

Draft Frequently Asked Questions for NCSC Phase 1 Pilot
Version Date: March 7, 2014

1. What is the National Center and State Collaborative?

The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) is a project led by five centers and 26 states to build an alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. 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. This test is aligned to the Common Core State Standards through the Core Content Connectors.

2. Who is eligible for the Phase 1 Pilot Test?

Only students who are taking the RIAA this year may participate in the NCSC assessment. *Not all eligible students will be chosen.*

3. Will students chosen for the NCSC alt continue to take the RIAA?

Yes. Not all students in Rhode Island will take the NCSC alt but those who are chosen to participate will continue with the RIAA.

4. What is the Phase 1 Pilot Test?

The Phase 1 Pilot Test is the first of two rounds of pilot testing to try out the newly-developed NCSC assessment system. The Phase 1 Pilot Test will focus on the following aspects of our new alternate assessment:

- Student accessibility of items and how they interact with the items
- How the items function
- Technology platform
- Scoring process and procedures
- Test administrator training modules

Phase 2 is scheduled for Fall, 2014. Once the data has been collected from the Phase 1 pilot test, the items will be placed into different test forms, or “versions”, of the test. The Phase 2 Pilot Test will provide data on the test forms.

5. **UPDATED INFORMATION: What is the Phase 1 Pilot Test design?**

Selected students will participate in either ELA *or* Mathematics; not both. Items will be a mix of different complexity levels. Science is not included as part of NCSC.

- **ELA:** The operational ELA test includes a reading and a writing component. For the pilot, there will be four reading passages in informational and literacy genres with accompanying selected response (*aka* multiple choice) items. Additional foundational reading items will be included in Grades 3 and 4. The writing component will consist of selected response writing items and writing prompt. In total, the ELA pilot test consists of approximately 30 selected response items and one writing prompt.
- **Mathematics:** The Mathematics test consists of approximately 30 selected response and constructed response items from all of the complexity levels.

Test Administration:

6. How will the pilot test be administered?

The items will be presented online through the NCSC comprehensive assessment system. Test administrators will work one-on-one with students to administer the assessment based on individual student needs using the test administration manual and allowable accommodations.

7. How long will the test take to administer?

The NCSC operational assessment is designed to be administered in 1.5 to 2 hours. The pilot tests are built to approximately the same length. *Teachers will be able to stretch the administration out across multiple days if necessary.*

8. UPDATED INFORMATION: What are the pilot test administration windows?

The pilot test dates are below. Instead of having two separate testing windows, there will be one for both ELA and mathematics. Within that testing window, teachers can administer the test whenever they see fit. They do not have to start on April 14th if they are not ready. Before administering the test, teachers must view the online training modules and take a short quiz at the end.

English Language Arts and Mathematics: April 14 - May 23.

9. How will student eligibility for participation in the alternate assessment be verified?

RIDE will provide data to verify that students who are chosen to participate are also taking the RIAA.

Sampling

10. How will the pilot test content area be determined?

Each student will be assigned either ELA or Math by their teacher or district administrator. Teachers or district administrators may choose to assign both pilot tests if they wish but only one content area is required if the student participates.

11. How many students are expected to participate from each state?

The number of students that constitute a reliable sample varies by state because each state has a different number of students.

12. How are students chosen to participate?

Pilot testing of items is a required step in the development of any test. The students selected must fit a specific set of criteria in order to be chosen.

The first set of *strata* (criteria by which students are sorted) are always demographics: race, ethnicity, gender, location of their school (rural, urban, etc.), proficiency level on a state test, etc. Because of the unique population this assessment is designed for, another set of student characteristics must also inform which students are selected. Students' disability severity, primary disability category, and communication mode are among the additional characteristics that are needed in order to develop a reliable sample and to ensure items are accessible to all students, regardless of their level of independence, AAC device, or disability.

Test Accommodations and Personal Needs Profile

13. Where can teachers find the NCSC test accommodations policies?

This document will be available soon and posted on the NCSC web page.

Test Administrator Training:

14. What are the requirements for teacher test administrator training?

A series of online modules will be available for teachers prior to the assessment window that teachers can complete at their own pace before administering the pilot.

Preparing for the Pilot Test:

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

Some test items may require the teacher to prepare manipulatives that are readily available in typical classrooms. Teachers will be provided guidance in preparing materials through the assessment directions/test administration manual.

16. How long will teachers have to prepare materials before they administer the test?

Teachers can administer the test at any point within the April-May testing window. They will also have access to the testing materials throughout that time so how they choose to prepare is up to the teacher, the needs of the student, and when they scheduled the test.

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

The technology requirements can be found on the NCSC webpage (www.ride.ri.gov/NCSC) under the “Resources” tab.

Results from the Pilot Test:

18. Will districts or schools receive student or district results?

No. District and student results will not be provided for the Phase 1 Pilot. The purpose of this pilot is to try out the test items, administration procedures, and scoring processes. The reliability and validity of student results cannot be established in this initial pilot phase.

19. Will the results of the pilot be used for teacher evaluation?

No. The results of this pilot test will only be used for the purposes outlined above and will not be used for any type of teacher or student evaluation processes.

20. Will the results of the pilot test be used to fulfill graduation requirements?

No. The results of this pilot test will only be used for the purposes outlined above and will not be used to fulfill any kind of graduation requirement.

If You Have Questions:

21. UPDATED INFORMATION: Where can I find more information on NCSC?

www.ride.ri.gov/NCSC

22. Who should districts/schools/teachers contact with questions on the pilot test?

Heather Heineke, heather.heineke@ride.ri.gov, or 222-8493.