

Six Questions *about* **Interim Assessments**

with **DoDEA Chief Academic Officer**
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DoDEA teachers administer College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) interim assessments in ELA/Literacy and mathematics that are designed to assess student progress in mastering CCRS during the course of the school year and provide data to help inform instruction, interventions, and professional development.

1 What are interim assessments?

Interim assessments are really just checkpoints along the way to see how our students are progressing. We want to make sure that all of our students are on track for success.

This is not only important for teachers to have a view of every single student in their class, but we as a system get that big picture view of how our students are doing in terms of meeting our lofty goal of student excellence.

2 How do interim assessments fit into college and career readiness?

Designing a rigorous, challenging educational experience for our students is the starting point. You begin with the standards: what is it that our kids need to know and be able to do? The next piece is putting together the curriculum and the instructional strategies and the materials and making sure that students and teachers have high-quality materials with which to learn. But then you need to check, how are we doing? How are students doing in terms of accessing that curriculum and in terms of meeting those standards? We know that not all of our students need the same thing to get there. The constant is that standard; what is different is what our students need from us.

3 How can the interim assessments help a teacher to analyze and improve their teaching and the learning that happens in the classroom?

Teachers can use this interim assessment data first to understand how their class as a whole is doing. Is there anything we need to go back and re-teach and take a look at again, either as a class or within small groups? This information enables us to individualize and personalize each student's educational experience.

4 What are the expectations we have as a system for what we want teachers to do with interim assessments?

Our teachers have been asked to do so much as we continue to navigate the pandemic and let me just say our teachers and administrators have risen to the occasion in beautiful ways and are innovating and serving our students in amazing ways. We are moving forward with these interim assessments out of our commitment to hold each student to high standards and to know each student very well and make sure that our instruction is connecting with each and every student. It's especially important this year to see whether there are any learning gaps that our students have which we can conscientiously address.

5 What are we doing to help teachers with this process, and where can teachers go for additional information about interim assessments if they need it?

It's not easy, right? Teaching is complex. So we have resources compiled for teachers around the interim assessments. There's a website that not only has interim assessment information but also information that you can use in your classroom every day. But I would say, more importantly, the greatest resource to help teachers with this are their fellow teachers. That's why we've invested in focused collaboration. We've set aside dedicated time across the system for teachers to come together and collaborate and learn from one another.

https://www.dodea.edu/assessments/resources/CCRS_Interim_Assessments.cfm

6 How are we adapting the interim assessments for this year?

Here at headquarters in the Ed Directorate we're all about continuous improvement. We ask for feedback, and we do really listen. We gathered feedback last year about the interim assessments, and we made some adjustments, particularly in the reporting this year so that it is more user-friendly. We really appreciate and act upon the feedback. Keep it coming.

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