



New Meridian

Next Generation Assessment Options for New Jersey

New Jersey State Board of Education

August 1, 2018

New Meridian Corporation

Who we are

New Meridian is an assessment design and development partner that helps states prepare today's students for the challenges of tomorrow. We do that by providing technical expertise and the highest quality, research-validated test content that is uniquely focused on critical thinking, reasoning, research, and communication skills — the capabilities students will need to thrive in the future.

New Meridian is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Austin, Texas.

New Meridian was selected by competitive procurement to be the exclusive agent authorized to license test content owned by CCSSO and jointly developed by the former PARCC states.

Key Trends in the Assessment Landscape

Significant shifts over last five years

- Significant changes in the two assessment consortia:
 - SBAC down to 14 from 31.
 - PARCC states have adopted a new licensing model, with 11 states now flexibly licensing shared content.
- Ongoing issue of opt-outs, resulting in an increasing focus on how to reduce testing time and increase the usability of the reporting.
- Persistence of Common Core State Standards (and variants).
- States adopting SAT/ACT for high school accountability purposes, despite questions about these tests' alignment to state standards and students' access to accommodations.
 - No state has yet met expectations of USED Peer Review with this approach.
 - Two recent studies by Florida and Achieve have counseled against this approach.
- Growing interest in interim benchmark assessments for summative purposes.

Key Trends in the Assessment Landscape

Closing the “honesty gap”

- States are closing the “honesty gap” between proficiency levels on state tests compared to proficiency levels on NAEP. Two recent studies confirm that states are raising the bar for what counts as proficient and on track to college and career readiness.
 - A recent NCES analysis shows that the states administering the PARCC test, **including NJ**, set expectations that **approach or exceed NAEP expectations for proficiency**.
 - A recent Achieve analysis confirms this.

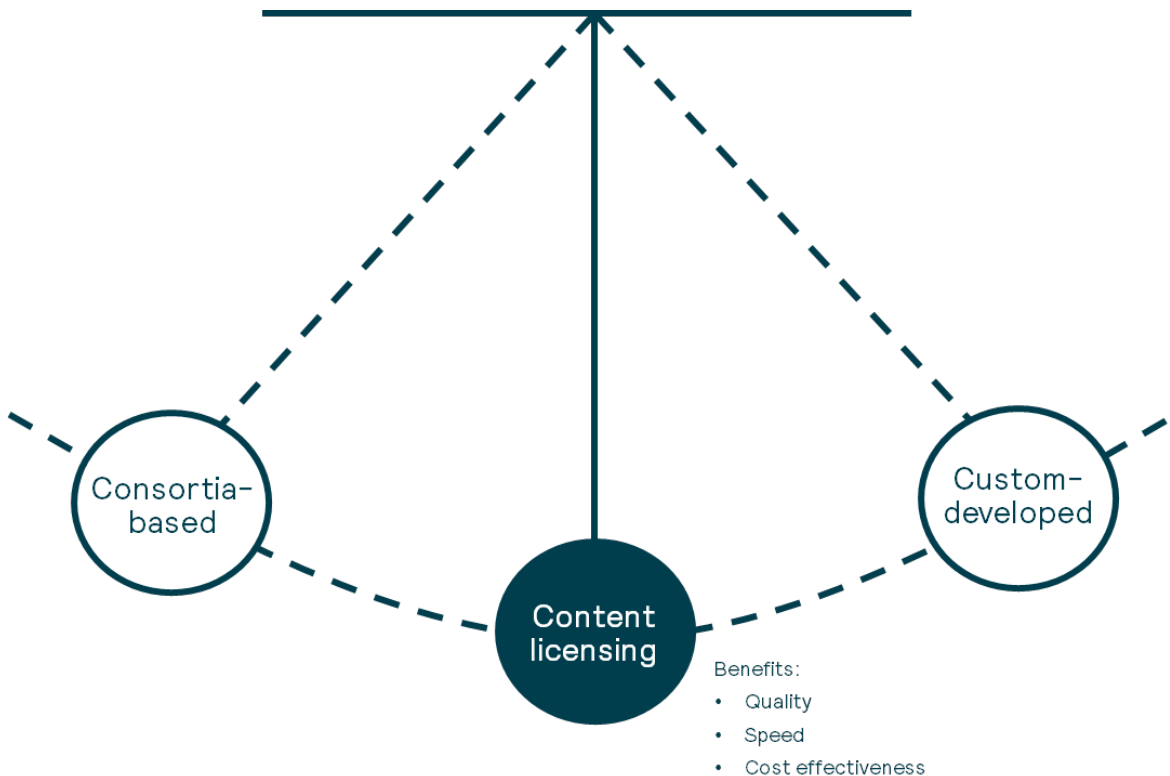


States that are closing the honesty gap despite political challenges associated with low proficiency rates help ensure that students are prepared to compete and succeed in a globally competitive economy upon graduation.

Key Trends in the Assessment Landscape

Shift away from consortia back to custom design

States have left the consortium model to adopt custom designs. However, in the process, some states have begun to pursue a new approach to summative assessments – a content licensing approach.



States leaving the consortia acknowledge they are “constrained in what they can do alone by cost, by capacity, and by time.”

(Education First report, 2018).

The New Meridian Approach

Pioneering a new approach to summative assessments

- New Meridian is pioneering a new approach to state summative assessments that retains all the advantages of a consortium without the all-or-nothing rigidity.
- States now have access to **highest-quality, operationally ready test content** with unapparelled flexibility:
 - Flexibility to **choose the test development or test administration vendor** of their choice.
 - Flexibility to **design custom assessments** to meet state-specific needs, including adaptive test designs.
 - Ability to accurately **benchmark student growth to college and career readiness** and compare achievement and growth to historical trends and that of other states.
 - Ability to include state educators in ongoing content development and test design.



