



Phase 4: Evaluate & Analyze

Review the quality of individual assessments, analyze the assessment suite and provide input into districtwide recommendations.

Now that your Educator Reviewers are assembled and prepared, they are ready to review. While your district will decide the specifics of how people are organized and which assessments they are reviewing will vary, the major components of this phase are universally recommended.

REVIEW THE QUALITY OF INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENTS

To evaluate each assessment tool, the LASER rubrics focus on core elements of quality: timeliness and usefulness of data, alignment to standards and instructional usefulness.

For both ELA and math, the LASER rubrics ask for descriptive information about each assessment:

- What type of assessment is it?
- What specific standards are measured?
- How timely are the results available, and at what level of detail?
- Math only: Which of the major cluster and supporting cluster standards are assessed?
- ELA only: Text quality and complexity: Do text genres match Common Core guidelines by grade? How rigorous are texts' quantitative and qualitative complexity? Are texts authentic?

Then, the Educator Reviewers assess each assessment's:

Rating Scale:				
Category	Questions to Consider and Discuss as a Review Team	Evidence	Rating (1-4)	Ratings Guidance
Assessment Alignment To Standards	Assessment: Purpose of evidence gathering and its validity. Intentional: What is the purpose of the assessment?			<p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p> <p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p>
	Intended to Support: What evidence supports the claim that the assessment is valid?			<p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p> <p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p>
	Scope of Items: How many items are included, and what is the range of the items' content, difficulty, and length?			<p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p> <p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p>
	Item Quality: How do items measure the intended learning objectives? How do items measure the intended learning objectives? How do items measure the intended learning objectives?			<p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p> <p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p>
Instructional Usefulness	Instructional Usefulness: How do items measure the intended learning objectives? How do items measure the intended learning objectives? How do items measure the intended learning objectives?			<p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p> <p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p>
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SUMMARY RATING, RECOMMENDATION AND NARRATIVE EXPLANATION:				<p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p> <p>Align to standards and/or content standards. Identify the focus of the assessment. How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards? How does the assessment align to the standards and/or content standards?</p>

Alignment to college-ready standards, including the extent to which the assessment covers the breadth and rigor of each mathematics standard and alignment to the reading, academic vocabulary and writing (when applicable) standards

Instructional usefulness, including the extent to which the items, tasks and/or texts are worthy of instructional time and to which the assessment produces results that are useful for informing instruction.

While the rubrics include a 1-4 rating system and ask reviewers to add up scores to get a sum that corresponds with a recommendation for the district, the rubric also allows for complexity and leaves room for educators to use their judgment and make decisions on a case-by-case basis. For example, the ELA rubric includes a separate score for Text Quality and Complexity that must be considered alongside the Summary Rating. And a “Narrative Explanation for Recommendation” is required for each assessment reviewed.

After reviewing an entire assessment and providing evidence for each criterion in the rubric and an overall scoring rationale, the Educator Reviewers will make one of four recommendations:

1. **Eliminate and replace with a different assessment**
2. **Eliminate and do not replace**
3. **Keep and modify the assessment**
4. **Keep the assessment as is**

ANALYZE THE ASSESSMENT SUITE AND PROVIDE INPUT INTO DISTRICTWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to considering the quality and usefulness of each assessment, the team should look at ***all assessments given in a single school year for each given grade/subject*** and determine if there are redundancies or gaps that may have implications for the assessment strategy. Looking at all assessments reviewed for a given grade and subject (e.g. 4th grade mathematics), the Educator Reviewers should ask:

- Does each assessment serve a clear and non-duplicative purpose?
- Which assessments help teachers and school teams most effectively inform their instruction?
- Are there clear gaps/needs not currently being served by existing assessments? Are there ways to meet these needs with existing assessments, rather than adding an additional assessment?
- Are there obvious redundancies? Opportunities to eliminate or consolidate assessments?
- Which assessments have real benefits to teachers, students, parents and the system as a whole? What are those benefits and are they aligned to district and school priorities?
- Of the assessments reviewed and those found most useful, what might strengthen the use of assessment results for their intended uses?
- Are there new insights about the assessment strategy based on your review of these assessments at large?

For example, in 4th grade, your inventory may uncover 7 math assessments and 6 ELA assessments, all of which are given at similar points during the year. The mathematics reviewers may evaluate 3 interim assessments (given in October, January and April), 2 end-of-unit assessments and 2 diagnostic pre-tests. The English language arts team may evaluate 3 interim assessments (given in October, January and April) and 3 end-of-unit assessments. For math, the Educator Reviewers may recommend keeping 5 of the 7, and the ELA reviewers might recommend keeping all 6 but shortening the length of the 3 end-of-unit assessments.

//Implementation Tip: Convening the Educator Reviewers should be done in person if possible.

In Phase 3, the first meeting (Convene the Educator Reviewers & Frame the Work) focuses on the goals of the work and initial inventory findings. The second meeting (Train and Model the Assessment Review Process) consists of a deep dive rubric training. At the third and subsequent meetings, Educator Reviewers are applying the LASER to evaluate assessments (Phase 4) and making recommendations. Ideally, the meetings would happen on a districtwide PD day, or the Educator Reviewers would have stipends or substitutes provided for ½ day meetings. The meetings can be done over webinar for a large district. We recommend that the “c” level sponsor of the work participates in the 1st meeting and that the project manager (or a seasoned facilitator) leads the meetings. In Syracuse, sessions were held after-school, on Saturday, and via webinar.

The Educator Reviewers must now consider what input to share with the district, factoring in the district’s assessment goals/priorities. This input should include recommendations for each individual assessment, as well as recommendations for all assessments for that particular grade/subject.

It’s up to your district to decide whether to put the math and ELA teams together to identify whether the assessments that can be streamlined or eliminated, or whether to leave that set of recommendations to the district’s Working Group. No matter what, the sum total of the tests given in the elementary grades must be considered for each grade level, across subject areas, and not only by the subject-specific teacher review team.

PHASE 4: LESSONS FROM SYRACUSE

Revise the assessment framework based on review team feedback.

Syracuse made revisions to their assessment framework, midway through the review process, in large part due to feedback from the review teams. This further empowered the review teams as they continued their process.

Make hard decisions about which assessments to keep, remove and improve.

Syracuse district leaders set out with a key goal to streamline their assessments and align them to the framework they created. They used the recommendations from the teacher teams to inform their decisions, and are eliminating additional assessments that they found to be redundant but not recommended by the teacher teams. These decisions are difficult – in many instances the assessments have been used in the district for a number of years, and so they have advocates who wish to retain them. The district believes that following the steps outlined in this guide helped them stay true to the intent of this work, even when decisions became hard.