

Sections from the Exec. Summary of the Race to the Top Program Relevant to Assessment (US Dept of Education, Nov. 2009)

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf>

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (10 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B) the State's participation in a consortium of States that—

- (i) Is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium's common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice); and
- (ii) Includes a significant number of States.

Reform Plan Criteria

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments (20 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan for supporting a statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation, and high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) tied to these standards. State or LEA activities might, for example, include: developing a rollout plan for the standards together with all of their supporting components; in cooperation with the State's institutions of higher education, aligning high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with the new standards and assessments; developing or acquiring, disseminating, and implementing high-quality instructional materials and assessments (including, for example, formative and interim assessments (both as defined in this notice)); developing or acquiring and delivering high-quality professional development to support the transition to new standards and assessments; and engaging in other strategies that translate the standards and information from assessments into classroom practice for all students, including high-need students (as defined in this notice).

Definitions from the Appendix:

Formative assessment means assessment questions, tools, and processes that are embedded in instruction and are used by teachers and students to provide timely feedback for purposes of adjusting instruction to improve learning.

High-quality assessment means an assessment designed to measure a student's knowledge, understanding of, and ability to apply, critical concepts through the use of a variety of item types and formats (e.g., open-ended responses, performance-based

tasks). Such assessments should enable measurement of student achievement (as defined in this notice) and student growth (as defined in this notice); be of high technical quality (e.g., be valid, reliable, fair, and aligned to standards); incorporate technology where appropriate; include the assessment of students with disabilities and English language learners; and to the extent feasible, use universal design principles (as defined in section 3 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 3002) in development and administration.

Instructional improvement systems means technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as: instructional planning; gathering information (e.g., through formative assessments (as defined in this notice), interim assessments (as defined in this notice), summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time (as defined in this notice) reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.

Interim assessment means an assessment that is given at regular and specified intervals throughout the school year, is designed to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of academic standards, and produces results that can be aggregated (e.g., by course, grade level, school, or LEA) in order to inform teachers and administrators at the student, classroom, school, and LEA levels.

Student achievement means—

(a) For tested grades and subjects: (1) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (2) other measures of student learning, such as those described in paragraph (b) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

(b) For non-tested grades and subjects: alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Student growth means the change in student achievement (as defined in this notice) for an individual student between two or more points in time. A State may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.