

# School Assessment Post-COVID Planning and Due Diligence

With the closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are all concerned about the impact on student learning, and how to support students, educators, and caregivers when students return to school. Nearly all educational institutions moved to a remote model of teaching and learning for the remainder of the spring. At this point, the number of institutions that will remain remote in fall 2020 is unknown. Given the current state of uncertainty, Pearson is in the process of reviewing options to equitably and reliably support assessment delivery, in all possible scenarios, for the foreseeable future.

*The intent of this update is to provide information on what Pearson is actively pursuing to deliver reliable measurement models that support instruction and student learning.*

*Implementation information will be finalized over the next few months. Further, the information in this document does not serve as legal or policy guidance for states, schools, or districts, or replace policy, guidance, or procedures.*

## In this document, we cover the following topics:

### Assessment @ Home

Supporting educators, students, and caregivers using our assessment tools and resources from home.

### Remote Proctoring of High-Stakes Assessment

Different approaches based on type of assessment. Evaluation underway of remote proctoring supports, options, and a potential pilot.

### Best Practices for In-Person Testing Post-COVID

Thinking forward to considerations for return to schools and the impact on implementation and scheduling of assessment.

### Assessment Strategy for the Post-COVID School

Support for measuring student progress during this time of distance learning with the goal of preventing learning loss.

## Assessment @ Home

Available today—our TestNav secure testing application can be installed on a student's home device or district/school managed device to provide the accessible, reliable, and secure testing platform your students are familiar with.

For formative, interim, benchmark, diagnostic, and other low-stakes assessments, Web-based TestNav can be useful to provide educators with test delivery that does not lock down the desktop.

Test coordinators and test proctors will work together as they traditionally have to register and set up students prior to testing. They can then deliver assessments easily by sending the authorization tickets to test takers through their primary mode of distance learning communication. Following the communication of login credentials, the proctor indicates when and how the assessment should be taken. For these non-summative assessments, delivery is typically one of these two modes:

### Synchronous Assessment

- Meeting with students in real time over web conferences or online learning platforms
- PearsonAccess test management dashboards allow teachers/proctors to monitor student test progress and completion in real time



### Asynchronous Assessment

- Assessments are either optionally taken at the student's pace; or, if required, on the student's desired timeline for completion
- Based on the security level of the test forms and the desired security of the content, TestNav can disable access to all other applications on the device during testing
- PearsonAccess test management dashboards allow teachers/proctors to monitor student test progress and completion in real time

## Remote Proctoring of High-Stakes Assessment

We recommend that students taking high-stakes assessments do so under a proctored setting, which historically for K-12 assessment has meant a physical location. Secure, actively proctored testing for summative assessment is industry best-practice. The protocols around a securely proctored environment ensure that testing content is not exposed or misused, that each student's experience is as similar and as equitable as possible, and that potential incidents of cheating are avoided.

In a remote setting for K-12 students, there are many considerations to effectively carry forward remote proctoring with fidelity—these considerations include (but are not limited to) student equity and safety, data privacy, technology access, measurement reliability, and test security.

Pearson is currently evaluating remote proctoring possibilities in a distance learning environment. Currently the focus of this evaluation is on two possible paths:

### Third-party Remote Proctoring Software

- Use of a third-party vendor software that can run alongside TestNav to proctor tests. In this scenario, the proctor service/application will potentially monitor students taking the assessment without any additional proctoring needs from the local institution.
- Using this approach will ensure high test security and a common testing experience, but it will also require tester (and guardian) agreement to participate, compliance with all data security requirements, and additional fees for live remote proctoring.



*For back-to-school (BTS) 2020, Pearson is actively engaged in determining which of the above options will be available for states/districts to utilize remote proctoring to securely deliver high-stakes assessment.*

### Small Group Live Proctoring by District/School via Collaboration Application

- Pearson is evaluating enhancements to TestNav for the following:
  - i. Ability to remote proctor using both audio and video to verify that the correct student is taking the test
  - ii. A “Raise Hand” functionality for students to be able to electronically notify their proctor during testing if they need assistance, including the ability for students to interact with proctors via chat or sharing their screen
  - iii. Mechanism for students and caretakers to acknowledge the security of the test content, and agree to confidentiality

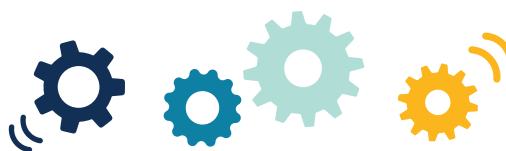
## Best Practices for In-Person Testing Post-COVID

The uncertainty around how and when schools will return to physical in-person teaching and learning has many states anticipating social distancing protocols to be implemented in different ways. Pearson is preparing for guidance around best-practice assessment setup for classrooms and computer labs. In partnership with our state and district clients, we will make the necessary scheduling options available to allow testing in a socially distanced setting, which may require schedules to span longer periods of time to allow smaller groups of students to test.

Additionally, device support is being evaluated, as school devices deployed for distance learning may have an impact on the software needs for schools.

### Pearson Companion—Virtual Labs

Pearson can also work with the school district to provide a “virtual computer lab” to securely deliver applications to any device equipped with a web browser. For school districts with 1:1 Chromebook implementations, this means students will have equitable access to learning resources and applications not previously available on their Chromebook devices. Typical use cases served by the virtual computer lab include



resource-intensive applications (audio/video editing software, computer-aided design applications, numerical computing environments like MATLAB, etc.). Since the virtual computer labs are built on top of infrastructure and services from leading cloud providers, the security and privacy of the streaming services meet or exceed regulatory requirements applicable to K-12 education (FERPA, COPPA, CIPA, SOC2, etc.).

## Assessment Strategy for the Post-COVID School

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of society to an unprecedented degree. With the vast majority of schools closed with months of instruction remaining in the 2019-20 school year, educators have properly focused on the immediate needs of all students, particularly those most at risk, ensuring that basic services such as meal programs continue. Teachers are working hard to develop and implement distance learning plans, knowing that many students lack sufficient home resources (e.g., technology or reliable internet) to participate fully in this outreach.

While current challenges have dominated our attention, it is important to begin to focus on what comes next: *What should educators do when schools reopen, whether part of an extended summer program, or more likely, back-to-school, for fall 2020?*

### Realistically, we must accept the following likelihoods:

- Efforts at distance learning will be unevenly successful, with the greatest shortcomings affecting our most vulnerable students: students living in poverty, students with disabilities, and English learners.
- Achievement gaps, a great concern in “normal” times, will likely be exacerbated, given the differential impact of distance learning.
- Many of the tools we use to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses and track the impact of instruction at the student, subgroup, and school level will be unavailable, given the cancellation of Spring 2020 summative assessments and interruptions of formative and interim assessments with the premature closing of schools.

While the response to these conditions will require a coordinated, comprehensive design, we are focused on one key component of any back-to-school plan: strategies to assess student readiness for learning. We recommend a two-pronged approach that both:

- Looks Backward: Measures the impact of lost instruction, and
- Looks Forward: Determines a starting point for instruction for each student/class.

Our team is prepared to further discuss solutions that help navigate these complicated times and support students and teachers towards lifelong learning and success.



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