Benefits over new custom development:

- Faster development times
- Reduced costs
- Fewer resource requirements
- Higher quality

The New Meridian Approach

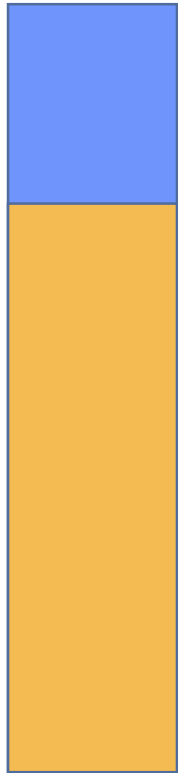
An approach created by states, for states

- States have taken the lead in developing this innovative approach to **jointly or independently develop and share high-quality test content** for their mutual benefit.
 - 11 states/entities licensed shared content in 2018: IL, MD, NJ, DC, NM, MA, RI, LA, CO, DoDEA, and BIE
 - Over 150 state staff and educators from participating states take part in test design and development, ensuring that test questions are appropriate and relevant to students' experience learning the content.
- **As a nonprofit, New Meridian manages the content licensing and supports states with technical design services**, enabling states to achieve the combined goals of high-quality, cost effectiveness, and flexibility in design.
- **States benefit from collective investment while maintaining independence** of their own custom state testing programs.
- Focus on **innovative design** ensures that assessments measure **critical thinking, reasoning, research, and communication skills** that are widely recognized as being critical to success in college and career.

Next Generation New Jersey Assessments

Design process and validation

Approximately 75% testing time

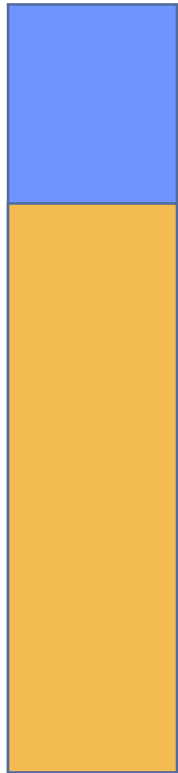


- New Meridian started process of designing a shorter test blueprint aligned to the long form in fall 2017.
- Operational Working Groups and educators from across states were engaged to inform the design.
- Initial blueprint was approved in December 2017.
- New Meridian has undertaken extensive efforts to validate the quality of the shorter form:
 - Invited two external reviews to validate comparability:
 - Student Achievement Partners
 - Center for Assessment
 - Conducted two equating analyses comparing short- and long-form results using actual 2017 and 2018 data.
 - Presented results and gained approval of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- Engaged NJ DOE for NJ-specific requirements in June.

Next Generation New Jersey Assessments

Innovative design reduces testing time while maintaining rigor

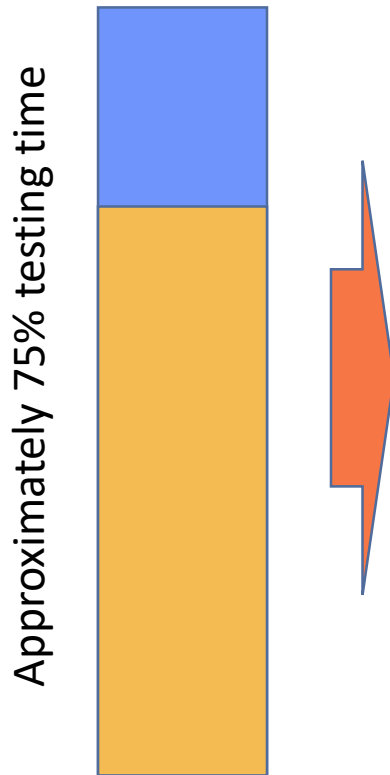
Approximately 75% testing time



- Blueprint is a subset of the longer test form that NJ students took this past spring.
- Maintains strong coverage of NJ Learning Standards.
- Integrated English language arts tasks continue to measure students' ability to reason from textual evidence.
- Mathematics tasks continue to measure students' ability to use mathematical reasoning to solve authentic problems.
- Maintains established scale benchmarked to college and career readiness.
- Maintains longitudinal comparability to 2015 baseline.

Next Generation New Jersey Assessments

Comparable design likely avoids need for peer review



- Samples same NJ Learning Standards as long-form blueprint.
- Preserves long-form design elements (e.g., task models and complex item types).
- Equating analyses using 2017 and 2018 data show short form maintains nearly identical psychometric test characteristics as longer form.

These analyses represent very strong validity evidence supporting the comparability of the two forms, meaning resubmission for peer review should not be necessary.

Next Generation New Jersey Assessments

Maintaining a focus on critical thinking while reducing testing time

New Meridian will work with New Jersey educators to design and develop its next-generation assessment system for ELA and mathematics to respond to feedback from the field while maintaining highest-quality:

- Maintain high standards and a focus on **critical thinking, reasoning, research, and communication**—the skills students will need to thrive in the future.
- Engage New Jersey educators in test design and development.
- Meet stakeholders' request for **reduced testing time**.
- Consider other designs in the future, including an **adaptive assessment**.
- **Maintain scale and longitudinal growth trends** that are familiar to educators, families and students.
- **Report instructionally valuable information** on students' mastery of New Jersey learning standards **earlier**, in time to be useful for educators.
- Maintain industry-leading **accessibility and accommodations features** for English language learners and students with IEPs and 504 plans.
- Provide options that **avoid the need to resubmit for USED peer review**.



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