Understanding the Assessment
Peer Review Process

Summer 2021
Assessment Team
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Today’s Peer Reviewer
Panelists:
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AGENDA

Part I: Overview of assessment peer review

1. Purpose of the Assessment Peer Review
2. The Peer Review Process
3. Timeline

Part II: Peer Reviewer Perspectives on Initial Submissions, Resubmissions
PART I: Overview of Assessment Peer Review
PURPOSE AND ROLE OF PEER REVIEW

- To support states in meeting statutory requirements under Title I

- To ensure states develop and implement valid and reliable coherent State assessment systems

- To review and document the assessment system’s technical quality

- To ensure that assessment results are applied manner consistent with professional standards
WHAT NEEDS TO BE PEER REVIEWED?

- General mathematics and reading/language arts for grades 3-8 and at least once in grades 9-12

- General science administered at least once in each of these grade spans: 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12

- AA-AAAS in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for the grades described above

- English language proficiency (ELP) assessments for all English leaners (ELs) grades K-12

- Alternate ELP assessments (AELPA) for ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grades K-12
WHAT NEEDS TO BE PEER REVIEWED?
(CONT.)
ESSA FLEXIBILITIES

- If applicable, locally selected, nationally recognized high school academic assessments

- If applicable, the more advanced high school assessments used for students who take the State’s high school math test in 8th grade

- If applicable, content assessments in a student’s native language for ELs

- If applicable, content assessments in a Native American language
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Example of initial submission process and timeline

**Prepare Evidence**
State prepares evidence for all 6 (or possibly 7) critical elements to submit for peer review (Summer and Fall)

**Submit Evidence**
State submits evidence to USED via max.gov (e.g. Winter)

**Evidence Review**
State’s evidence is reviewed by panel of 3 reviewers and finalized by USED (Spring)

**Decision**
USED sends Decision letter: fully meets, substantially meets, partially meets or does not meet (Summer)

**Prepare Follow up Evidence**
State responds within 30 days with its plan/timeline to meet remaining elements. (Fall)

**Submit Evidence**
State submits follow up evidence (Spring)
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Preparing Evidence

Peer Review Guide

https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/saa/assessmentpeerreview.pdf

State Index Template and Evidence
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Preparing Evidence

II – CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW

- 1. Statewide system of standards & assessments
  - 1.1 State adoption of academic content standards/ELP Standards
  - 1.2 Challenging academic content/ELP standards
  - 1.3 Required assessments
  - 1.4 Policies for including all students in assessments
  - 1.5 Meaningful Consultation

- 2. Assessment system operations
  - 2.1 Test design & development
  - 2.2 Item development
  - 2.3 Test administration
  - 2.4 Monitoring test admin.
  - 2.5 Test security
  - 2.6 Systems for protecting data integrity & privacy

- 3. Technical quality – validity
  - 3.1 Overall Validity, including validity based on content
  - 3.2 Validity based on cognitive processes
  - 3.3 Validity based on internal structure
  - 3.4 Validity based on relations to other variables

- 4. Technical quality – other
  - 4.1 Reliability
  - 4.2 Fairness & accessibility
  - 4.3 Full performance continuum
  - 4.4 Scoring
  - 4.5 Multiple assessment forms
  - 4.6 Multiple versions of an assessment
  - 4.7 Technical analyses & ongoing maintenance

- 5. Inclusion of all students
  - 5.1 Procedures for including SWDs
  - 5.2 Procedures for Including ELs
  - 5.3 Accommodations
  - 5.4 Monitoring test admin. for special populations

- 6. Achievement standards & reporting
  - 6.1 State adoption of achievement standards
  - 6.2 Achievement standards setting
  - 6.3 Challenging & aligned achievement standards
  - 6.4 Reporting

- 7. Locally Selected Nationally Recognized High School Academic Assessments (if applicable)
  - 7.1 State procedures
  - 7.2 LEA procedures

Key

- Critical elements primarily checked by Department staff (e.g., Critical Element 1.3)
- Critical elements likely addressed by coordinated evidence for all States administering the same assessments (e.g., Critical Element 2.1).
- Critical elements likely addressed with State-specific evidence (e.g., Critical Element 5.1).

