

2017–2018 Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance Requests

The work conducted at the Center on Standards & Assessment Implementation (CSAI) falls into two categories—annual projects, which are long-term, sustained efforts planned in advance of each fiscal year; and technical assistance requests, which arise throughout the fiscal year and vary in their scope of work. Requests for technical assistance come to CSAI primarily from our partners within the Comprehensive Center Network. CSAI also receives technical assistance requests through submissions sent via the CSAI website, and directly from state education agency and local education agency staff, as well as staff from national and local education organizations. Below we detail several of the technical assistance requests CSAI has completed, or is in the process of completing, in Year 6.

English language proficiency (ELP) assessment and newcomer students

California Department of Education (CDE) staff requested information on what other states were providing in their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plans regarding newly arrived students that come later in the year (past the first 30 days of instruction), but that need to be assessed for English Language Proficiency (ELP). In response, CSAI staff conducted a national scan and analysis of ELP assessment information contained within ESSA Consolidated State Plans. CSAI found that the issue of timing with regards to ELP assessment was rarely addressed in the plans reviewed, except in general terms, with all states initially assessing newcomer students within 30 days and administering a summative assessment annually. CSAI also inquired about potential options from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Information from this request was summarized for a general audience and posted as a [resource](#) on the CSAI website.

Computer science standards and assessment

Michigan Department of Education (MDE) staff contacted CSAI regarding K–12 computer science (CS) standards and assessment. MDE is beginning the process of developing and adopting CS standards in spring 2018 and was seeking comparison data from other states. CSAI had recently begun collecting information on CS standards as part of its regular [State of the States](#) updates. CSAI staff were able to create and provide a matrix, including whether states have formally adopted CS standards or are still in the process of developing them; whether CS standards will be assessed locally or at the state level; and possible supports these states will need around implementation.

Evidence-Centered Design training

The California Department of Education reached out to CSAI for assistance during a time of heavy assessment development for several members of its staff. These staff were responsible for holding their assessment development contractors accountable for adhering to the principles of Evidence-Centered Design (ECD), but needed to develop a shared understanding of these principles in order to proceed. ECD is a process intended to ensure a rigorous framework for developing assessments that actually measure their intended constructs and yield the evidence needed to support claims drawn from the results.

CSAI staff delivered a half-day training to approximately 40 staff. Materials from the training, including example questions and evidence, a framework for building assessments, and current constraints and recommendations, were developed into a [collection](#) posted to the CSAI website.

Assessment System Visualizer demonstration

CSAI's [Assessment System Visualizer](#) is an online, interactive tool intended to build the capacity of individuals seeking to analyze components of their state, district, school, and/or classroom assessment systems and make decisions about how to improve them. The West Comprehensive Center connected CSAI to staff at the Arizona Department of Education who were preparing to roll out their Balanced Assessment Framework with local education agencies. CSAI was able to provide a demonstration of the Visualizer and its possible uses for inclusion in the trainings accompanying the roll out.

Louisiana item writer training

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) requested CSAI support in developing and facilitating item writer training for Louisiana teachers. The training and materials are specifically focused on best practices for writing cluster or task-based sets of assessment items that culminate in an extended response item. Two separate trainings will be presented—one focused on three-dimensional science standards, and the other on Louisiana social studies standards. After these trainings are completed, LDOE can use the materials created to continue to build capacity through additional trainings. The materials will also be made publicly available on the CSAI website.

Performance assessment items workshop

The Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC) is working with multiple states, which have recently adopted new standards based on the [College, Career, and Civic Life \(C3\) Framework](#). A few of these states, including Illinois and Iowa, have identified the need to create assessments related to these standards. MWCC requested CSAI's assistance in building a knowledgebase regarding performance assessment items, as well as identifying existing sample performance assessment items that focus on civics and/or social studies. MWCC then expanded on this request and asked for CSAI's support in designing and facilitating a two-day training workshop for teachers. This workshop will focus on building the capacity of teachers from each state to create high-quality performance assessment items. These teachers will then be able to conduct training for other teachers within their respective states. Some states have expressed an ultimate goal of creating open, online repositories for performance assessment items.

Maryland stakeholder workgroup support

The Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center (MACC) requested CSAI support for a project they were undertaking in Maryland. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) convened a task force to make recommendations to the state superintendent and board regarding high school graduation requirements. The scope of the task force's work included credit requirements, diploma options, and assessment requirements. To support the task force, CSAI staff initially analyzed proficiency-based assessment (PBA) requirements in select states that were identified by the task force. Upon review by the task force, this expanded to state policies (for all states) regarding use of PBAs for graduation. CSAI also reviewed state policies nationwide regarding senior projects/capstones, attendance requirements for graduation, and use of afterschool activities in lieu of physical education credits. In addition to providing these informational resources to the task force, CSAI staff met with MSDE staff who were facilitating the task force to provide direct consultation and answer questions.

Midyear grade level changes and achievement indicators

At the request of the Southern Regional Education Board, CSAI shared expertise with the Executive Director of Accountability at the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). OSDE had requested to engage with national experts on two questions that Oklahoma is working on as it finalizes its ESSA plan. Oklahoma's questions were on the topics of assessment participation calculation and using scale scores as interim proficiency targets. In addition to meeting with OSDE staff, CSAI reviewed and provided feedback on the business rules OSDE developed around handling midyear grade level changes and ensuring that all students are assessed at least once during high school.



CSAI Update is produced by the The Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation (CSAI). CSAI, a collaboration between WestEd and CRESST, provides state education agencies (SEAs) and Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs) with research support, technical assistance, tools, and other resources to help inform decisions about standards, assessment, and accountability. Visit www.csai-online.org for more information.



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