

New Hampshire Accountability Pilot Overview Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE)

Purpose and Intent of Pilot:

In collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders throughout the state, the New Hampshire Department of Education (NH DOE) is developing an expanded view of assessment and accountability, grounded in research, that it would like to pilot in a small number of districts in the coming year. There are several key components to this approach that NH DOE believes will help them achieve better results for all students:

- Explicit involvement of local educational leaders in designing and implementing the accountability system,
- Intense and reciprocal support on behalf of the NH DOE for local districts involved in this initiative that will include technical, policy, and practical guidance,
- Use of a competency-based approach to instruction, learning, and assessment which can best support the goal of significant improvements in college and career readiness, and
- Use of authentic, instructionally-relevant, and validated performance-based assessments, alongside periodic administration of Smarter Balanced assessments of state standards in math and ELA, for the purpose of tracking and reporting the progress of students, schools, districts, and educators.

Impact on Accountability:

This new approach does not change the state's firm commitment to accountability for the purposes of improving student learning and outcomes, especially for educationally disadvantaged student groups, as well as supporting high quality educator, leader, and school support and evaluation systems. However, the State argues that an improvement-focused approach improves how the state collects and uses information to better meet the needs of educators and students in New Hampshire.

Requirements for Participation in the Pilot:

Districts that participate in the pilot must show a track record of effective implementation of existing accountability policies. These districts must demonstrate stakeholder engagement and interest in pilot participation as well as the capacity to implement the planned approach with fidelity. Many of these districts will be drawn from existing innovation networks in which this work has already been underway for several years. Participating districts must have already developed a coherent and high quality set of K-12 competencies, mapped to the State graduation competencies, and the organizational capacity to participate effectively in the pilot. They also must be well on their way to having a comprehensive performance assessment system. Because districts need to have demonstrated strong levels of performance and capacity in order to effectively participate in the pilot, districts with priority schools are not eligible to participate.

How has the state engaged stakeholders in the development of a new system?:

Stakeholders are meaningfully engaged in every major initiative through numerous avenues. First, the Commissioner and her highest level staff meet with all of the district superintendents every month to present ideas and solicit feedback. Second, NH has had an active accountability task force since before NCLB was implemented. This advisory group, comprised of a broad-based set of practitioners, has been involved in designing, reviewing and commenting on multiple iterations of this proposal. Third, the state has been meeting with a policy oversight group including leadership from the participating districts to support implementation of the PACE accountability initiative.

What assessments will be used in the pilot districts in 2014-2015?:

The PACE districts will use a system of assessments, including the Smarter Balanced Assessment in English Language Arts and Math once each in elementary, middle, and high school. In addition, it will use performance tasks in the off years in English language Arts, Math, and Science. By doing this, the districts have brought together their local accountability assessments with the state requirements.

Grade	ELA	Math	Science
K-2	Local Performance Assessments	Local Performance Assessments	Local Performance Assessments
3	Smarter Balanced & Local PBAs	Common and Local PBAs	Local Performance Assessments
4	Common and Local PBAs	Smarter Balanced & Local PBAs	Local Performance Assessments
5	Common and Local PBAs	Common and Local PBAs	Common PBAs
6	Smarter Balanced & Local PBAs	Common and Local PBAs	Local Performance Assessments
7	Common and Local PBAs	Smarter Balanced & Local PBAs	Common PBAs
8	Common and Local PBAs	Common and Local PBAs	Local Performance Assessments
9	Interim Smarter Balanced & Local PBAs	Common and Local PBAs	Local Performance Assessments
10	Common and Local PBAs	Interim Smarter Balanced & Local PBAs	Common PBAs
11/12	Smarter Balanced (plus optional SAT)	Smarter Balanced (plus optional SAT)	Local Performance Assessments
	**CAPSTONE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT		

Table 1. General assessment requirements for the PACE pilot accountability system.

How will student proficiency be measured in the pilot districts?:

School districts participating in the PACE pilot will be required to report the number and percentage of students at each grade level who are meeting both locally defined, but state (and peer) approved definitions of proficiency and competency. Comparability efforts will not be focused on individual assessments administered throughout the year, rather the focus of comparability must be on the annual determinations. NH DOE has proposed an approach to do just that. The Smarter Balanced Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) are the basis for establishing cut scores on the Smarter Balanced assessments (this process was recently completed). The ALDs serve as the narrative descriptions of performance and the role of the standard setting panelists is to match the narrative descriptions with actual performance on the test. Therefore, NH DOE will require the PACE districts to anchor their annual determinations of proficiency (competency) to the Smarter Balanced ALDs for the respective grade level and subject area. In addition, to ensure that all students are held to the same set of college and career ready expectations, the state has adopted college and career readiness standards and state model competencies that describe the knowledge, skills, and work study practices that all students are expected to master before they exit the K-12 system. All districts, regardless of the assessment system in use, must demonstrate the alignment of their systems with these standards and model competencies.

