



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Jennifer McCormick
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Indiana Department of Education
South Tower, Suite 600
115 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

April 10, 2020

Dear Superintendent McCormick:

Thank you for submitting Indiana's application for the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) authorized in section 1204 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). I appreciate the work of you and your team to develop this IADA proposal.

I am writing to provide initial feedback based on the U.S. Department of Education's (the Department's) review of the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) IADA application. As you know, in addition to the Department's review of the application, we conducted, as required by the statute, a peer review of the application. Peer reviewers examined the application using the program requirements and selection criteria described in 34 CFR §§200.105 and 200.106. The goal of the peer review was to inform the Department regarding whether the proposed system is comparable to the State assessments, valid, reliable, of high technical quality, consistent with relevant, nationally recognized professional and technical standards, and provides unbiased, rational, and consistent determinations of progress toward meeting the ambitious, State-designed long-term goals for academic achievement.

Based on our review of the peer feedback and our own analysis of the application, I am requesting additional information to ensure the State's application meets all statutory and regulatory requirements, as detailed in the enclosed table. In addition, information is requested to strengthen your State's application regarding several of the selection criteria. I am also enclosing a copy of the peer technical review forms. Please note that the Department's feedback may differ from that contained in the peer review form. I encourage you to read the full peer review forms for additional suggestions and recommendations regarding IDOE's application. Department staff will contact you to support Indiana in addressing the items enclosed with this letter.

ESEA section 1204(f)(4) requires the Department to issue a written determination within 90 days of a State's submission of its IADA application, which is April 27, 2020, for the IDOE application. Given this statutory requirement, I ask that you provide the requested additional information and submit it through OMB Max within 10 calendar days of receiving this letter. If you would like more time to submit additional information, please contact the Assessment Team at ESEA.Assessment@ed.gov and indicate your new submission date. Please recognize that if the Department accommodates your request for additional time, a determination on the IDOE IADA application may be rendered after the 90-day period.

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202
<http://www.ed.gov/>

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Thank you for the important work that you and your staff are doing to support the innovation that is possible through the ESSA. The Department looks forward to working with you to ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

/s/

Frank T. Brogan
Assistant Secretary for
Elementary and Secondary Education

Enclosures

cc: Charity Flores, Director, Assessment
Kristine David, Assistant Director, Assessment

Items that Require Additional Information or Revision in Indiana’s Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority Plan

Regulatory Requirement	Required information from the SEA
<p>Consultation. Evidence that the SEA or consortium has developed an innovative assessment system in collaboration with--</p> <p>(1) Experts in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative assessment systems, which may include external partners; and</p> <p>(2) Affected stakeholders in the State, or in each State in the consortium, including--</p> <p>(i) Those representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, and other subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the Act;</p> <p>(ii) Teachers, principals, and other school leaders;</p> <p>(iii) Local educational agencies (LEAs);</p> <p>(iv) Representatives of Indian tribes located in the State;</p> <p>(v) Students and parents, including parents of children described in paragraph (a)(2)(i) of this section; and</p> <p>(vi) Civil rights organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of consultation or collaboration with representatives of Indian tribes located in the State, students with disabilities and parents of students with disabilities, those representing the interests of English learners, or civil rights organizations.
<p>Innovative assessment system. A demonstration that the innovative assessment system does or will--</p> <p>(1) Meet the requirements of section 1111(b)(2)(B) of the Act, except that an innovative assessment--</p> <p>(i) Need not be the same assessment administered to all public elementary and secondary school students in the State during the demonstration authority period described in 34 CFR 200.104(b)(2) or extension period described in 34 CFR 200.108 and prior to statewide use consistent with 34 CFR 200.107, if the innovative assessment system will be administered initially to all students in participating schools within a participating LEA, provided that the statewide academic assessments under 34 CFR 200.2(a)(1) and section 1111(b)(2) of the Act are administered to all students in any non-participating LEA or any non-participating school within a participating LEA; and</p> <p>(ii) Need not be administered annually in each of grades 3-8 and at least once in grades 9-12 in the case of reading/language arts and mathematics assessments, and at least once in grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12 in the case of science assessments, so</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that the State is ready to begin full administration of its innovative assessment beginning in the 2020-2021 school year and, for those schools administering it, to use the results in the accountability system based on data from the 2020-2021 school year.

