



## Division of Accountability & Research

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### ***Interim Assessment Q & A*** ***2008-2009***

#### **GENERAL**

##### ***What are interim assessments?***

Interim assessments are 50-minute, paper/pencil assessments that will be given three times per year in grades 3-10 in reading, writing, and math and in grades 6-10 in science and in the high school social studies classes: U.S History and Civics.

##### ***Why administer interim assessments?***

High performing school systems give priority to establishing and communicating high academic standards and monitoring those standards to determine if all students are achieving. One way of implementing and monitoring academic standards is by setting periodic benchmarks to determine student progress. By setting achievement benchmarks for all students, we increase the probability of all students meeting or exceeding standards and decrease the likelihood that some students will fall hopelessly behind before appropriate interventions can be implemented.

##### ***What is the difference between interim assessments and CSAP?***

The most significant difference between interim and CSAP assessments is that interim assessments recur, identify the gap between actual and desired performance, and suggest actions that will successfully close the gap. CSAP, on the other hand, is administered once a year and measures proficiency. Both are aligned with state and college readiness standards.

##### ***What is the format of interim assessments?***

The item format is similar to CSAP and college-readiness assessments with both multiple choice and written (constructed) responses. Each interim assessment is designed around the APS literacy and mathematics pacing guides to gauge student progress toward the standards as specified in the pacing guides.

##### ***Who will create the test?***

Teachers and district staff developed the “blueprints” or design of the assessments. Teachers then used the blueprints and the district pacing guides to develop the first drafts of the assessments. District staff then edited the draft documents and produced the final assessments.

##### ***Are interim assessments secured?***

Yes. Interim assessments are secured assessments and will be returned to the Division of Accountability and Research after each administration. However, they are low-stakes, formative assessments designed to measure growth toward proficiency, as well as depth of knowledge on concepts. The Teacher’s Instructional Edition is also secured and will be returned to the Division of Accountability and Research after each interim assessment window.

***When will interim assessments be given?***

Interim assessments will be given at the end of the first, second and fourth quarters of the school year. CSAP is given at the end of third quarter.

***Does each interim assessment measure learning during the current quarter only or does it include learning from previous quarters?***

In general, the interim assessments are cumulative assessments. The assessments will cover only content taught specifically in each of those quarters, as well as cumulative essential learnings found in the pacing guides for the current and previous quarters. The fourth quarter assessment will cover both third and fourth quarter learning since there is no interim in third quarter due to CSAP.

***Do interim assessments replace any existing assessments?***

The MAP and the Math Benchmark Assessments are being replaced with interim assessments.

***Are we being redundant in some of our testing?***

Interim assessments do not replicate any other assessment given by the district.

**STUDENTS**

***How do interim assessments benefit students?***

Interim assessments measure increasing student proficiency against end-of-quarter goals, keeping everyone's eyes on the essential learnings that should be mastered by May or June. This allows students to see and celebrate progress toward a goal, focus on specific areas that need work, and continuously refresh their memories of all aspects of the cumulative curriculum so key skills don't atrophy and learning gaps can be closed.

***Are any students exempt from taking interim assessments?***

Any student exempt from CSAP can be considered exempt from interim assessments. This would include IEP students who cannot access the assessment and would be considered for the CSAPA and ELL students who have been enrolled in a public school in the United States for less than one year.

***What about students who are far below grade level?***

Interim assessments have a range of items from very easy to very difficult and are designed to identify even minimal understanding in a subject area. The teacher is able to see the student's individual work, thereby gaining deeper understanding of student learning for each student. All students will be able to demonstrate some level of learning on each item. In fact, in order for students to receive accommodations on CSAP, there must be documentation on other local assessments that students need such accommodation when taking exams. Any accommodations a student is eligible for when taking the CSAP are the same accommodations given for interim assessments (e.g., extended time, reader's scripts, ELL).

## **TEACHERS**

### ***How do teachers best use interim assessments?***

The best use of interim assessments is to monitor progress toward student proficiency, providing teachers with information for intervention, improvement in instruction and follow-up with students. Teachers are able to use the test results down to the item level to determine where students are and where they need to be relative to achievement targets.

### ***How do interim assessments assist with intervention and/or instruction?***

Interim assessments identify the gap between actual and desired performance and recommend actions that will successfully close the gap. They produce an item analysis of each student's proficiency and growth, giving teachers data to help design an improvement strategy and differentiate instruction. Data will be generated showing patterns of incorrect responses, as well as which items were most troublesome for the whole class and subgroups within the class.

### ***What does this do for teachers of electives?***

Reading, writing, and mathematics are integrated into all elective content areas. Elective teachers can utilize interim assessment data to implement recommended actions and design strategies within their specialties to provide informal intervention, therein supporting increased student achievement and closing learning gaps.

### ***Can interim assessments be used as a cumulative metric?***

Interim assessments can replace end of quarter/semester exams. They are a cumulative measure of progress toward standards and the content students learned each quarter and throughout the year.

### ***How much time is required to grade the interim assessments?***

Multiple-choice items constitute 90% of the interim assessments. Scoring software will score the multiple-choice items, and results will be available immediately after they are scanned, therefore requiring a minimal amount of time. The constructed response items constitute 10% of the items and should take teachers roughly 2-3 minutes per student.

