

*iNACOL Leadership Webinar*

# **The Innovative Assessment Pilot:**

**A New Opportunity for States and Districts  
to Collaborate Developing Next Generation  
Systems of Assessments**

January 29, 2018, 3-4pm ET

Maria Worthen, iNACOL

Scott Marion, Center for Assessment

Invited Participant: Donald Peasley, U.S. Dept of Education

*[www.inacol.org](http://www.inacol.org)*

**iNACOL**  
International Association for K-12 Online Learning

# Webinar Logistics

- Type questions in the chat window.
- The webinar is being recorded-- will be emailed to registered participants and available at [iNACOL.org](http://iNACOL.org).
- Share what you're learning on social media using [#rethinkassessment](https://twitter.com/hashtag/rethinkassessment) and [@nacol](https://twitter.com/nacol)

# Objectives

- Overview of the Innovative Assessment Pilot:
  - Purpose and background
  - Application requirements
  - Selection criteria
- Considerations for states developing innovative systems of assessments-- with or without the demonstration authority



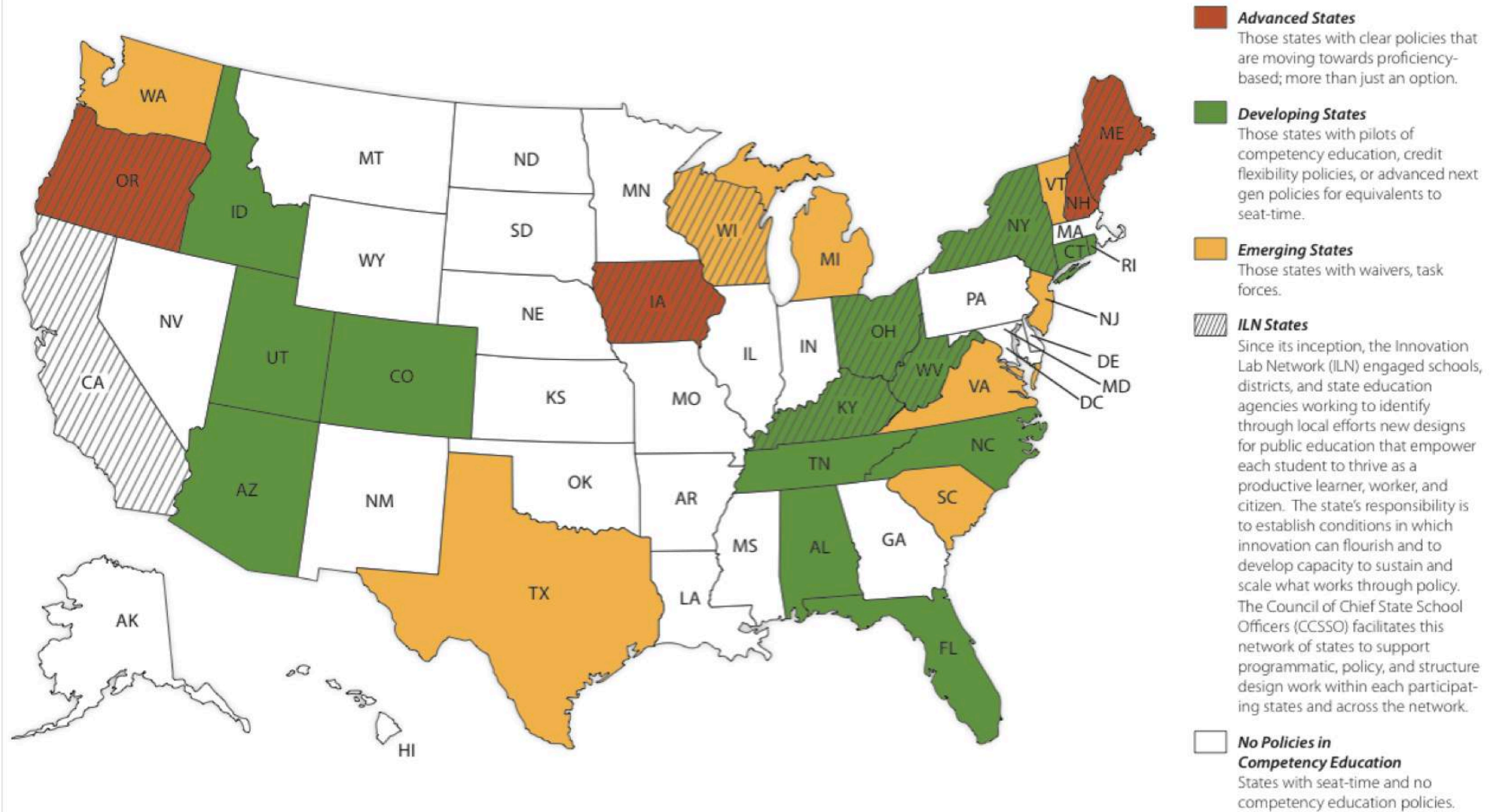
**Scott Marion**  
President and Executive  
Director  
Center for Assessment



