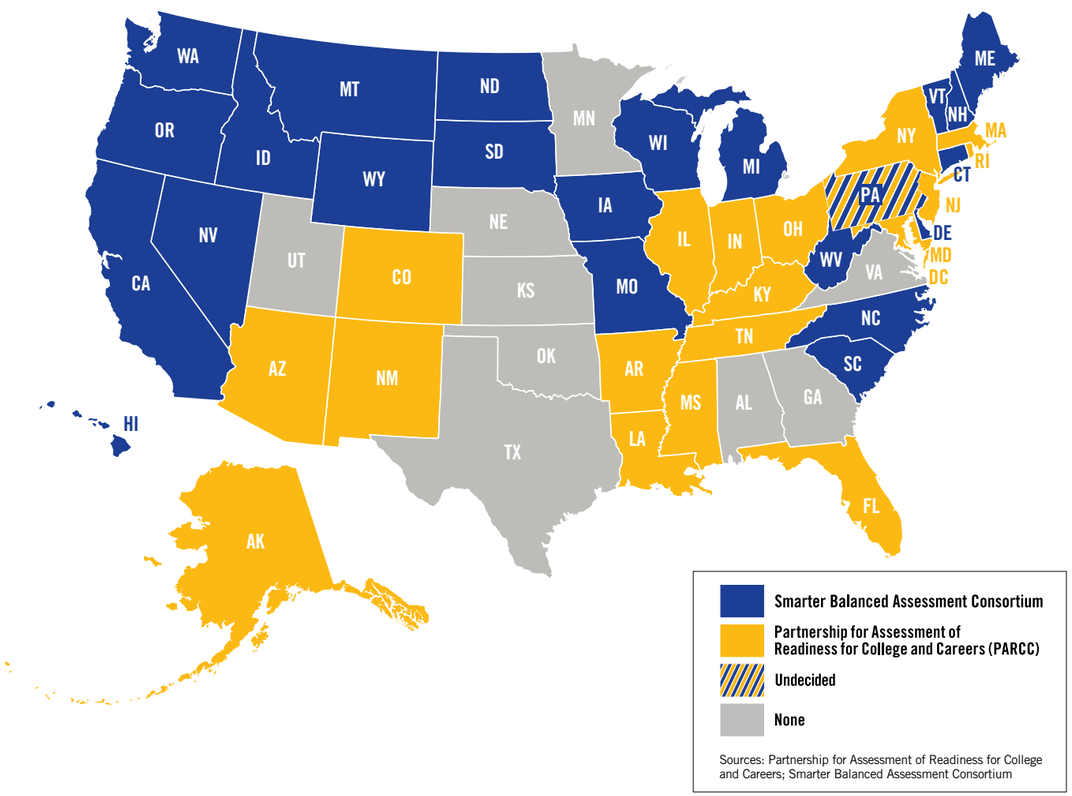
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS

Assessing the Common Core:
A Quick Reference for Authorizers

New Common Core-aligned state assessments are scheduled for official rollout within the next two years. Do you know what you need to know? Are the schools you authorize ready to administer the new assessments?

Which Assessment is Your State Using?



Assessments: By the Numbers (as of January 2014)

46 states & the District of Columbia have adopted the Common Core

SPRING 2014 new assessments scheduled for field testing

SPRING 2015 new assessments ready for official use

24 states belong to Smarter Balanced

$22.50 -$29.95 cost range of new assessments per student

23 months until first renewal process with new assessment results

18 states are part of PARCC

1 state is undecided

100 kbps recommended minimal external bandwidth per student for test administration

Assessment Implementation Timeline

2013-2014:

... will be the last school year that most states administer their own state assessments in language arts and math.

... PARCC and Smarter Balanced will both be field-tested in place of or alongside of state assessments.

Do you know how your state plans to handle double testing and how it plans to use results from state tests?

2014-2015:

... will be the first school year of full implementation of the new assessments.

Technology Readiness

Do the schools you authorize have the technology needed to participate in Common Core assessments?

PARCC and Smarter Balanced have released similar minimum technology specifications that include:

- **Operating system compatibility**
- **Minimum bandwidth**
- **Required memory**
- **Monitor screen size**
- **Browser security**

Authorizers should make sure schools are ready to take the new assessments.

Next Generation Assessments

PARCC — Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

PARCC and Smarter Balanced are both described as "next generation" assessments because they aspire to be performance-based and to assess understanding and higher-order thinking, thorough problem solving and demonstration of mastery rather than multiple-choice bubbles or fill-in-the-blanks.

Key Similarities:

- Assessments will be computer-based for grades 3-8.
- There will be a variety of assessment types, including selected-response, constructed response, and complex performance tasks.
- Both assessments will be given annually in the spring and currently will cover language arts and math.
- Results will be available within weeks of administration.
- Each consortium will make available optional interim assessments, professional development materials, formative items, model curriculum units, and online libraries of aligned-content resources.

Key Differences:

- PARCC summative assessments will be fixed-form—each student in a cohort will take the same test.
- Smarter Balanced will be adaptive—each student will take an individually tailored set of items that will change in difficulty as students progress through the test.
- PARCC will have one optional diagnostic and one optional midyear assessment.
- Smarter Balanced will have optional interim assessments for grades 3-12.

Source: Nancy A. Doorey, "Coming Soon: A New Generation of Assessments," Educational Leadership.

About this Resource

This Quick Reference for Authorizers is part of NACSA's series, *Staying the Course*, which provides guidance to authorizers in navigating the challenges presented by implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Other resources in the series include an introduction to the Common Core and the accompanying new assessments and an overview of the challenges presented by implementation, a brief on promoting equity and autonomy for charter schools during implementation, and a brief on strategies for managing accountability during the transition.

nacsa
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS

www.qualitycharters.org