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<p>long as the statewide academic assessments under 34 CFR 200.2(a)(1) and section 1111(b)(2) of the Act are administered in any required grade and subject under 34 CFR 200.5(a)(1) in which the SEA does not choose to implement an innovative assessment.</p>	
<p>(2)(i) Align with the challenging State academic content standards under section 1111(b)(1) of the Act, including the depth and breadth of such standards, for the grade in which a student is enrolled; and</p> <p>(ii) May measure a student’s academic proficiency and growth using items above or below the student’s grade level so long as, for purposes of meeting the requirements for reporting and school accountability under sections 1111(c) and 1111(h) of the Act and paragraphs (b)(3) and (b)(7)-(9) of this section, the State measures each student’s academic proficiency based on the challenging State academic standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a plan to ensure that the assessment will be aligned with the challenging academic content standards, including the depth and breadth of such standards. • Evidence that demonstrates how the off-grade level observation information will be reported to parents and teachers.
<p>(3) Express student results or competencies consistent with the challenging State academic achievement standards under section 1111(b)(1) of the Act and identify which students are not making sufficient progress toward, and attaining, grade-level proficiency on such standards;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that the pilot assessment will express student results consistent with the State’s challenging academic achievement standards (e.g., a detailed description of the plan to set achievement standards for the pilot assessment; or a justification why the State’s current achievement standards are appropriate, given the pilot test design).
<p>(4)(i) Generate results, including annual summative determinations as defined in paragraph (b)(7) of this section, that are valid, reliable, and comparable for all students and for each subgroup of students described in 34 CFR 200.2(b)(11)(i)(A)-(I) and sections 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) and 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the Act, to the results generated by the State academic assessments described in 34 CFR 200.2(a)(1) and section 1111(b)(2) of the Act for such students.</p> <p>Consistent with the SEA’s or consortium’s evaluation plan under 34 CFR 200.106(e), the SEA must plan to annually determine comparability during each year of its demonstration authority period in one of the following ways:</p> <p>(A) Administering full assessments from both the innovative and statewide assessment systems to all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related to element (b) (1) above, evidence that the State is ready to begin full administration of its innovative assessment beginning in the 2020-2021 school year and will set achievement standards and generate results for all students taking the innovative assessment in the 2020-2021 school year. • Evidence of a plan to generate results that are valid, reliable, and comparable for all students and for each subgroup of students described in 34 CFR 200.2(b)(11)(i)(A)-(I) and sections 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) and 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the ESEA. Specifically, the State should demonstrate how the use of locally scored items on the pilot assessment will result in valid, reliable and comparable scores.

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<p>students enrolled in participating schools, such that at least once in any grade span (i.e., 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12) and subject for which there is an innovative assessment, a statewide assessment in the same subject would also be administered to all such students. As part of this determination, the innovative assessment and statewide assessment need not be administered to an individual student in the same school year.</p> <p>(B) Administering full assessments from both the innovative and statewide assessment systems to a demographically representative sample of all students and subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the Act, from among those students enrolled in participating schools, such that at least once in any grade span (i.e., 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12) and subject for which there is an innovative assessment, a statewide assessment in the same subject would also be administered in the same school year to all students included in the sample.</p> <p>(C) Including, as a significant portion of the innovative assessment system in each required grade and subject in which both an innovative and statewide assessment are administered, items or performance tasks from the statewide assessment system that, at a minimum, have been previously pilot tested or field tested for use in the statewide assessment system.</p> <p>(D) Including, as a significant portion of the statewide assessment system in each required grade and subject in which both an innovative and statewide assessment are administered, items or performance tasks from the innovative assessment system that, at a minimum, have been previously pilot tested or field tested for use in the innovative assessment system.</p> <p>(E) An alternative method for demonstrating comparability that an SEA can demonstrate will provide for an equally rigorous and statistically valid comparison between student performance on the innovative assessment and the statewide assessment, including for each subgroup of students described in 34 CFR 200.2(b)(11)(i)(A)-(I) and sections 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) and 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the Act;</p> <p>(ii) Generate results, including annual summative determinations as defined in paragraph (b)(7) of this section, that are valid, reliable, and comparable, for all students and for each subgroup</p>	

