

**New Hampshire Department of Education
College and Career-Ready Accountability Options
Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE)
for Demonstrating Progress**

The accountability option provides districts with an alternative route to demonstrating measurable progress in student outcomes, one that enables districts to emphasize meaningful content, high quality instruction, and deep student engagement. After describing the general Level 2 option, this document outlines a state-sanctioned Level 2 option that districts can choose which embraces a performance assessment approach to demonstrating progress.

Description of the Accountability Option for Demonstrating Progress

The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) has created a route for districts and schools to demonstrate progress that is not solely or primarily dependent upon state standardized tests. *The creation of the accountability option, named College and Career-Ready Accountability Options, reflects NHDOE's belief in placing the decisions of how accountability is determined in the hands of districts and schools, rather than the state mandating a uniform set of accountability measures.* Within a context of reciprocal accountability, districts and schools are responsible for determining and reporting on local accountability measures, while the state is responsible for providing assistance to districts in setting up strong accountability systems. The accountability option is also based on the belief that most students are better able to demonstrate their competency through multiple assessment measures. Thus, the accountability option was established to enable schools and districts to demonstrate student achievement and learning growth through means other than or in addition to standardized tests. Schools seeking approval to demonstrate progress through the accountability option must propose develop an accountability plan that addresses these criteria:

- Must be part of a coordinated district plan to assess and report on student performance
- Must demonstrate the opportunity for an adequate education for all students
- Must be tied to key performance indicators/measures that are coherent and ambitious
- Yearly measureable targets must be established
- Contain measures within, at least, the following domains: (1) academic, (2) college and career readiness, (3) teacher effectiveness, and (4) school environment
- There is sufficient technical quality of the measures (e.g., validity and reliability)
- Defines what is acceptable and unacceptable performance for each performance measure
- Indicates what information will be reported to the public

Any accountability option district application must include NECAP, and subsequently Smarter Balanced, assessments within their accountability plan in at least one grade per elementary, middle, and high school (tentatively grade four, eight, and eleven). Once a school accountability plan has been developed by a district, it must be first approved by the local school board prior to submission to NHDOE for review. The NHDOE will establish a peer review process to consider and recommend for approval (or not) each district request.

Approved accountability option plans will be considered an alternative to the state's current district accountability system. Once approved, each district must annually report on its progress, including indicating whether each school has met, not met, or exceeded its goals on each performance indicator/measure. A NH DOE peer review process will approve, disapprove, or overturn the district's evaluation/conclusions regarding attainment of each school's goals.

Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE) Option

NHDOE is creating a state-sanctioned Performance Assessment of Competency Education option that is competency-based, focused on assessing students' demonstration of higher order thinking skills and "deeper learning." In this model, performance assessments will be the vehicle to create a rich body of evidence to demonstrate that students have mastered state competencies. These assessments will be the core of assessing student, school, and district progress, as well as measuring teacher contributions to student learning. NHDOE will approve any district's proposal which selects the PACE option, provided the district works with NHDOE to shape and field test the model, and commits to all components within the PACE option. Approved districts will be provided state support in its implementation.

NHDOE is offering this accountability option because of our belief that high-quality, competency-based performance assessments have the potential to support educational improvement in multiple ways:

- Promote student agency and engage students in interactions with complex content and skills
- Reveal student thinking and learning
- Model high quality instructional activities
- Anchor rich curricular units

The goal of this accountability pilot is to demonstrate the power and value of local districts having the agency to build accountability systems that provide richer evidence of student learning of meaningful content, skills, and dispositions that prepare students to be college- and career-ready.

This accountability option will be based on the following principles:

1. Students should have opportunities to learn the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for them to graduate from high school college- and career-ready, pursue meaningful post-secondary options, and become productive citizens of New Hampshire and the world.
2. A student assessment system should promote and measure the knowledge, skills, and dispositions in ways that provide feedback for improvement of student and system learning.
3. Performance assessments are a vehicle for encouraging the teaching and learning of meaningful content and skills.

The Pilot Stage: Building a Framework for PACE

Getting Started

Districts that voluntarily choose to participate in PACE will be exempt from NHDOE Level 1 accountability requirements. The 2014-2015 school year would be a pilot year. During this year, participating districts would help refine PACE while field testing the model. The resulting student data would be used to both fine-tune the accountability model and build a baseline year of district data for subsequent years. Beginning in 2015-2016, the state accountability requirements would apply.

