Strategy and Implementation Readiness Checklist (SIRC): Transition to NRS-Approved Assessments

Overview

Shifting to new assessments is not merely a procedural change but a deliberate effort to align education with the evolving understanding of participants' needs. As states prepare to implement assessments approved for use with the National Reporting System (NRS) that they have not used before, thoughtful planning and consideration can ensure a smooth and successful transition. By considering stakeholders' needs and the potential impacts of using new assessments, and carefully planning the transition, programs can also ensure that the new assessments effectively inform and guide instruction. This resource is designed as a guide to support states in updating their assessment policy, developing their plan for disseminating related information and implementing the policy, and preparing their data system and local program staff for the change.

The checklist is organized into strategic themes:

- [Constructing an implementation plan and timeline](#)

- [Preparing local program staff preparation](#)

- [Addressing implementation challenges](#)

- [Securing people and resource](#)

- [Preparing to use data for continuous improvement](#)

The checklist can be used at any point in the process of transitioning to a new NRS-approved assessment. The information acquired during this process may come from various data sources, including program data and adult education stakeholders, most notably local providers. It is not expected that every element within each theme requires a "yes" for implementation, but the checklist does allow for the determination of whether or not enough elements are in place to implement, continue, revise, or cease a strategy through the lens of readiness.

Constructing an Implementation Plan and Timeline

Having a plan in place will help you to articulate clearly and concretely the steps that need to be taken to successfully transition to the new assessment(s). The plan can communicate individuals' roles in each step and by when the step will be completed.

	Yes	No	In Progress
• Have you identified milestones in your process for transitioning to the new assessment(s)? (e.g., identifying the policy writing team, publishing a new policy, developing the dissemination plan)	☐	☐	☐
• Do your milestones include goals related to:			
– teacher preparation?	☐	☐	☐
– transition implementation challenges?	☐	☐	☐
– people and resource allocation?	☐	☐	☐
– data systems, entry, and use for continuous improvement?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you developed a timeline that includes the milestones leading up to the full implementation of the new assessment(s)?	☐	☐	☐
– If no, list the milestones that should be included in the timeline.			
– If yes, document the timeline here.			
• Is your timeline aligned to the activities required by existing or new federal, state, or local policies?	☐	☐	☐
– If no, what are the policies with which it will need to be aligned? If there are no policies with which it needs to align, write N/A.			
– If yes, identify the policies with which it is aligned. If there are no policies with which it needs to align, write N/A.			
• Have you developed a communication plan for sharing the timeline, including identifying with whom you will share it?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you identified potential challenges associated with the timeline?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you developed guidance on how to navigate potential timeline challenges effectively?	☐	☐	☐
Describe how you intend to address the step(s) with checkmarks in the "No" or "In Progress" columns:			

Preparing Local Program Staff

Even the most experienced local program staff will need some level of training on the new assessment. Training topics may include the implications of the assessment on instruction for teachers, how to proctor the new assessment, or reading and understanding students' results.

	Yes	No	In Progress
• Have you identified the training local program staff will need to implement the new assessment(s)?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you determined what training teachers will need to adapt instruction to the new assessment?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you identified a training provider?	☐	☐	☐
— If yes, and if it will be a state-provided training, what will the training cover?			
• Have you taken the steps necessary to allow local program staff, and especially teachers, to participate in the training (e.g., paying for overtime, providing substitute teachers)?	☐	☐	☐
• Are there planned learning events or scheduled meetings that can be leveraged as an opportunity to provide the training?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you identified professional learning resources and other tools that you will share with local program staff to support them during the transition?	☐	☐	☐
— If yes, please list these resources and tools.			
• Have you developed a plan (including a timeline) for how the professional learning resources will be shared with local program staff?	☐	☐	☐
Describe how you intend to address the step(s) with checkmarks in the "No" or "In Progress" columns:			

Addressing Implementation Challenges

Transitions can be hard, but developing a plan for addressing potential challenges can help you prevent them or be prepared when they do arise and minimize their impact.

	Yes	No	In Progress
• Have you identified potential challenges that may occur during the transition to the new assessment(s), and especially during the initial use?	☐	☐	☐
— If yes, list the potential challenges.			
— If no, how can you obtain this information?			
• Are there preventative measures you can take to avoid the potential challenges?	☐	☐	☐
— If yes, what would those preventative measures be?			
• Have you developed contingency plans to address the potential challenges?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you identified with whom the contingency plans will need to be shared?	☐	☐	☐
— If yes, list those people here.			
— If no, what roles (e.g., program directors, regional coordinators, teachers) will the people with whom you share the plan have?			