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<p>of students described in 34 CFR 200.2(b)(11)(i)(A)-(I) and sections 1111(b)(2)(B)(xi) and 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the Act, among participating schools and LEAs in the innovative assessment demonstration authority. Consistent with the SEA’s or consortium’s evaluation plan under 34 CFR 200.106(e), the SEA must plan to annually determine comparability during each year of its demonstration authority period;</p>	
<p>(5)(i) Provide for the participation of all students, including children with disabilities and English learners;</p> <p>(ii) Be accessible to all students by incorporating the principles of universal design for learning, to the extent practicable, consistent with 34 CFR 200.2(b)(2)(ii); and</p> <p>(iii) Provide appropriate accommodations consistent with 34 CFR 200.6(b) and (f)(1)(i) and section 1111(b)(2)(B)(vii) of the Act;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about supports available for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities. • More information about accommodations and accessibility for the observation/portfolio components, including how principles of universal design for learning have been incorporated, to the extent practicable.
<p>(7) Generate an annual summative determination of achievement, using the annual data from the innovative assessment, for each student in a participating school in the demonstration authority that describes--</p> <p>(i) The student’s mastery of the challenging State academic standards under section 1111(b)(1) of the Act for the grade in which the student is enrolled; or</p> <p>(ii) In the case of a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities assessed with an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards under section 1111(b)(1)(E) of the Act, the student’s mastery of those standards;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that describes how the State will calculate scores for the pilot assessment when one of the four “through-year” testing components is missed by a student.
<p><u>Initial implementation in a subset of LEAs or schools. If the innovative assessment system will initially be administered in a subset of LEAs or schools in a State--</u></p> <p>(1) A description of each LEA, and each of its participating schools, that will initially participate, including demographic information and its most recent LEA report card under section 1111(h)(2) of the Act; and</p> <p>(2) An assurance from each participating LEA, for each year that the LEA is participating, that the LEA will comply with all requirements of this section.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As noted in element (1), evidence that the State is ready to begin full administration of its innovative assessment beginning in the 2020-2021 school year. • A description of each LEA, and each of its participating schools, that will initially participate, including demographic information and its most recent LEA report card. • An assurance from each participating LEA, for each year that the LEA is participating, that the LEA will comply with all requirements of this section.

Application Selection Criteria	Required information from the SEA
<p>(a)(1) The rationale for developing or selecting the particular innovative assessment system to be implemented under the demonstration authority, including--</p> <p>(i) The distinct purpose of each assessment that is part of the innovative assessment system and how the system will advance the design and delivery of large-scale, statewide academic assessments in innovative ways; and</p> <p>(ii) The extent to which the innovative assessment system as a whole will promote high-quality instruction, mastery of challenging State academic standards, and improved student outcomes, including for each subgroup of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the Act;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that supports the rationale for the innovative assessment (e.g., evidence that supports the assumptions that the use of progress measures and portfolios will result in assessment results that are more valid than the current assessment).
<p>(a)(2) The plan the SEA or consortium, in consultation with any external partners, if applicable, has to--</p> <p>(i) Develop and use standardized and calibrated tools, rubrics, methods, or other strategies for scoring innovative assessments throughout the demonstration authority period, consistent with relevant nationally recognized professional and technical standards, to ensure inter-rater reliability and comparability of innovative assessment results consistent with 34 CFR part 200.105(b)(4)(ii), which may include evidence of inter-rater reliability; and</p> <p>(ii) Train evaluators to use such strategies, if applicable;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of how scoring reliability for observation and portfolio components will be ensured (e.g., how scoring protocols will be developed and how inter-rater reliability will be calculated). • Documentation that describes how the through-course assessment components will be combined with the observation and portfolio components to develop a single, summative score.
<p>(a)(3) If the system will initially be administered in a subset of schools or LEAs in a State--</p> <p>(i) The strategies the SEA, including each SEA in a consortium, will use to scale the innovative assessment to all schools statewide, with a rationale for selecting those strategies;</p> <p>(ii) The strength of the SEA’s or consortium’s criteria that will be used to determine LEAs and schools that will initially participate and when to approve additional LEAs and schools, if applicable, to participate during the requested demonstration authority period; and</p> <p>(iii) The SEA’s plan, including each SEA in a consortium, for how it will ensure that, during the demonstration authority period, the inclusion of additional LEAs and schools continues to reflect high-quality and consistent implementation across demographically diverse LEAs and schools, or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a plan to ensure that participating schools reflect high-quality and consistent implementation and are, as a group, demographically similar to the State as a whole. • Evidence that demonstrates how the State will ensure quality in the implementation of the innovative alternate assessment as the project progresses over the timeframe of the authority.

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<p>contributes to progress toward achieving such implementation across demographically diverse LEAs and schools, including diversity based on enrollment of subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the Act and student achievement. The plan must also include annual benchmarks toward achieving high-quality and consistent implementation across participating schools that are, as a group, demographically similar to the State as a whole during the demonstration authority period, using the demographics of initially participating schools as a baseline.</p>	
<p>(b)(1) The extent and depth of prior experience that the SEA, including each SEA in a consortium, and its LEAs have in developing and implementing the components of the innovative assessment system. An SEA may also describe the prior experience of any external partners that will be participating in or supporting its demonstration authority in implementing those components. In evaluating the extent and depth of prior experience, the Secretary considers—</p> <p>(i) The success and track record of efforts to implement innovative assessments or innovative assessment items aligned to the challenging State academic standards under section 1111(b)(1) of the Act in LEAs planning to participate; and</p> <p>(ii) The SEA’s or LEA’s development or use of--</p> <p>(A) Effective supports and appropriate accommodations consistent with 34 CFR part 200.6(b) and (f)(1)(i) and section 1111(b)(2)(B)(vii) of the Act for administering innovative assessments to all students, including English learners and children with disabilities, which must include professional development for school staff on providing such accommodations;</p> <p>(B) Effective and high-quality supports for school staff to implement innovative assessments and innovative assessment items, including professional development; and</p> <p>(C) Standardized and calibrated tools, rubrics, methods, or other strategies for scoring innovative assessments, with documented evidence of the validity, reliability, and comparability of annual summative determinations of achievement, consistent with 34 CFR part 200.105(b)(4) and (7).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of how the SEA will ensure that external partners will have the necessary experience to support the innovative assessment system, specifically in the areas of research, formulations of item specification, item development, rubrics, scoring, and training associated with implementation.