(if applicable)
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Consortium Consideration

- Process used for academic assessment consortium will be applied to ELP assessment consortia (WIDA, ELPA21) and/or Alternate assessment consortia (DLM, Cambium) and/or general assessment consortia (SBAC)

- “Common” evidence items for consortium
  - Reviewed by one panel of peers

- “State specific” items for each State
  - Reviewed by other peers, using notes from common evidence review

- Map to Critical Elements
  - Outlines which are most likely consortium specific (note: this is a guide, may differ between consortia)
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Preparing Evidence: State, vendor or both

These are suggestions, based on past experience in reviewing consortium assessments; other consortium or ‘common assessments’ may have different patterns of ‘who submits what’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Critical Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State-specific evidence</td>
<td>1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.4, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated evidence for States administering the same assessments</td>
<td>2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 6.2 and 6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid evidence</td>
<td>2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 5.3, 5.4 and 6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Submitting Evidence

Direct URL to State Assessment Home Page in Max.gov = https://community.max.gov/x/Rg2WSg

Select State Assessment Systems Tab, then...

Select State Page from List
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Evidence Review and Peer Reviewers’ Role

- Assessment peer review is conducted by external assessment experts, including nationally recognized assessment experts, State and local assessment directors, and educators.

- Reviewer panels for each State will be anonymous, but the list of approved peer reviewers will be released to the public.

- Each reviewer conducts an independent review first and develops notes based on the evidence provided by the state; the review team then meets to discuss and share notes and make collective recommendations on each critical element. These notes are provided to the State.
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**USED’s Role and Review**

- The Assistant Secretary will provide formal feedback to a State regarding whether the State has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all applicable ESEA statutory and regulatory requirements and will identify any additional evidence necessary to address the critical elements
  - Peer notes help inform States what additional evidence may be needed
- ED staff to review selected portions of state submission
- ED is specifically prohibited from approving State standards, test items
States will receive a decision letter from USED informing states whether their assessments:
- Fully meets requirements
- Substantially meets requirements
- Partially meets requirements
- Does not meet requirements

Decision Letters:
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Decision Letter, cont.

- States will receive a letter from the Department along with any relevant sets of peer review notes.

- The table in the letter represents the official request for additional evidence.

- This table may not agree with all of the recommendations made in the peer notes.

- ED standardizes all the decision letters, so they are consistent with ESSA requirements and across States.

- Use the peer notes as constructive suggestions but respond to the items in the table in the letter.
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Follow up evidence and resubmission

States will be asked to provide a PLAN and TIMELINE within 30 days
- This is a request for how a state plans to collect the evidence, NOT a request for the evidence itself
- States may request a phone call to discuss results
- States may request more time to respond

We prefer that follow-up evidence come in together, not piecemeal
- States should submit evidence when all critical elements can be addressed
- ED will typically hold a summer and winter peer review
TIMELINE FOR THE 2021-22 PEER REVIEW

- Now: prepare your submission
- Mid-November: look for an email with information about MAX registration and submission. Consider which 1-2 staff will need MAX access. Register in MAX!
- November-December 31: upload evidence and indices
- Early January to March: peer review. ED may reach out to you about missing or unclear evidence
- March-August: ED will prepare peer review results and send the SEA the decision letter and peer notes. Can discuss with SEA as needed
- +30 days: SEA to respond with plan and timeline for collecting and resubmitting additional evidence (e.g. end of year 2021 or summer 2022)
PART II: Peer Reviewer Perspectives on Initial Submissions, Resubmissions
Overarching Ideas-New Submissions

- Planning and Scheduling

- Involving your Technical Advisory Committee
  - Special Population

- Other Key Resources
  - Annual Technical Report
  - Assessment contractor
  - Special Education and EL

- Applying lessons learned/best practices across submissions (general education assessments, alternate assessments, English language proficiency assessments)
  - Ex: Special ed monitoring
Planning and Scheduling

- Peer Review cycles allow approximately a year for states to plan their submissions

- Plan around test administration, scoring, and reporting tasks for the current year
  - Assists with time management for mission-critical tasks as well as evidence gathering
  - Prepares other offices to focus PD, instruction/intervention, accommodation, alternate format

- Schedule “gates” around completion of tasks needed for peer review
  - Identify specific personnel responsibility
  - Integrate monitoring tasks required

- Periodically review progress toward completion of submission
  - Communicate updates to all constituency groups
Involving Your Technical Advisory Committee

- Provide them with timelines and assessments scheduled for submission
  - Ensure special population consideration

- Gather TAC input on plans/methodology for responding to Critical Elements
  - If possible, provide sufficient lead time for TAC to weigh in on methodologies so that feedback can be incorporated into the process
  - Ensure continuous monitoring and improvement process documented

- Ensure feedback is captured in TAC notes, including SEA’s planned response
Other Key Resources

- Annual Technical Report
  - Contents and organization can be structured for Peer Review
  - Ensure special populations are thoroughly addressed in technical report and administration manual

- Assessment contractor
  - Ensure contract stipulates and allows resources/time for assisting with Peer Review
  - Involve the contractor in TAC discussions and work
  - If alternate assessment contractor is not the same as general, include them in all key planning, implementing, and reporting processes
Applying Lessons Learned/Best Practices

- Scheduling tasks, involving the TAC, structuring Technical Reports, and working with respective assessment contractors should all be done as consistently as possible across ALL assessment systems.