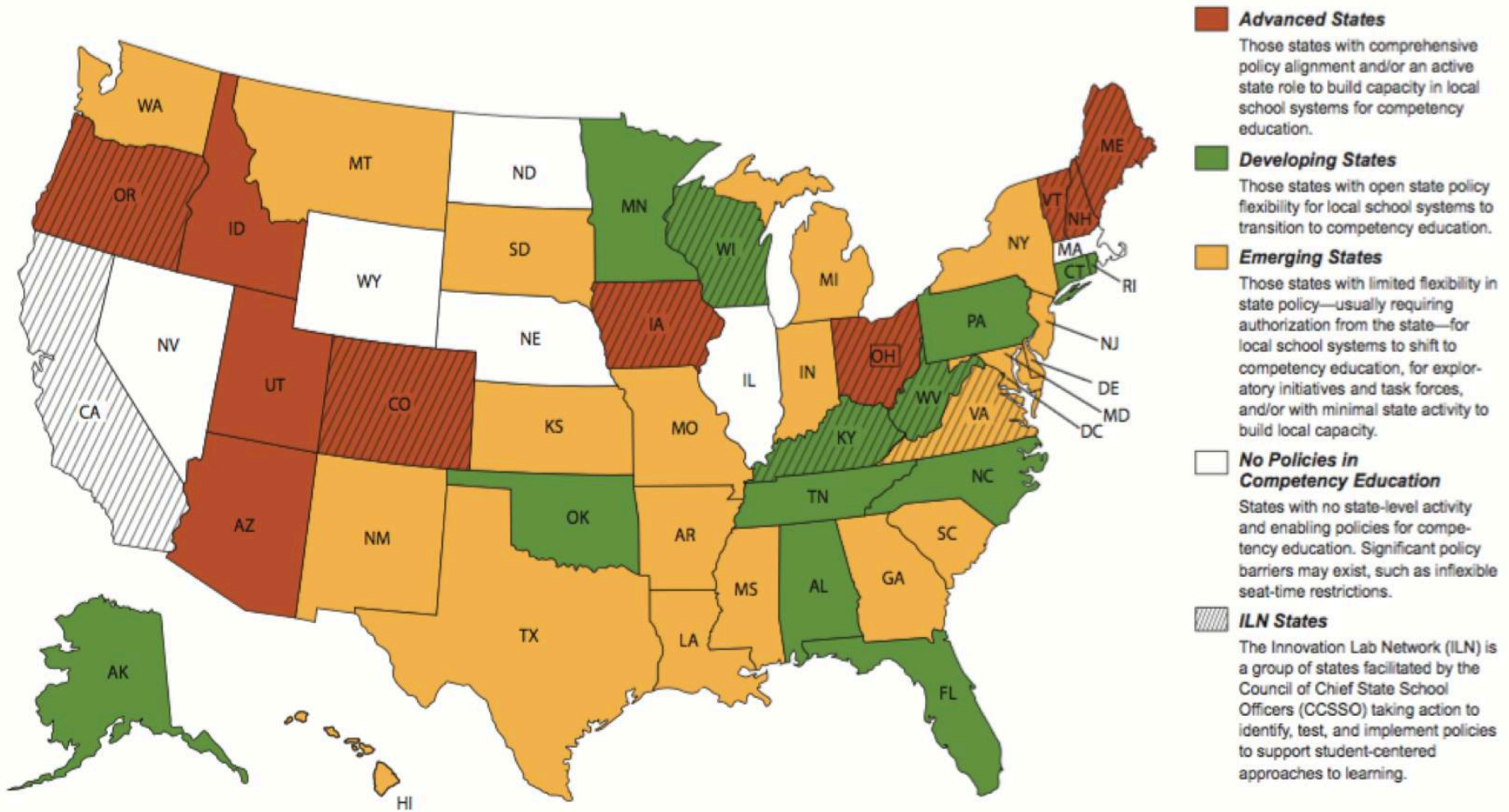
**Maria Worthen**  
Vice President for  
Federal & State Policy,  
iNACOL