Below is a proposed model for PACE. Using this as a beginning framework, participating districts, working in collaboration with NHDOE, Center for Collaborative Education, and Center for Assessment, would agree on revisions and fine-tuning to the model that would best balance the need for cross-district comparability, validity, and reliability with local creativity and innovation. The goal is to create an accountability model that leads to increased district, school, and teacher agency in designing curriculum, instruction, and assessment that best meets students' needs, and student agency in how they demonstrate mastery over a set of common competencies.

A Beginning Proposed Framework

Performance assessments in PACE will be defined as:

Multi-step, complex activities with clear criteria, expectations, and processes that enable students to interact with meaningful content and that measure the depth at which students learn content and apply complex skills to create or refine an original product and/or solution.

Districts that are interested in joining PACE will be required to submit an application to NHDOE that indicates their commitment to work with NHDOE and a cohort of selected districts to develop and implement the PACE model of accountability. Over the course of a year, each selected district will be expected to develop an accountability plan that includes the following:

- Clear and measurable goals for the system
- High quality measurement indicators to evaluate progress towards the goals
- Yearly reports on student and school performance
- Coherence with educator evaluation systems.
- State competencies that are aligned with college and career outcomes
- Instructional system is designed to support student learning of competencies
- Validated performance assessment system for students to demonstrate mastery of competencies that is at the center of, but not the only measure within, the local accountability system
- Use of performance assessments as both formative and summative assessments
- Commitment of resources necessary to ensure the plan's success
- Leadership and educator capacity to design, implement, support, and sustain the system
- A clear and visible commitment towards improving the achievement of students who have historically been under-served

The NHDOE will work with each applicant to develop and refine their plans over the course of the pilot year.

PACE pilot districts will engage in the following activities:

1. **Use the state competencies in English language arts, mathematics, and science upon which to base the local curriculum, as well as state Work-Study Practices that define the essential dispositions students need to be successful**

All of the performance assessments within PACE, whether from the state performance task bank or locally generated, should be based on the state's newly developed competencies in English

language arts, mathematics, science, and eventually social studies and the arts, as well as a set of dispositions or Work-Study Practices. Competencies are defined as:

Targets for student learning representing key content-specific concepts and skills applied within or across content domains

The state competencies are aligned with college and career-ready standards at the appropriate depth of knowledge. While the competencies represent content-specific concepts and skills, they are organized in a manner to encourage cross-disciplinary learning, teaching, and assessment. Work-study practices are defined as:

Behavioral qualities or habits of mind that students need to be successful in college, career, and life.

A statewide committee will develop a set of Work-Study Practices during the 2013-2014 school year, with the goal of bringing them before the state board of education for approval in spring 2014. These practices will be cross-disciplinary habits that are intrinsic to life-long learning.

2. Use state and national open source banks of validated performance assessment tasks

NHDOE is in the process of building a statewide bank of validated common performance assessment (PA) tasks – with accompanying guidelines, tools, rubrics, and student work anchors - in each of five core disciplines (mathematics, English language arts, social studies, science, arts) and at each of the three grade spans (K-5, 6-8, 9-12). All tasks will be multi-step, curriculum-embedded assignments that usually take place over more than one class period. As

Participating districts and schools will be able to choose tasks from the state performance task bank or a national Innovation Lab Network (ILN) performance task bank, of which New Hampshire is a member state. All tasks regardless of origin will require students to demonstrate mastery of the state competencies and work-study practices. All tasks will have been validated through a review process that includes field testing.

A teacher-friendly field guide for administering the state bank of performance assessment (PA) tasks as well as designing and implementing local performance tasks will be developed for districts (online and in hard copy) that will include:

1. The rationale for quality PAs in improving curriculum, instruction, and learning
2. How to access, use, and score the state task bank of validated performance tasks and develop, use, and score local assessment tasks
3. Professional development modules on local validation and scoring of PA tasks, and
4. A process for using PA student scores to improve instruction and curriculum.

PACE Level 2 districts will be required to use tasks from the two performance task banks to assess student performance in ELA, math, and science. Guidelines will be determined by participating districts and NHDOE as to the minimum number of state and ILN bank tasks that need to be used for each discipline to address the measurement criteria of sufficiency; most

likely the minimum number will be two per discipline. Districts may choose to supplement these common performance tasks with either additional common tasks or locally created and validated performance tasks.

