

Teach More, Test Less: Testing Transparency Reports FAQ

Based on the concerns conveyed to the Commissioner surrounding the use of assessments, and in accordance with Section 1 of Subpart F of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2014, the Commissioner directed the Office of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness to review each district's/BOCES' APPR plan to identify opportunities for districts/BOCES to act locally to ensure the minimum assessments necessary are used to inform effective decision making. As districts/BOCES just completed the second full year of APPR implementation, the Department encourages leaders to use the Testing Transparency Report to help review their currently approved APPR plan to identify modifications that would be approvable by the Department and result in less testing for students. The Department has consistently communicated that **the amount of testing should be the minimum necessary** to inform effective decision-making at the classroom, school, and district/BOCES level.

Q1. What is the source of the data contained in the “Teach More, Test Less” Testing Transparency Report for my district/BOCES?

- A. The data contained in the report are a reflection of the approved version of each district's/BOCES' APPR plan **as of June 5, 2014**. Course names and locally-developed assessments are listed according to the descriptions provided in Task 2, Task 3, and all related attachments found within the approved APPR plan.

Q2. Will every district/BOCES receive the same letter? What will I find in the letters?

- A. Each district/BOCES will receive an individualized letter that analyzes all of the assessments used in their plan and addresses **up to** three different considerations. Accompanying the considerations outlined in the report are points of technical assistance, examples, and resources for districts/BOCES to use if they would like to proceed with reducing the amount of testing in their APPR plan.

Q3. What are the three considerations found in the reports?

- A. The three considerations are as follows:
1. Consideration One illustrates courses designated as using **pre-assessments** in the State Growth or Other Comparable Measures subcomponent and in the Locally Selected Measures subcomponent.
 2. Consideration Two illustrates the use of **multiple assessments** across the State Growth or Other Comparable Measures subcomponent and the Locally Selected Measures subcomponent. This Consideration only highlights courses where students are tested with a **different** assessment in each subcomponent.
 3. Consideration Three indicates where testing could further be reduced through the use of school- or BOCES-wide, group, or team measures. While districts/BOCES may already be using the **same assessment** for the State Growth or Other Comparable Measures subcomponent and the Locally Selected Measures subcomponent, or using school-wide measures with locally-developed or third party assessments for the Locally Selected

Measures subcomponent, there are further opportunities to reduce assessments through the use of school- or BOCES-wide, group, or team measures based on State/Regents assessments.

Q4. Are there districts/BOCES that do not have any considerations reflected in their report?

- A. Yes, there are some districts/BOCES with APPR plans that do not rely on any pre-assessments, do not rely on multiple assessments, and only use State/Regents assessments for the purposes of evaluation. For those districts/BOCES whose APPR plans do not reflect characteristics related to any of the three considerations, a letter will be sent that outlines the relevant legislation and acknowledges the assessment design contained in the APPR plan.

Q5. How does NYSED determine whether my district/BOCES is using pre-assessments in a particular grade and subject?

- A. The use of pre-assessments is determined based on the general HEDI descriptions and related attachments that were submitted as part of your district's/BOCES' APPR plan. Certain rules were also applied when analyzing each APPR plan.

For example, if a grade and subject uses a third-party assessment that is designed with a pre-to-post-test comparison model, the course is included in the pre-assessment analysis. For instance, if the STAR Reading Enterprise assessment is listed for grades 3-12 ELA in a district's/BOCES' APPR plan, then that grade and subject will be included in the "Use of Pre-Assessments" consideration table in the district's/BOCES' Testing Transparency Report because STAR relies on a pre-to-post-test comparison.

Additionally, where districts/BOCES list the same assessments in both Tasks 2 and 3 for a particular grade and subject and the general HEDI description indicates that a pre-assessment is administered, that grade and subject will only appear once in the "Use of Pre-Assessments" consideration in the Task Two table as it is understood that students are taking the assessment once.

Q6. In Tasks 2.10 and 3.12, where districts/BOCES may list any additional courses that they offer, but the two lists of courses are not identical, how does NYSED align courses for inclusion in the consideration tables?

- A. NYSED will align courses listed in Task 2.10 with courses listed in Task 3.12 for the purpose of assessment comparison. To do this, a grouping of courses in one task will be aligned with each course contained in a list in the other task.

For Example, Task 2.10 may contain a single listing for "All Other Courses K-5," while Task 3.12 contains separate listings for "All Art Courses," "All Music Courses," and "All PE Courses." In the Multiple Assessments consideration table, this would appear as "All

Other Courses K-5: Art,” “All Other Courses K-5: Music,” and “All Other Courses K-5: PE.”

Please note that courses listed in Task 2 but not in Task 3, or vice versa, will not appear in the “Multiple Assessments” or “Use of School- or BOCES-wide, Group, or Team Measures” consideration tables, but will appear in the “Use of Pre-Assessments” consideration, as applicable.

Q7. Where should I submit specific questions about my Testing Transparency Report?

- A. Extensive information, including [Task-by-Task Guidance](#) and [training modules](#), is available at the [EngageNY website](#). Your BOCES can also be a valuable resource in answering APPR related questions. Finally, specific questions about your APPR plan can be submitted directly to NYSED at educatoreval@mail.nysed.gov.

Q8. Is my district/BOCES required to make changes upon receipt of the Testing Transparency Report? Will there be an expedited process for any changes my district/BOCES determines it will make?

- A. If, after reviewing the Testing Transparency Report, a district/BOCES makes the decision locally to make adjustments to the assessments used in the State Growth or Other Comparable Measures subcomponent and/or the Locally Selected Measures subcomponent, the Expedited Material Change process is available for use. Information associated with this process, in addition to the form necessary to begin an Expedited Material Change, can be found at: <http://www.engageny.org/regents-regulatory-changes-subpart-30-2-expedited-materials-change-form>. Districts and BOCES are **not** required to make any changes to their APPR plan.

Q9. Do we have to do anything further with these reports?

- A. Yes. In accordance with Section 1 of Subpart F of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2014, please note that all school districts are required to:
- publicly post this memorandum on the school district’s website (if one exists);
 - supplement the information contained in this memorandum to include any standardized tests not specified by the Department; and
 - ensure a public discussion of the contents of this memorandum in a manner to be determined by the district, including discussion on the extent to which the standardized tests not required by state or federal law are beneficial to the educational process or may be eliminated to reduce over testing.

The implementation of these requirements is left to local discretion to determine the process that best fits the needs of the district. The Department does not intend to issue any further guidance on the manner in which these local decisions occur. We recommend districts reach out to their BOCES for further guidance and/or consult with local counsel.