



## **KANSAS ASSESSMENTS 101:**

A Guide to Kansas Assessments and Frequently Asked Questions for the 2014-2015 School Year

### **Kansas Assessments for 2014-2015**

Students across Kansas will be tested in the following subjects during a time period from March 9<sup>th</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup>:

- English / Language Arts (ELA)\* - Grades 3-8 and 10
- Math\* - Grades 3-8 and 10
- Science - Grades 4, 7, and 11
- Social Studies - Grades 6, 8, and 11
- Multidisciplinary Performance Task (MDPT) - Grades 3-8, and 11
- Math Performance Task – Grades 3-8
- KELPA-P - Grades K-12: This test measures English Language Proficiency for identified English Learners (ELs)
- cPass - Grades 11-12: This test focuses on academic and career pathway knowledge and skills

\*Annual accountability measures focus on growth and achievement in ELA and Math. This document will provide more information on each of these assessments only.

### **What will the test look like this year?**

Assessment Sections: This year, students in each grade level will complete four separate parts for each of the ELA and the Math assessments. Students will provide answers to multiple choice and technology enhanced questions. Additionally, students in grades 3-8 will complete a Multidisciplinary Performance Task (MDPT) during the ELA assessment and a Performance Task during the Math assessment. Each will be explained in more detail below.

MDPT: The Multidisciplinary Performance Task is a new assessment feature that is being field tested for this year. Students in grades 3-8 and 11 will receive information from a variety of resources and then write an on demand response to a prompt or question using the resources from different subject areas that were provided. The goal is to see how students in Kansas inform or persuade an audience using information from a several sources.

Math Performance Task: During the Math assessment, students in grades 3-8 will complete an extended activity that will measure a student's ability to demonstrate knowledge and skills across multiple math standards. These performance tasks will be used to better measure how much students understand and how they analyze and solve real-world problems.

### **My child has special needs. Is he/she tested differently?**

Kansas allows for a variety of accommodations for students with disabilities, which could include text-to-speech, as an example. A guide to these accommodations is available at the following website: <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=407>



### **I had heard or read that last year's assessments did not go well. What about this year?**

As you may know, Kansas has experienced a significant change in our assessments over the past few years. Last year, for example, some technical difficulties and a cyber attack on the Kansas Assessment system prevented some school districts from successfully administering all of the annual assessments. With improvements occurring to the system over the last year, we are confident that this spring's Kansas Assessment season will be a success, and we are equally confident that we will receive individual student scores to share with you, once those scores have been validated by the Kansas State Department of Education.

### **Anticipated Results**

Individual student performance on these assessments will take some time to accurately determine because this is the first year that the results across Kansas will undergo the necessary calculations to determine cut scores and performance levels. The Kansas State Department of Education will bring teachers together from across Kansas this summer to determine these cut scores and performance level designations, so it may be next fall (2015) before we are able to share how your student performed on each assessment.

### **What is the ESEA Flexibility Waiver ("The Waiver") and how does it relate to Kansas Assessments?**

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a federal education law that applies to all states. It requires students in each school across Kansas district to reach the same performance targets in ELA and Math. These targets rose each year until 2014, when all students were expected to perform at or above grade level in ELA and Math. Kansas, along with over 30 other states, requested flexibility from this federal law in 2012. Kansas was approved, and as a result, was allowed to develop new goals for student performance using the Kansas Assessments in ELA and Math as evidence of achievement and growth.

### **Accountability and Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs)**

Through our ESEA Flexibility Waiver (The Waiver), each school in Kansas receives school-specific growth and achievement goals, or Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs), to meet on an annual basis. Schools must "Make Progress" in one of four categories for each the ELA and Math assessment. The four categories are Achievement, Growth, Gap Reduction, and Reduction of Non-Proficient. Schools that are "Not Making Progress" may receive additional support from the Kansas State Department of Education. A needs assessment may be given, and a School Improvement Plan may be developed to guide these improvement efforts.

### **Will my child's school be shut down if it keeps failing to meet AMOs?**

The goal of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver is not to shut down underperforming schools. Rather, the goal is to help schools succeed. To that end, schools that have not made AMOs for two years in a row are placed on improvement.

### **Where can I see how specific schools have performed in recent years?**

Public access to previous assessment performance can be found on the following website:

<http://online.ksde.org/rcard/>

This information will likely undergo significant updates over the summer and in to next year as this year's ELA and Math assessments are incorporated into the larger view of a district's achievement and growth among schools.



### **Subgroups**

The AMO targets apply to individual schools, and to subgroups of students specifically in the calculation of the Reduction of Non-Proficient AMO. A subgroup exists when 30 or more students who share specified demographic characteristics are enrolled in a school or district. Each subgroup must make progress in meeting annual targets as calculated in the Reduction of Non-Proficient AMO. The following is a list of subgroups that might exist within a school or district:

- All Students
- Free and Reduced Lunch
- Students with Disabilities
- English Learner (EL) Students
- African-American Students
- Hispanic
- White
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Multi-Racial
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

### **How do participation and graduation rates affect AMOs?**

Each of these is factored in along with assessment results when determining whether or not a school has or has not made progress. As a general rule, at least 95 percent of students per school must participate in the ELA and Math assessments. Additionally, high school graduation rates must be above 80 percent or show improvement over the previous year.

### **What can I do to help my child excel on the Kansas Assessments?**

There are a number of ways to help your child perform his or her best on the Kansas Assessments. Parents can help their children most by starting the day with a nourishing breakfast and ensuring they get plenty of rest the night before. Parents can also visit with teachers to find out more about what their child is learning and by reviewing information about the school's Kansas Assessment schedule.