3. Participate in a professional development model that provides support to educators in designing, implementing, and reliably scoring quality, competency-based performance tasks, as well as onsite technical assistance to design a local accountability PACE model

A key outcome for this initiative is to build assessment literacy in all district staff and administrators. Participating districts will receive state support to create local assessment systems in which teachers create and administer performance tasks which are embedded in the curriculum and scoring of student work takes place at the local level. All participating districts will receive the following state support to put these systems in place:

Leadership Capacity Building. Principals, superintendents, and school board members from participating districts will be invited to participate in regional and state sessions focused on the role of leadership in facilitating and managing the change needed in transforming to a locally-designed accountability system focused on performance assessment of competency-based education. Leaders will learn tools and skills in managing this change process.

Professional Development Institutes. Participating PACE schools will select teacher teams to participate in summer and school-year PACE institutes on assessment literacy; competencies and work-study practices; assessment task design and validation, including use of the state and ILN performance task bank; scoring calibration; and data analysis to track student progress and inform instruction. As part of this professional development, participating teams will be introduced to a set of Guiding Questions and accompanying process to help guide teachers in the process of assessment of student learning.

Regional Calibration Scoring Sessions will be conducted to build inter-rater reliability and consistency in scoring across districts. These sessions will serve as professional development for participants to then lead calibration scoring sessions at the local level. Each district will have a goal of attaining and demonstrating 80% or greater inter-rater reliability (exact agreement per scoring dimension) on tasks that are locally scored.

Performance Assessment Coaches. Districts will be able to access a cadre of Performance Assessment Coaches consisting of content teachers and curriculum directors in the core academic disciplines at the different grade spans who have been trained and supported in creating, administering, validating, and scoring quality performance assessments. These practitioner coaches will be available to assist local districts in implementing the state-sanctioned PACE Level 2 option of school and district accountability.

Technical Assistance in Local PACE System Design. The work of districts in the pilot phase will vary, depending on where they enter on the developmental spectrum of creating and implementing a performance assessment culture in the school/district. Thus, districts will be able to access CCE technical assistance in the design of a local PACE accountability system.

4. Connect PACE performance tasks to educator evaluation

As part of the local educator evaluation system, districts will be supported to use performance tasks to assess student progress in attaining selected Student Learning Objectives as one way to measure teacher contributions to student learning. Support will be provided on how to establish and measure student learning growth targets for selected performance tasks.

5. Participate in District Peer Review Audits

Districts will collaborate in a district peer review audit that will validate that districts have in place a strong performance assessment system that meets the criteria of the state-sanctioned PACE option. Participating districts will submit evidence of their performance assessment systems to peer review teams of external practitioners from other PACE districts. The peer review process will be an important vehicle for providing collegial feedback to districts while supporting rich professional learning and cross-district collaboration. The peer review team will look for evidence of the following components of a strong local performance assessment system:

- ✓ Use of the state competencies in building local curricula
- ✓ Selection and use of performance assessment tasks from the state and ILN banks
- ✓ Professional development for faculty in assessment task design, validation, and scoring
- ✓ Scheduled time for teachers to engage in task design, validation, and scoring
- ✓ Evidence of technical quality such as validity, sufficiency, and reliability.
- ✓ Local policies that support the state performance assessment system (e.g., performance assessment graduation requirements)

Peer review audits will be conducted within the first two years of a district being approved as a PACE district for district and school accountability, and every five years thereafter.

6. Base Local Accountability Reports on State Performance Tasks and Multiple Measures

The goal is that eventually participating districts will base their local accountability reports, which report to the public on student progress, on (1) a diagnostic “dipstick” administration of NECAP (and eventually Smarter Balanced) state assessments in single grades at the three grade span levels (elementary, middle, and high), (2) administration of performance tasks selected from the state and ILN performance task banks, and (3) other student outcome data (e.g., attendance, suspensions, graduation, college-going, Advanced Placement) to provide a full picture of student progress. The local accountability reports must include data that demonstrates that the performance assessment data that is presented is valid, reliable, fair, and sufficient to provide valid inferences of student competence and progress.