### ***How do teachers read and implement the data [feedback] obtained from interim assessments?***

Teacher's Instructional Editions (TIE) are provided for each teacher every quarter. The TIE contains all assessment items with a corresponding Response Analysis, which lists each possible answer, the reason that answer is correct or incorrect and direction regarding which essential learning should be readdressed with the student. The data will be evaluated by teachers in Data Teams and used to help drive instruction and determine need for intervention at the building level. The TIE is also secured and will be returned to the Division of Accountability and Research after each interim assessment window.

### ***What professional development is available for scoring assessments and analyzing the data?***

Instructional coaches and teacher leaders will help design professional development for teachers around common scoring standards and data analysis in Professional Learning Communities and Data Teams, immediately prior to and following administration of the interim assessments.

### ***Do teachers get a copy of the assessment in advance?***

The assessments will be released a few days prior to the testing window. There should be no need to preview the interim assessments as long as classroom instruction follows the guidelines of the Essential Learnings/Big Ideas for both literacy and mathematics. This critical information can be found in the pacing guides, which are available to teachers from teacher leaders, instructional coaches and/or on the Division of Instruction website well in advance of the assessments.

### ***Are interim assessments used to evaluate teachers?***

Interim assessments are not used in the evaluation of teachers.

## **PRINCIPALS**

### ***What should schools do to prepare for interim assessment?***

Planning for interim assessments is critical for a smooth implementation. The necessary planning includes:

- Having one or more people from a building trained to print and scan answer sheets.
- A plan to print answer sheets in advance of receiving the assessment materials.
- Creating schedules that will allow students a full 60 minutes to complete each test.
- Use the same guidelines for extended time that are used for CSAP. No documentation for extended time needs to be reported to the Division of Accountability/Research.
- The only preparation for students should be an explanation of what the test is and why they will be taking it (appropriate for the students' level).

### ***When will materials arrive in the buildings?***

Printed tests will arrive in buildings by the Wednesday before the test window opens. This will allow time for staff to unpack and distribute materials to teachers. Teachers may review the test before administration but should **NOT** take the tests out of the building.

### ***What are the test windows for the interim assessment?***

The first interim assessment window is: **September 15-26<sup>th</sup>**

- **Sept. 15-26<sup>th</sup> for reading& writing grades 3-10**
- **Sept. 22-26 for math grades 3-10**
- **Sept. 24-30<sup>th</sup> for science/social studies for grades 6-10 only**

The second interim assessment window is: **December 1-12<sup>th</sup>**

- **Dec. 1-12<sup>th</sup> for reading & writing grades 3-10**
- **Dec. 8-12<sup>th</sup> for math grades 3-10**
- **Dec. 10-16<sup>th</sup> for science/social studies for grades 6-10 only**

The third interim assessment window is: **April 20 – May 1<sup>st</sup>**

- **April 20<sup>th</sup>–May 1<sup>st</sup> for reading & writing grades 3-10**
- **April 27–May 1<sup>st</sup> for math grades 3-10**
- **April 29-May 5th for science/social studies for grades 6-10 only**

***What training is necessary for teachers to administer the interim assessments?***

A brief training for teachers should include the typical directions for giving a standardized test. Feel free to use past CSAP training materials for support. The following are examples of directions teachers should know:

- Read test directions exactly as specified on the assessment.
- Teachers should not support or help students after the test starts.
- End times should be written on the board.
- Students should mark their answers clearly, completely filling in the bubbles with a pencil. (The Edusoft answer sheets will accept pen but students should not get into the habit of using a pen for assessments).
- Students should not make unnecessary marks on the answer sheet, particularly below the bottom barcode line. If the barcode is corrupted, the sheet will not scan.

***What should a building do if they experience problems with the scanner/scanning, etc.?***

Please refer to material distributed during Edusoft training, which may also be found on the Division of Accountability/Research website. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact:

- Bonnie Blazek at ext. 28338, Cell – (303) 396-3396 – [Bblazek@aps.k12.co.us](mailto:Bblazek@aps.k12.co.us)
- Division of Accountability & Research main number – (303) 340-0861

***When does all scanning need to be completed?***

Schools should scan as soon as they complete testing and scoring the constructed responses. This data for each student is available immediately after scanning. Building-level data and reports will not be complete until all classroom data is scanned. Scoring and scanning of interim assessments should be completed by the last day of the quarter in which they are given.

***What do we do with the tests after administration?***

Teachers are encouraged to confer with students around both strengths and areas for improvement as reflected by their performance on the assessment. To support this, tests and teacher instructional additions will remain in each building for three weeks after the close of the test window. Tests should be sent back to the Division of Accountability & Research no later than Oct 17<sup>th</sup> (Interim 1), January 16<sup>th</sup> (Interim 2), and May 18<sup>th</sup> (Interim 3).

***What Professional Development for report generating and data analysis will be available?***

Please refer to the Interim Assessment Professional Development schedule that is posted on the Division of Accountability/Research website under the Edusoft link.