on that information. As we engage in this activity, please consider Utah’s:

- Interim Assessments—Adaptive tests with up to three administration periods/year
 - Benchmark Assessments (the ones you practiced)
 - Utah Compose—web-based writing program designed to help Utah public school students in grades 3-12 improve writing through practice, immediate feedback, and guided instructional support
 - Utah Test Item Pool Service (UTIPS)—Educators can use the UTIPS tool to write their own assessment items to assign to their students in a variety of formats including multiple-choice, multi-select, hot text, matching, and short-answer questions. An equation editor is provided for teachers and students. Automated scoring is available for all item types except writing. Assessments can be shared across classrooms, schools, and across Utah. Reports have been updated and provide detailed results that can be used to inform instruction and to assist students in setting learning goals.
1. Using the use-cases copied below and the design considerations you worked on earlier, please complete the following table (for your specific use case).
 2. Please indicate whether or not any of the four assessment options listed above meets that intended use case and your suggestions regarding design specifications.
 3. Please indicate if something is needed or missing (e.g., more open response tasks; more access to student work)

PARENT USE CASE SUMMARY	INTERIM	BENCH MARK	UTAH COMPOSE	UTIPS	WHAT’S MISSING OR NEEDED?
<p>Parents need to know their child’s progress, both growth and achievement, toward both local and state expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are differences between state and local expectations? If so, why? • The information should inform parents about advocating for additional support or enrichment and/or to understand how to support their child’s learning 					
<p>Parents need support and feedback to help their child grow/improve learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should include descriptive examples of student work based on performance and related assessments • Should include assessment literacy supports, including language supports, embedded in the reports to parents 					

TEACHER USE CASE SUMMARY	INTERIM	BENCH MARK	UTAH COMPOSE	UTIPS	WHAT'S MISSING OR NEEDED?
<p>Understand students' current levels of knowledge and skills in specific domains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to help teachers form instructional groups • help determine interventions for struggling students • provide actionable information for all students 					
<p>Assessment results should be used to help students understand where and how they can improve their learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formative assessments must not feel punitive to students 					
<p>Assessment results should support teacher learning about assessment (literacy), student learning, and instruction</p>					

PRINCIPAL USE CASE SUMMARY	INTERIM	BENCH MARK	UTAH COMPOSE	UTIPS	WHAT'S MISSING OR NEEDED?
<p>Assessments results are used to monitor student performance toward grade-level expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used to monitor subgroup performance • used to predict end-of-year performance (for intervention) • same depth of standards as state summative • provide information to parents on student achievement and if interventions or special services are needed 					
<p>Assessments should be used by the principal to support teacher professional growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using rich, common assignments/tasks to support discussions of student work • to establish shared understand of criteria for success • used to improve teachers' and leaders' assessment literacy 					