

ONLINE ASSESSMENT

AN EVOLVING LANDSCAPE. NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

Just three years ago, school districts were moving swiftly to prepare for online summative assessments. It was far more than simply adding technology. The move to digital assessments has ushered in significant impacts on teaching and learning. Technology rapidly emerged as an essential tool in planning, creating, delivering, and evaluating successful instruction. Now online assessments are becoming the standard and are in use regularly, not only for summative or high stakes assessments, but for interim and formative testing as well. The May 24, 2017 Special Report from *Education Week*, entitled “Student Testing: What’s Next,” notes that schools are expected to spend nearly \$1.6 billion on classroom assessment tools. Additionally, the report stated that in a 2016 survey, “...83 percent of district or school leaders said their teachers were using one or more digital tools for conducting formative assessments during the 2015-16 school year.”

As district leaders continue to plan for and implement effective online assessment infrastructure and programs, these recommendations can help ensure the broader education community of students, teachers, parents, administrators, and school board members continue to benefit from the value of online assessments.

NINE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEVERAGING ONLINE ASSESSMENT CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

1 Create and Sustain a Cross-Functional Strategic Planning Team

Key departments typically include curriculum and instruction, professional development, assessment, and technology. Collaboratively, this team can provide support for current and new initiatives that will determine how best to use the district’s online assessment system to improve instructional outcomes.

2 Ensure Ongoing Funding

To succeed over the long term, funding for building digital learning environments must be continuous. This supports a robust network infrastructure and should eventually ensure that every student has an Internet-connected device.

3 Embed Technology in Instructional Practice

When using technology is part of every student’s daily instruction, digital assessment becomes a natural part of teaching and learning rather than a special event that requires special preparation.

4 Invest in Sustained Professional Development

Professional learning is more crucial than ever to help teachers move successfully to digitally enhanced instruction, emphasizing not only the “how” in using digital content and assessments but the “why” to support personalized learning and the development of higher order thinking and problem solving skills.

5 Build and Maintain a Robust Infrastructure

Making sure your network infrastructure can support the demands of new assessments is a continuous commitment. You can find more information about bandwidth requirements online at www.setda.org/priorities/equity-of-access/broadband-imperativeii-2016/



6 Select Devices Strategically

Tap the expertise of a range of stakeholders to ensure that devices meet the ongoing academic needs of students and teachers, and address the considerations of cost, maintenance, warranties, required peripherals, screen size, content availability, battery life, and power.

7 Communicate Often and Thoroughly

Create and enhance mechanisms for proactive communication to school sites and all key stakeholders in your larger education community, emphasizing how data gathered from assessments is better informing instruction and student outcomes.

8 Consider Logistics

Develop procedural manuals that include all necessary detail. This will streamline everyone’s work during key testing windows and ensure online assessments are delivered consistently and successfully.

9 Use Assessment Data Effectively

Prepare and support teachers in using interim assessment data to gain deeper knowledge about students and use that information to personalize instruction.