*Invited Participant, available to answer questions regarding the NIA:  
Donald Peasley, U.S. Department of Education*

# Snapshot of Competency-Based Education Policy - 2012

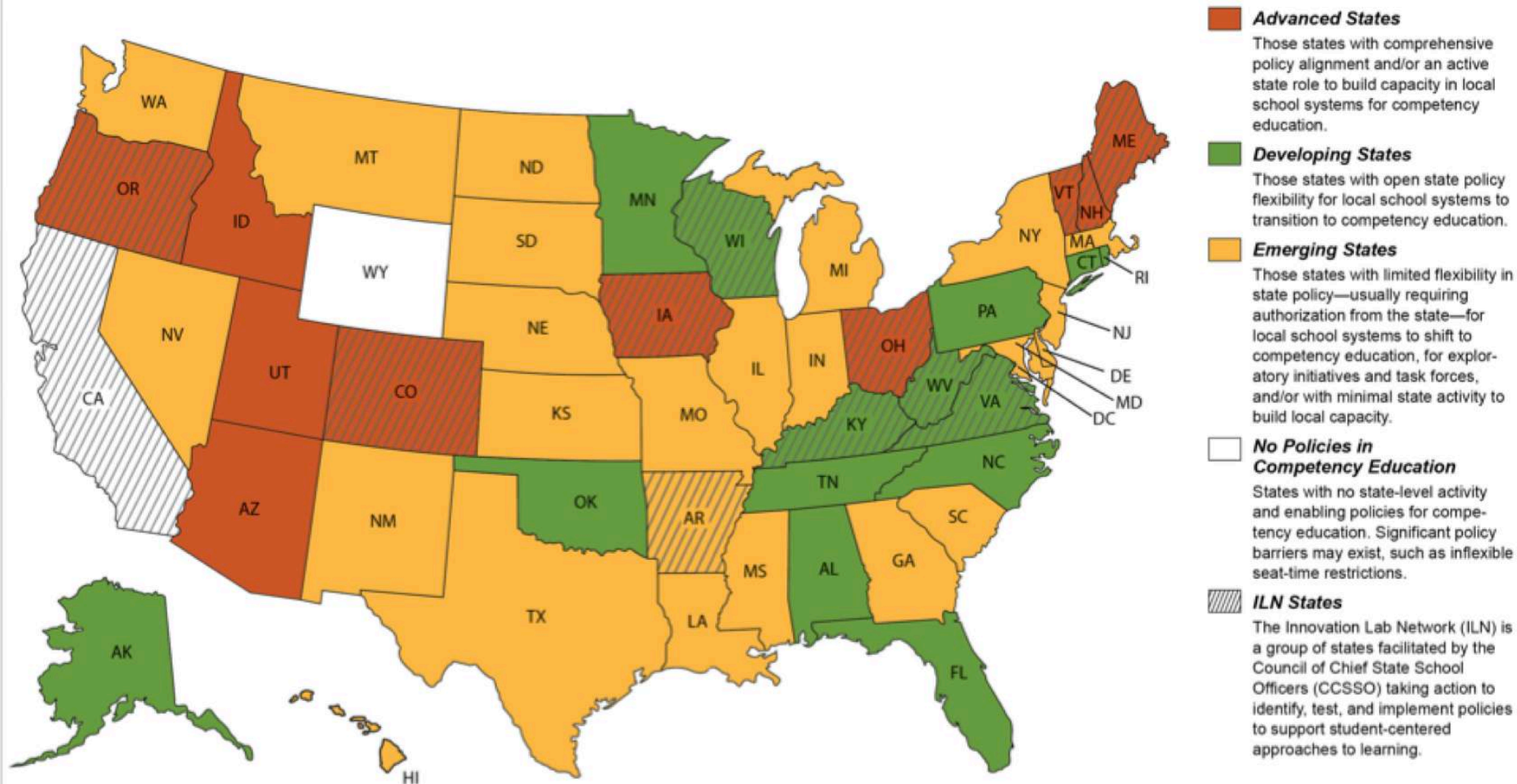


# Snapshot of Competency-Based Education Policy - 2016



- Advanced States**  
 Those states with comprehensive policy alignment and/or an active state role to build capacity in local school systems for competency education.
- Developing States**  
 Those states with open state policy flexibility for local school systems to transition to competency education.
- Emerging States**  
 Those states with limited flexibility in state policy—usually requiring authorization from the state—for local school systems to shift to competency education, for exploratory initiatives and task forces, and/or with minimal state activity to build local capacity.
- No Policies in Competency Education**  
 States with no state-level activity and enabling policies for competency education. Significant policy barriers may exist, such as inflexible seat-time restrictions.
- ILN States**  
 The Innovation Lab Network (ILN) is a group of states facilitated by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) taking action to identify, test, and implement policies to support student-centered approaches to learning.

