
Scenario 2: State Decides to Use Hybrid Assessments

Some states, such as Massachusetts, may consider combining questions from the consortia assessments with state-developed questions to form hybrid assessments. It will be critical that higher education play a role in that process to ensure the assessments remain robust enough to measure college readiness.

What higher education can do:

- **Work with K–12 officials to ensure that maintaining a college-ready indicator is a priority in the assessment revision process.** Offer higher education’s participation and leadership.
- **Work with K-12 to establish appropriate validation studies to ensure the high school assessments are strong indicators of college readiness.** The PARCC and Smarter Balanced consortia have been conducting such studies with their assessments. But if significant changes are made to those assessments, states may need to revisit the validity process.
- **Insist that the process include the establishment of a threshold that must be met by the assessment** (the right combination of rigorous assessment questions) to reliably indicate that students are college ready in mathematics and English language arts.
- **Place higher education faculty representatives on key K–12 assessment workgroups in charge of designing the new assessment system.**
- **Establish a communications plan to educate campus presidents, chief academic officers, and higher ed faculty and staff** how college- and career-ready standards and aligned assessments contribute to efforts to reduce remediation, improve graduation rates, and increase the proportion of the state’s citizens with a postsecondary credential.

Scenario 3: State Develops or Purchases Assessments

Some states are developing or purchasing their own high school assessments. Tennessee, for example, developed its own high school assessment to serve as a college-ready measure; while other states, such as Michigan and Arkansas, will use the SAT or ACT, respectively, as their statewide high school assessment. In these cases, it is very important that higher education engage in the development process and/or be involved in making the decision if the state purchases a test off the shelf. Ensuring the integrity and transparency of the college readiness indicator is of paramount importance.

What higher education can do:

- **Work quickly to ensure that higher education is effectively represented in whatever body will make decisions about the high school assessment.**
 - If the test is to be a measure of college readiness, then the state’s colleges must be at the table when decisions are made.
 - State higher education leaders should insist on selecting the individuals who are best able to represent the state’s colleges.
- **During the current contract window (typically one to three years),** execute an evaluation process of the range of high school testing options that measure college readiness, comparing the current assessment system with its ability to determine whether students will be successful in college credit-bearing coursework; and provide K–12 leaders with feedback in advance of the next round of decision-making.
- **When considering purchasing a new assessment,** invite higher education faculty to review sample tests and offer a formal opinion on the ability of the measure to serve as a college-ready indicator that can be used by colleges in placement decisions as well as by high schools in targeting curricular supports to students to enable them to reach college-ready performance levels before they graduate. Effective high school assessments must be well-aligned to college-ready standards and serve both of these purposes.
- **When building a new exam,** involve key higher education faculty in the design and development. Faculty should serve on the state technical advisory committee, on committees that establish the content and item specifications for the test, and on item review panels. Faculty also should play a key role in establishing the performance standards for the assessment so that they can be used to determine student readiness for credit-bearing courses.
- **Evaluate the predictive validity of the new assessment as a measure of college readiness.** This may involve commissioning an internal or external evaluation process; committing to track student performance data over time; and reporting back to K–12 on how students who have entered postsecondary institutions are performing in credit-bearing coursework.
- **Educate key decision-makers on how tests are used** in higher education for admission and placement. Use of tests has changed dramatically in higher education in recent years, and K–12 and policy leaders may make decisions based on outdated knowledge.
- **Agree to waive the placement test** for students who score college ready on the new assessment once that assessment has been shown to be associated with student success.