	Yes	No	In Progress
• Have you determined which inclusive supports students of different populations may need during the transition to minimize disruption to their learning plans?	☐	☐	☐
— If yes, list the supports, differentiating between populations.			
• Have you identified who will be responsible for ensuring that students receive those supports?	☐	☐	☐
— How will you determine if students are receiving the supports they need?			
• Are these steps and related communications represented in your communication plan for the assessment transition?	☐	☐	☐
Describe how you intend to address the step(s) with checkmarks in the "No" or "In Progress" columns:			

Securing People and Resources

Having the right people and resources in place can determine the success or failure of any transition.

	Yes	No	In Progress
• Have you identified the people who will need to be involved in ensuring that the transition to the new assessment(s) goes smoothly?	☐	☐	☐
• Are those people available to complete the work?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you developed an alternative plan in case one of those people is no longer available?	☐	☐	☐
— If yes, what is your alternative plan?			

	Yes	No	In Progress
− If no, what are some considerations that will go into developing that plan?			
• Have you assessed the financial resources required for implementing new assessments (e.g., costs related to training, materials, and technology)?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you explored additional funding sources or ways to reallocate existing funding to support implementation of new assessments?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you ensured that programs will have timely access to resources aligned to the new descriptors (e.g., textbooks, teaching materials, web-based resources)?	☐	☐	☐
− If yes, describe the measures taken.			
− If no, what steps could be helpful to support programs' access to the resources they will need that are aligned to the new descriptors?			
• Have you identified the other resources (e.g., space for training, photocopies) needed to be involved in ensuring that the transition to the new assessment(s) goes smoothly?	☐	☐	☐
− If yes, list those resources.			
− If no, what are some areas in which you will need to identify resources?			
• Have you determined how you will acquire those resources?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you determined a timeline for acquiring those resources?	☐	☐	☐

	Yes	No	In Progress
— If no, list the milestones that will need to be included in the timeline.			
— If yes, write the timeline here.			
• Have you identified with whom you will share the timeline?	☐	☐	☐
• Are these steps and related communications represented in your communication plan for the assessment transition?	☐	☐	☐
Describe how you intend to address the step(s) with checkmarks in the "No" or "In Progress" columns:			

Preparing to Use Data for Continuous Improvement

Data is a powerful tool. It can help you determine what is going well and pinpoint areas where you may need to course correct. However, pre- and post-test data alone is not enough; having data from multiple sources provides a more complete (and useful) picture of how your transition to the new assessment is going.

	Yes	No	In Progress
• Is the necessary infrastructure in place to collect data from the new assessment?	☐	☐	☐
— If yes, what changes have been made to the infrastructure?			
— If no, what changes would need to be made to the infrastructure?			

	Yes	No	In Progress
• Have staff received training on how to accurately collect data using the new assessment and enter it into the data management system?	☐	☐	☐
• Are there established protocols for ensuring data accuracy and consistency across reporting periods or program years?	☐	☐	☐
• Are there mechanisms in place to share assessment results with others (e.g., students, teachers, administrators, policymakers)?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you established a feedback process for local program staff to share experiences, challenges, and successes in implementing the assessment(s)?	☐	☐	☐

— If no, how have you collected feedback from educators on their experience, challenges, and successes in the past?

— What made that process successful?

— What could have been done better?

— If yes, describe the process.

	Yes	No	In Progress
• Have you identified the timeline for the feedback process?	☐	☐	☐

— If no, what are the milestones for the feedback process?

— If yes, write the timeline here.

	Yes	No	In Progress
• Have you identified who will review the feedback received?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you decided how feedback will be used to refine and improve the implementation process over time?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you developed a plan for periodic reviews of and adjustments to the implementation process?	☐	☐	☐
• Have you identified measures of success for the implementation process?	☐	☐	☐
— If yes, what are those measures?			
• Are these steps and related communications represented in your communication plan for the assessment transition?	☐	☐	☐
Describe how you intend to address the step(s) with checkmarks in the "No" or "In Progress" columns:			