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<p>(b)(2) The extent and depth of SEA, including each SEA in a consortium, and LEA capacity to implement the innovative assessment system considering the availability of technological infrastructure; State and local laws; dedicated and sufficient staff, expertise, and resources; and other relevant factors. An SEA or consortium may also describe how it plans to enhance its capacity by collaborating with external partners that will be participating in or supporting its demonstration authority. In evaluating the extent and depth of capacity, the Secretary considers--</p> <p>(i) The SEA’s analysis of how capacity influenced the success of prior efforts to develop and implement innovative assessments or innovative assessment items; and</p> <p>(ii) The strategies the SEA is using, or will use, to mitigate risks, including those identified in its analysis, and support successful implementation of the innovative assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a plan to enhance State capacity by collaborating with experts in alternate assessment design for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. • Evidence of strategies to identify and mitigate risks to support successful implementation of the innovative assessment. • Information about LEAs selected to begin implementing the innovative alternate assessment in the 2020-2021 school year, in order to evaluate the LEA capacity to implement the proposed assessment.
<p>(c)(1) The extent to which the timeline reasonably demonstrates that each SEA will implement the system statewide by the end of the requested demonstration authority period, including a description of--</p> <p>(i) The activities to occur in each year of the requested demonstration authority period;</p> <p>(ii) The parties responsible for each activity; and</p> <p>(iii) If applicable, how a consortium’s member SEAs will implement activities at different paces and how the consortium will implement interdependent activities, so long as each non-affiliate member SEA begins using the innovative assessment in the same school year consistent with 34 CFR part 200.104(b)(2);</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As noted in element (b)(1), evidence that the State is ready to begin full administration of its innovative assessment beginning in the 2020-2021 school year.
<p>(d)(1) The extent to which the SEA or consortium has developed, provided, and will continue to provide training to LEA and school staff, including teachers, principals, and other school leaders, that will familiarize them with the innovative assessment system and develop teacher capacity to implement instruction that is informed by the innovative assessment system and its results;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that describes how training provided to LEA and school staff will familiarize them with the innovative assessment system and develop teacher capacity to implement instruction that is informed by the innovative assessment system and its results (e.g., how will teachers use the results from the locally scored portion of the assessment)
<p>(d)(2) The strategies the SEA or consortium has developed and will use to familiarize students and parents with the innovative assessment system;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the strategies IDOE has developed and will use to familiarize

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	<p>students and parents with the innovative assessment system.</p>
<p>(d)(3) The strategies the SEA will use to ensure that all students and each subgroup of students under section 1111(c)(2) of the Act in participating schools receive the support, including appropriate accommodations consistent with 34 CFR part 200.6(b) and (f)(1)(i) and section 1111(b)(2)(B)(vii) of the Act, needed to meet the challenging State academic standards under section 1111(b)(1) of the Act;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See evidence requested for requirement (b)(5).
<p>(d)(4) If the system includes assessment items that are locally developed or locally scored, the strategies and safeguards (e.g., test blueprints, item and task specifications, rubrics, scoring tools, documentation of quality control procedures, inter-rater reliability checks, audit plans) the SEA or consortium has developed, or plans to develop, to validly and reliably score such items, including how the strategies engage and support teachers and other staff in designing, developing, implementing, and validly and reliably scoring high-quality assessments; how the safeguards are sufficient to ensure unbiased, objective scoring of assessment items; and how the SEA will use effective professional development to aid in these efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of strategies and safeguards to ensure that local scoring is valid and reliable and how safeguards are sufficient to ensure unbiased, objective scoring of assessment items, especially locally scored components of the innovative assessment. • Evidence that describes how local scoring will be monitored and audited.
<p>(e)(2) The SEA’s or consortium’s plan for continuous improvement of the innovative assessment system, including its process for-- (i) Using data, feedback, evaluation results, and other information from participating LEAs and schools to make changes to improve the quality of the innovative assessment; and (ii) Evaluating and monitoring implementation of the innovative assessment system in participating LEAs and schools annually.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of processes for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using data, feedback, evaluation results, and other information to improve the quality of the innovative assessment. ○ Evaluating and monitoring implementation in participating LEAs and schools annually.