Technical and professional learning support:

The professional learning opportunities associated with PACE are couched in the actual work of PACE, including task development and scorer calibration activities. The implementing schools established work groups, creating common developmental competencies in the key content areas aligned to the state graduation competencies as well as continuing to build the state task bank. CCE is responsible for initial housing and maintenance of the state task bank and has now connected with the ILN-supported national task bank maintained by SCALE at Stanford University. In August of 2014, the PACE districts held two PACE Planning and Assessment Institutes, one a part of a larger state summer leadership institute and the other held at Sanborn Regional High School, in Kingston, NH. In addition to ongoing reciprocal support and development work, the full set of PACE pilot technical advisors, along with district partners, will convene for a three all-day meeting to begin the formative peer review work.

Performance Task Bank:

The NH task bank currently includes more than two dozen tasks, that number is regularly increasing as tasks continue to be reviewed and added. Additionally, the Innovation Lab Network pilot task bank maintained by Stanford University contains 27 tasks. A complete list of tasks with descriptions can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/alltaskslist>. A majority of tasks in the Task Bank are for the High School level, reflecting the urgency of providing models for assessing New Hampshire's graduation competencies. There is also good representation of tasks for elementary levels, which is why the current efforts are focused on developing common tasks for the middle school grades. The Task Bank contains tasks for which there exist approved New Hampshire Competencies: ELA, mathematics, science, and work-study practices. Plans for expanding the New Hampshire Task Bank are already underway. As tasks are submitted from PACE districts and other schools in the current and past New Hampshire Performance Assessment Cohorts, they enter the vetting process on an ongoing, rolling system manner. In addition to the ILN field testing, NH tasks will be field tested through the PACE work and the NH Cohorts. The plan is for the tasks to be revisited by summer 2015 when the student work generated by the tasks is available to be analyzed, for benchmarking and for further revisions to be made, if necessary.

Scoring Validity and Reliability:

NH DOE is taking steps to ensure scoring comparability by promoting reliable scoring of performance assessment tasks across classrooms, schools, and districts. NH DOE will sponsor Professional Development Institutes, including summer and school-year Quality Performance Assessment institutes on assessment literacy, competencies and designs for teaching them (knowledge, skills, and dispositions), assessment task design and validation, scoring calibration, and data analysis to track student progress and inform instruction. Regional task validation sessions will be conducted to assist districts in fine-tuning assessment tasks to ensure they measure target knowledge and skills. Regional calibration scoring sessions will be conducted to build inter-rater reliability and consistency in scoring across districts.

Reporting:

We are committed to providing regular project updates to USED regarding key benchmarks associated with the PACE accountability proposal. The general reporting schedule is presented below.

Dates	Systems Completed	Specific Deliverables
12/30/14*	Summative Performance Assessment Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report describing status of common summative performance assessments to be used in 2015 pilot by the four districts in the following content areas, with work study practices embedded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ English Language Arts, ○ Mathematics, and ○ Science • Documentation of shared practice around assessment design for all local summative assessments that contribute to students' summative determinations, including alignment, rigor, and fairness
1/30/15*	Scoring Quality of Performance Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report describing status completion of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ common scorer moderation/calibration protocols developed and shared among all districts ○ shared practice and lessons to date from district and cross-district content area working group calibration processes
2/28/15*	Professional Development and Technical Peer Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on professional development activities within and across districts related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Designing and using formative assessment processes to maximize student learning ○ to address a shared understanding of the expectations for aggregating evidence to make competency determinations from performance assessment results ○ regarding shared practice and identification of next generation models for fair, mastery-based, personalized competency determination ○ protocols and plans for the technical peer reviews of the four implementing districts
3/30/15	Competency Determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report describing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Specific plans for making annual determinations in all grades and subjects (ELA, math, and science)
4/30/15	Summative Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report describing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Status update on PACE Summative Performance Assessment and Smarter Balanced Window.

Table 2. General Reporting Schedule

NH DOE is committed to working with USED and its PACE district partners to provide the assurances necessary to USED while ensuring that district personnel are focused primarily on the hard work of teaching and learning. The report templates provided above are an attempt to strike this balance.