



National Center and State Collaborative

## ***Frequently Asked Questions for the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot***

### **1. What is the National Center and State Collaborative?**

The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) is a project funded by the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, and is led by five centers and 26 states to construct an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS), aligned to the Common Core State Standards, for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 3-8 and 11. The goal of the NCSC project is to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-secondary options. More information is available at: <http://www.ncscpartners.org/>

### **2. What is the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot Test?**

The Phase 1 Pilot Test is being conducted to collect data about how students with Significant cognitive disabilities interact with the mathematics, reading, and writing items, to gather information about how the items function, to examine test administration conditions, and to review item scoring processes and procedures.

### **3. What schools and students are eligible to participate in the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot Test?**

All schools that have students with significant cognitive disabilities who meet the criteria for eligibility for participation in the NCSC AA-AAS, provided in "Guidance for IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the NCSC Alternate Assessment," are eligible to participate in the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot Test. [NCSC Participation Guidelines](#)

### **4. When may District Test Coordinators or principals register their school to participate in the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot Test and when does the registration period end?**

Beginning October 15, 2013, District Test Coordinators or principals may register their school to participate in the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot test. School registration will close after the target sample size is met, in November 2013.

### **5. What information do schools need to provide when registering for the pilot test?**

- Contact information for principal, test coordinator, technical support, and teacher administrators
- Number of eligible students per grade
- Notes on special considerations (e.g., sending/receiving school, special education school)



National Center and State Collaborative

**6. Where do District Test Coordinators register their school to participate in the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot?**

District Test Coordinators or principals should register at [NCSC Pilot](#).

**7. When may principals or state designees register their students for the pilot test?**

Principals or state designees will be asked to register all of their eligible students in November 2013.

**8. Can a center-based or separate school participate in the Phase 1 Pilot?**

Yes, if this school has students that meet the eligibility guidelines referenced in FAQ 3.

**9. If a student receives special education services in a school that is not his/her home school, should the receiving or the sending school register the student?**

The school that will administer the test should register and note the sending school in the Special Considerations text window.

**10. How many students are expected to participate in the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot Test from each state?**

For the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot Test, it is expected that each state will need to contribute approximately one-third of the population of students who meet the eligibility criteria to participate in the NCSC AA-AAS. The sample of students tested will be demographically representative of NCSC partner states and inclusive of the individual learner characteristics and personal learning needs of students.

**11. What if not enough schools and students are registered for the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot?**

CTB will be monitoring school and student registration on a weekly basis. If target sample sizes are not met, CTB and NCSC partners will initiate supplemental recruitment efforts.

**12. What is the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot Test design?**

Eligible students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11 will take pilot test forms in *either* English language arts (reading and writing) or mathematics. In both ELA and mathematics, tests will be constructed with a mix of item tiers, or levels of item complexity.

- ELA: The ELA pilot test consists of both a reading and a writing component aligned to the Core Content Connectors (CCCs). On each pilot test, there will be four reading passages, two in informational and two in literacy genres with accompanying selected response items. Additional foundational reading items will be included in Grades 3 and 4. The writing component will consist of selected response writing items and a writing



National Center and State Collaborative

prompt. In total, the ELA pilot test consists of approximately 25 selected response items and one writing prompt.

- Mathematics: The mathematics test consists of approximately 25 selected response and constructed response items assessing grade-level mathematics content aligned to the CCCs.

**13. How will the pilot tests be administered?**

The items will be presented online through the NCSC comprehensive assessment system. Teacher test administrators will work one-on-one with students to administer the pilot tests based on individual student needs.

**14. How much time will it take to administer a pilot test?**

The pilot tests will take about 1.5 to 2 hours to administer. The test is designed to be administered across three sessions. Teachers will be able to pause and resume the test based on student needs.

**15. What are the pilot test administration windows?**

Mathematics: late February – March 2014

English Language Arts: March – April 2014

**16. What are the training requirements for teachers who will administer a NCSC pilot test?**

All teachers who will administer a NCSC Pilot test must complete a series of test administration training units that will be available about one month prior to the assessment window. Teachers may complete these test administration training units by using the online self-directed course of study, or States may choose to use these test administration training materials with teachers during face-to-face workshops. Every test administrator will participate in training and pass quizzes to ensure that the items are administered appropriately.

**17. What materials will teachers need to prepare prior to the test administration?**

Some test items may require teachers to prepare materials that are readily available in typical classrooms. This information is included in the test directions and test administration manual.

**18. Since the tests are administered online, what are the technology requirements?**

The requirements are in Section 9 of the “Architecture and Technology System Requirements for the NCSC Assessment Platform: Report and Recommendations”



National Center and State Collaborative

document posted on the NCSC website at: [http://3f071e93aad6392d132c-25358a031817aa7f80c72ac2922ef9ef.r3.cf2.rackcdn.com/NCSC\\_TechArchReport\\_103112.pdf](http://3f071e93aad6392d132c-25358a031817aa7f80c72ac2922ef9ef.r3.cf2.rackcdn.com/NCSC_TechArchReport_103112.pdf)

**19. What incentives are available to districts, schools, teachers or students participating in the NCSC Phase 1 Pilot Test?**

Schools, teachers, and students will have the opportunity to experience the types of items, item presentation, and administration procedures. Teachers will have an opportunity to provide feedback on their experience administering items to students. Your school will have the opportunity to confirm that teachers and students have the technology (computer hardware, software and internet capabilities) needed to complete the NCSC AA-AAS online. Data collected will inform the test forms and administration procedures for the operational NCSC AA-AAS which will be administered in spring 2015 to every eligible student in partner states.

**20. Will districts or schools receive student or district results?**

No. Neither District nor student results will be provided for the pilot. The purpose of this pilot is to (a) try out the test items and evaluate the quality of individual test items, (b) investigate administration conditions, and (c) investigate the proposed item scoring processes and procedures. The reliability and validity of student results cannot be established in this initial pilot phase.

**21. Who should districts/schools/teachers contact with questions about the pilot test requirements?**

Questions should be directed to Janet Stuck Connecticut's contact for NCSC AA-AAS. She is available via e-mail at [janet.stuck@ct.gov](mailto:janet.stuck@ct.gov).

**22. Who should districts/schools/teachers contact for registration questions?**

Contact CTB's Sample Acquisition team for questions about registration. Contact information will be available on the website [NCSC Pilot](#)

**23. Who should districts/schools/teachers contact for questions related to test administrator training?**

Questions should be directed to Janet Stuck Connecticut's contact for NCSC AA-AAS. She is available via e-mail at [janet.stuck@ct.gov](mailto:janet.stuck@ct.gov).