



Achieve

| *Perspective Newsletter*

Special Edition

Dear Reader,

Across the country, parents and educators are expressing their concerns about the volume of student testing throughout the school year. What can schools and districts do?

This special edition of *Perspective* highlights how schools or districts can take stock of the amount of testing they require. [The Student Assessment Inventory Tool for School Districts](#) and supplementary resources will ensure that this process is inclusive, thorough, and results-oriented. Everything is openly-sourced, free to use, and can be adapted to your specific context and needs as [Illinois](#), [Idaho](#), and [Delaware](#) have already done.

By thoughtfully engaging in conversation and analysis around testing, we can strike the right balance between gathering critical information to help our students succeed and not subjecting them to superfluous, misaligned, or outdated tests.

*Alissa Peltzman, Vice President, State Policy & Implementation Support,
Achieve*

How do I get started?

Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts Overview - This two-page document provides a high-level overview of the assessment inventory, its goals, and the four-stage inventory process.

The Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts - The inventory itself guides districts through a four-step, cyclical process through which they take stock of and evaluate each assessment they administer. The assessment inventory, as with all of the supplementary resources, is openly licensed under CC BY 4.0, meaning districts are free to use and modify as needed.

Guidance for School Districts - This resource was developed to provide additional guidance and key questions to assist district and community leaders - superintendents, assessment and curriculum leads, teacher leaders, school board members, and local advocates - in ensuring that their district's assessment inventory process is meaningful and actionable.



How can I train others to use the tool?

Training Materials - To guide district leaders who are leading or considering an assessment inventory in their districts, Achieve has created training materials (including ready-to-use PowerPoint slides) around [Setting the Context](#), [Inventory Planning](#), [Stakeholder Mapping](#), [Communications and Messaging](#), and [Assessment Inventory Scenarios](#).



How should I engage with teachers, parents, and students and incorporate their voices into the process?

Communications and Messaging Guide - This chart outlines the critical steps and questions involved in a communications planning process around the Assessment Inventory.

Listening to Teachers: Sample Focus Group and Survey Materials - Teachers are the primary administrators, interpreters, and users of assessments; consequently, their front-line perspectives are essential for "taking the temperature" on the assessment environment in a district and building the case for action. This resource guides districts through designing and using focus groups and surveys to incorporate teacher perspectives into the inventory process.

Listening to Parents: Sample Focus Group and Survey Materials - Parents are justifiably concerned about the amount of testing their children experience in public schools. Understanding how parents perceive, interpret, and use assessments is critical to the inventory process. This resource guides districts through designing and using focus groups and surveys to incorporate parent perspectives into the inventory process.

Listening to Students: Sample Focus Group and Survey Materials - Students have unique perspectives through their direct experiences taking tests. Their perspectives are essential for "taking the temperature" on the assessment environment in the district and building a case for action. This resource guides districts through designing and using focus groups and surveys to incorporate student perspectives into the inventory process.



How do we address concerns about testing for diverse learners?

[Considerations for Special Education Assessment Systems](#) - Students receiving special education services are a group for whom a special set of assessments may be used. Understanding who students with disabilities are and the assessments that are required for these students is important when addressing questions about the volume of testing. This resource was produced in partnership with the National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO) at the University of Minnesota.

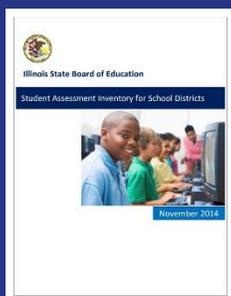
[Considerations for Assessing English Language Learner Students](#) - English language learners (ELLs) now represent a substantial proportion of students in many districts. This paper describes their history in the assessment system, the connections between content and English language proficiency assessments, and how the assessments these students take can be included in an assessment inventory process. This resource was produced in partnership with Dr. Kenji Hakuta at Stanford University and Understanding Language.



How have states used the Assessment Inventory Tool already?

Several states have adapted Achieve's assessment inventory and supported districts in examining local assessment systems. For example, the Delaware Department of Education is providing grants to all districts in the state to complete Achieve's assessment inventory process by the end of 2015. The state is also using the tool to analyze all state assessments, and posted their state assessment inventories on their website. The Connecticut State Department of Education provided approximately 50 grants to districts to engage in an assessment inventory process by summer 2015. The Illinois State Board of Education adapted

the assessment inventory and provided assessment inventory training materials, and developed modules on assessment literacy.



Illinois

Number of Assessments	Statewide	Local	Grade 3-5	Grade 6-8	Grade 9-12	Other	Other	Other
Statewide Assessment	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 3-5 Assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 6-8 Assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 9-12 Assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Idaho



Delaware

"Overall, we have reduced the amount of 'required' district assessment at every level by at least 90 minutes per benchmark period, and anticipate that we will consider eliminating more of the General Outcome Measures as we gather critical evidence about student performance from other measures over time."

- Jean Korder, Urbana School District 116, Illinois

"The recommendations that resulted from this work went beyond simply continuing or eliminating an assessment. It was clear that yearly evaluation of the district's assessments is necessary."

- West Aurora School District 129, Illinois

Additional Resource

[Comprehensive Statewide Assessment Systems: A Framework for the Role of the State Education Agency in Improving Quality and Reducing Burden](#) - In October 2014, CCSSO and the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) committed to evaluate and improve the quality and quantity of student assessments in public schools. This resource is intended to support and guide state leaders as they determine the state's role, evaluate their state assessment systems and move towards a comprehensive high-quality assessment system.

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Using these resources in your district?

We are interested in learning from your experiences and welcome your feedback! Please contact Jacob Mishook at jmishook@achieve.org or 202-745-2316 to share your thoughts.

*All students should graduate from high school
ready for college, careers, and citizenship.*

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