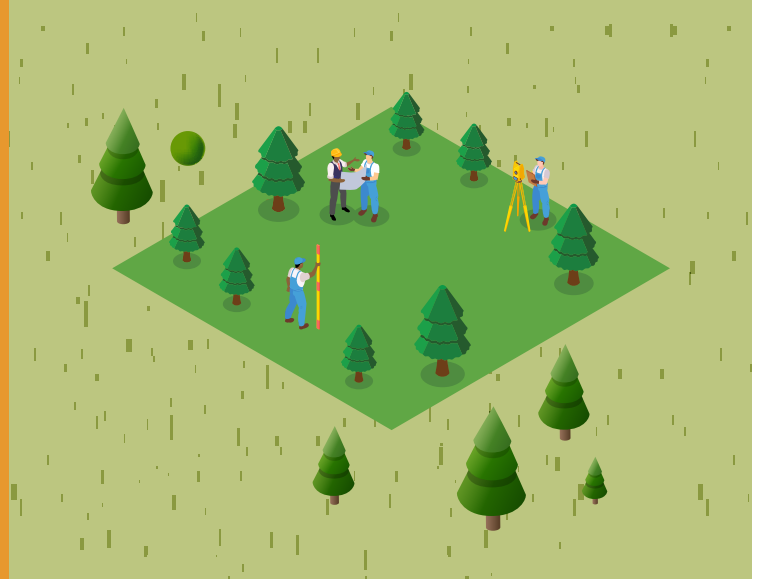


# SO YOU WANT TO TRANSFORM YOUR STATE'S ASSESSMENT SYSTEM?

*Transition to a through-year  
system discussion guide*



**The purpose of this discussion guide is to support state leaders in anticipating the key questions, discussions and considerations to keep in mind when approaching a redesign of a state assessment system to a through-year model.**

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## **Guidance:**

The questions that follow are not intended to be exhaustive and may be adapted given a state's particular context, needs and where they are in the planning process. While the questions are framed to focus on a transition to a through-year model, these questions may be adapted to consider different innovative state assessment approaches.

# Key questions to consider for SEA leaders:

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## Framing the problem

### What are the key problems you are trying to solve for in your assessment system?

- + Are these problems symptoms of a deeper issue or are they root causes? How do you know?
- + Do these problems look the same across communities? If not, how does the problem manifest for different subgroups or communities?
- + What do different stakeholders need in order for this problem to be addressed (ex. Teachers need... District leaders need...)? How do you know?
- + What solutions, designs and approaches exist that may match the needs and problems you've identified?

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## Articulating a vision for a future state

### Assuming you have chosen a through-year model:

- + How does a through-year model address your root cause problems?
- + When your new through-year model is fully operational, what will be true for each of the key stakeholders in your state?
- + Students will be able to...
- + Teachers will be able to...
- + School/district leaders will be able to...
- + SEA leaders and policy makers will be able to...

+ 10 years after your model is fully operational, what will the reality of teaching, learning and assessment be in your state?

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### Identifying enabling conditions

- + What are the current practices within your existing assessment systems that would support the transition to a through-year system?
- + What existing resources can you adjust or tap into?
- + What relationships and partnerships do you have to build on or leverage in this transition?
- + What power dynamics or conditions might support your system in making the transition?
- + What mental models or mindsets exist among your leaders or key stakeholders that may support this transition?

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## Building buy-in and engaging key partners

- Who will ultimately make final decisions as your transition progresses?
- Who are the groups, stakeholders or leaders who will collaborate and partner on the decision making?
- Who are the specific stakeholders and groups who will be involved in the process to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered?
- Who will provide consultation, feedback, analysis and alternatives along the way?
- Who needs to stay informed?

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## Planning for implementation

- What are the most effective strategies to support implementation of the new assessment model given your state’s context?
- How will you leverage field testing, evaluation and ongoing progress monitoring to ensure fidelity of implementation?
- How will you incorporate adjustments and new discoveries learned through the field testing process?
- How might different contextual factors influence implementation success or failure?
- What are the indicators that you will use to signal readiness for scaling the model and that you are building capacity across your system?

- + What competing initiatives or efforts may impact your implementation plan? How will you mitigate these?

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## **Scaling and integrating into your accountability framework**

- + When is the earliest you anticipate your new system to be operational?
- + What discussions might you need to have with USED?
- + What are the strengths and challenges you anticipate if and when your new system goes through peer review?
- + How will districts and schools in your state experience accountability differently? How will you prepare and communicate with them the changes?

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