

# Interim Assessments FAQ



*Note: Information about selecting other assessment options can be found in this [guidance document](#).*

## **1. How will the district interim assessments differ next year?**

- We heard you! We have reduced the grade levels for which interims are required so as not to assess our youngest learners using interims. Interim assessments next year will be required for grades 3-8 in English language arts and math.
  - Schools will still need to administer READ ACT assessments for K-3.
  - Schools that have opted in to ANET can decide if they want to administer 2<sup>nd</sup> grade interims.
- You have choice! You can opt-in to DPS-provided interims, or select your own.
  - DPS-provided interims will be more tightly aligned to chosen curriculum.
  - DPS is partnering with an external vendor to ensure quality and tight alignment with district curriculum.
- Interims will be administered three times throughout the year at the end of a unit of study. The three windows will allow for shorter and more instructionally focused assessments.
  - Schools will have additional flexibility on assessment windows to ensure alignment between the assessments and curricular pacing at the school.
  - The purpose of these assessments is to progress monitor and use data to adjust instruction.
- End-of-year assessments in grades 3-8 will be replaced with small-scale performance-based tasks embedded in the curriculum and aligned with district-developed, premade SLOs that will be available at the beginning of the year.

## **2. Why did we change the district interim assessments for 2015-16?**

- You've asked us to and we wanted to ensure our district assessments are more tightly aligned to the standards taught in our curriculum, providing teachers with meaningful data so they can adapt their instruction to meet students' needs.
- We want to make clear that data from these assessments is NOT for accountability purposes. It is to help teachers with their instructional practice.
- We wanted to provide assessments that more naturally fit with the district scope and sequence and standards being taught so as not to disrupt the learning cycle.
- These changes are part of a comprehensive, multi-year academic strategic plan that will drive our success in achieving the goals of the Denver Plan 2020.

## **3. How will these change the schedule for administering interim assessments?**

- Assessment windows will be less formal and primarily driven by when a teacher completes the materials. However, we know assessment windows are important because they help drive backward design and curricular pacing. So we will have some structure, such as requiring interim assessments be completed by certain dates.

## **4. How will these changes affect the amount of time we spend annually on district interims?**

- The time required to administer each assessment will decrease; however, three interims will now be available, in addition to the end-of-year performance based assessment, in order to generate additional information to inform instruction.

- Note that overall testing will be reduced as state lawmakers reduced statewide testing starting in 2015-16. Please see this communication for details.

**5. What about interim assessments for grades K-2?**

- We will not have interims for grades K-2 in 2015-16. We may seek to develop them in later years. Only READ act assessments are required.
- We will provide additional information about TS Gold and READ Act assessments the week of May 26.

**6. How will these changes affect ANet schools? Will ANet follow suit and only offer assessments for grades 3-8?**

- ANet recommends 2<sup>nd</sup> grade assessments. Based on recent direction from the board of education, individual schools will have the ability to choose whether or not they assess second graders.

**7. If we are only adopting new language arts curriculum, Engage NY, in grades 4-8, how will we align the language arts interim for grade 3?**

- Our assessment team is working closely with curriculum and instruction staff to design an assessment structure parallel to the other grade levels but aligned to the existing units.

**8. Who is creating the new interim assessments?**

- We are outsourcing the creation of the new interims. We expect to have a vendor by the end of May.

**9. How do these changes impact Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)?**

- District-provided end-of-year performance based assessments will be aligned to pre-made SLOs that will be available the beginning of the year.
- If schools decide not to opt-in to district interims, they must administer the end-of-year performance-based assessments or identify an alternative that assesses student performance in relation to SLOs.

**10. When will we see assessment blueprints to assist with planning?**

- They will be released in June after meeting with the selected vendor and finalizing the blueprints. This strategy is a significant shift and it will take some time to complete those documents.

**11. How will testing change for beyond Common Core (BCC) subjects?**

- We are shifting from a pre/post-test model to only small-scale, performance-based assessments administered at the end of the year/course. The small-scale, performance-based assessments will be directly aligned to SLOs provided by district staff.

**12. How will high school course assessments change?**

- There will be two test windows for high school course assessments, a Semester Final window in December and an End-of-Year Course Final window in May.
- The Semester Finals will be optional.
- Schools will have three options for the end of year course finals:
  - Administer district-created, end-of-course assessments, or
  - Administer a small-scale, performance-based assessment aligned to student learning objectives *combined* with a teacher-developed final exam, or
  - Administer a teacher-developed final that covers the SLOs