

# Key Similarities and Differences Between the Alternate Assessment Consortia

## Key Similarities

### Summative Assessments

- Online assessments for grades 3–8 and high school (ELA and mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities)
- Primarily selected-response questions, with some constructed-response and/or technology-enhanced items
- Delivery supported on computers and other digital devices
- Numerous accessibility tools provided within assessment delivery platform and support for common assistive devices

### Other Assessments, Resources and Tools

- Online professional development, curriculum, and instructional materials
- Virtual community of practice to support educators
- Formative items/tasks for classroom use
- State ownership and control of all individual student data, as is currently the case for state assessments

## Key Differences

### DLM

### NCSC

#### Assessments for Accountability

- Assessments are testlet based. Each contains an engagement activity and 3–7 questions, and takes 5–15 minutes to complete. Testlets are available at several linkage levels to provide all students with access to academic content.
- States choose one of two testing models:
  - Integrated Model: Educators choose areas within each subject to emphasize and use DLM’s instructionally embedded assessments to monitor individual student progress during the year. Total testing time is approximately 1.5–2 hours. In late spring, students are retested and that testing time is approximately 1.5–2 hours. Scores are based on a student’s cumulative assessment results throughout the year.
  - Year-End Model: All students are tested on the full blueprint during a spring summative testing window. Total testing time is 1.75–2.5 hours. Educators may optionally use the instructionally embedded assessments to monitor progress throughout the year.

- End-of-year test: Each summative assessment in ELA and mathematics consists of approximately 30 questions, most of which are multiple choice but some require the student to construct a response (e.g., submission of a “permanent product” that reflects student responses to guided-writing activities, using the communication tools and strategies that are effective for each student).
- The total testing time for each content area, ELA and mathematics, is expected to be 1.5–2 hours, but students can be given multiple smaller time slots over a 2-month period to meet the students’ needs.

#### Assessment Delivery

- During instructionally embedded assessment, teachers choose the timing and frequency of the testlets, with state guidance, and the content based on the student’s instructional plan.
- During the spring testing window in both models, the assessment is adaptive. Each subsequent testlet is chosen based on information provided by the teachers, the level of success with prior testlets, and the student’s current position within the learning map.
- Most testlets are designed for the student to interact directly with the online assessment system, with assistive devices and teacher support, as needed. Some testlets are designed for the teacher to administer offline and answer questions about the student’s responses.

- Test administrators will use the online NCSC assessment delivery system to administer the annual assessments for each student in ELA and mathematics, based on item-specific directions for test administrators. A stage-adaptive delivery process is being developed to target content at an appropriate level of challenge, while also addressing the need for standardization.
- Some students will enter responses on the computer or have the test administrator facilitate entry as they answer. For others, the test administrator may print the testing materials to administer the test and then enter student responses.

#### Costs

- For 2014–15: All states pay \$20 per student tested. For 2015–16: States pay \$78 per student tested. Fees cover administration and support for instructionally embedded and year-end assessments, access to all DLM professional development materials, and ongoing replenishment of item pools.

- For 2014–15: States pay \$15,270 plus \$6.28 per student to cover specified operational end-user costs. NCSC system components will be transferred to the state consortium post-grant, with no external organizational structure or business model. Consortium members will jointly procure assessment services making use of their open source delivery system (TAO) and all system components, and determine conditions of use by other nonmember states.