- Consistency can relieve pressure on staff, contractors, and peer reviewers, and usually improves the quality of all submissions.

- Improvements to assessment and Peer Review processes in one system may lead to improvements in others.
  - Processes and procedures currently used in one system, such as special education, may be expanded to address all assessments.
Critical Elements

- Address all requirements within each critical element
- Match the provided evidence to the requirement
- Understand the meaning of the requirement
Critical Elements – An Example

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Critical Elements – An Example

- Address all requirements within each critical element

Match the provided evidence to the requirement

Understand the meaning of the requirement

Are there standardized administration procedures?
- Are they clear?
- Are they thorough?
- Do they include administration with accommodations?
- Are these procedures communicated to educators?
Critical Elements – An Example

Address all requirements within each critical element

- Match the provided evidence to the requirement
  Common evidence = Training Presentation
  Presentation alone does not provide sufficient evidence

Also include evidence that staff received training
Address all requirements within each critical element

Match the provided evidence to the requirement

**Understand the meaning of the requirement**

Contingency plan ≠ Capabilities of delivery platform

If there is a technology challenge during administration, then what?

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**Critical Element 2.3 – Test Administration**

The State implements policies and procedures for standardized test administration, specifically, the State:

- If the State administers technology-based assessments, the State has defined technology and other related requirements, included technology-based test administration in its standardized procedures for test administration, and established 
  *contingency plans* to address possible technology challenges during test administration.
Critical Elements – An Example

- Expectation is not perfection
  - Understanding of and experience with statewide assessments
  - ... but also, don’t forget next steps/efforts of improvement

- Transparency
  - It is acceptable to say that you don’t have evidence yet
  - Include future plans

- Review, when possible
  - Completeness
  - Sufficient program information
  - Connection between Critical Element and evidence submitted
PART II, cont: A Peer Reviewer’s Perspective

Assessment Peer Review Re-submissions
Initial Submission Feedback

- Identify which critical elements for each assessment require additional evidence

- Review Peer notes and feedback to understand what is requested in the resubmission
  - If needed, seek clarification from OESE
  - Peer notes may include examples of evidence
    - Suggestions and examples, not requirements

- Identify the required evidence
  - Consult with vendor and TAC, as needed
Organization for Resubmission

- Identify program(s) and staff to address specific requests
  - Include special education and EL staff for specific areas
  - Review with staff, TAC, vendor
  - Assign responsibilities for collection and preparation

- Prepare draft
  - Not necessary to restate submission materials that were reviewed
  - Ensure additional information is provided to address the feedback

- Review
  - TAC, vendor program, staff
  - Consider non-participating staff to review submission for clarity to evidence
Specific Critical Element Examples

- Including Students with Disabilities and English Learners
  - Item Development
  - Test Administration
  - Monitoring Test Administration
  - Accommodations
  - Standard Setting
  - Reporting

- Coordination necessary to address all components
  - SWD and EL collect and report on assessment data to other offices
  - Staff monitor districts on a regular basis and can add specific general assessment to the process
Questions?
Upcoming Webinars

Webinar 2: Deep Dive into Critical Elements 5.4 and 6.4
Thursday, July 29, 2021, 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. EST
Registration Link:
(https://seiservices.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYtd2srjItH9Cf3kmyJdScqinVE8FmxXi1)

Webinar 3: Deep Dive into Critical Elements 2.1 and 3.1
Thursday, August 12, 2021, 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. EST
Registration Link:
(https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUrdOqgpjMuGNNj583mNaJLdhVGxSpntSdf)

Webinar 4: Debrief of the Assessment Peer Review Process including Tips & Tricks for Submitting Evidence
Tuesday, August 24, 2021, 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. EST
Registration Link:
(https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0rfGorT0sG9NHuDDMb9k53KrZWhzljq2mU)
RESOURCES

- ED Standards and Assessment:

- 2018 Assessment Seminar Materials and Video:

- Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation:
  https://www.csai-online.org/spotlight/peer-review-state-assessment-systems
  - Critical Elements Analysis Chart
  - Guidance for Supporting Assessment Peer Review Submissions
  - Evidence Organizer
  - Peer Review and State Assessment Administration: A Resource for State Assessment Directors
  - Peer Review of State Assessment Systems Outcomes Report