# Snapshot of K-12 Competency Education Policy - 2017



**CBE**  
is a model



Centered on  
the student



Focused on  
mastery of  
competencies



Based on  
learning  
outcomes

## Competency-Based Education

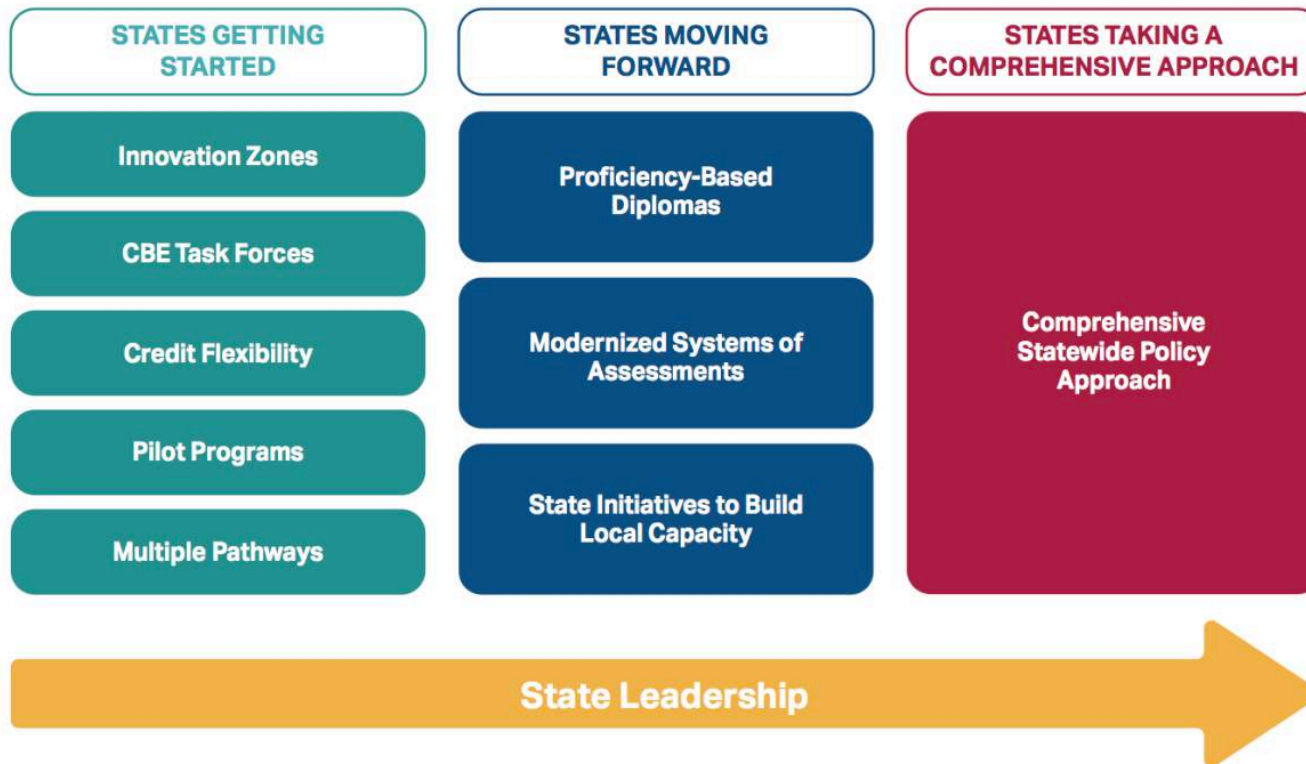
Principles from 5-part working definition:

1. Students advance upon demonstrated mastery.
2. Competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students.
3. Assessment is meaningful and a positive learning experience for students.
4. Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.
5. Learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of important skills and dispositions.

- [CompetencyWorks.org](http://CompetencyWorks.org)



# State Policy: Entry Points to Create Personalized, Competency-Based Education Systems





## Meeting ESSA's Promise: State Policy to Support Personalized Learning

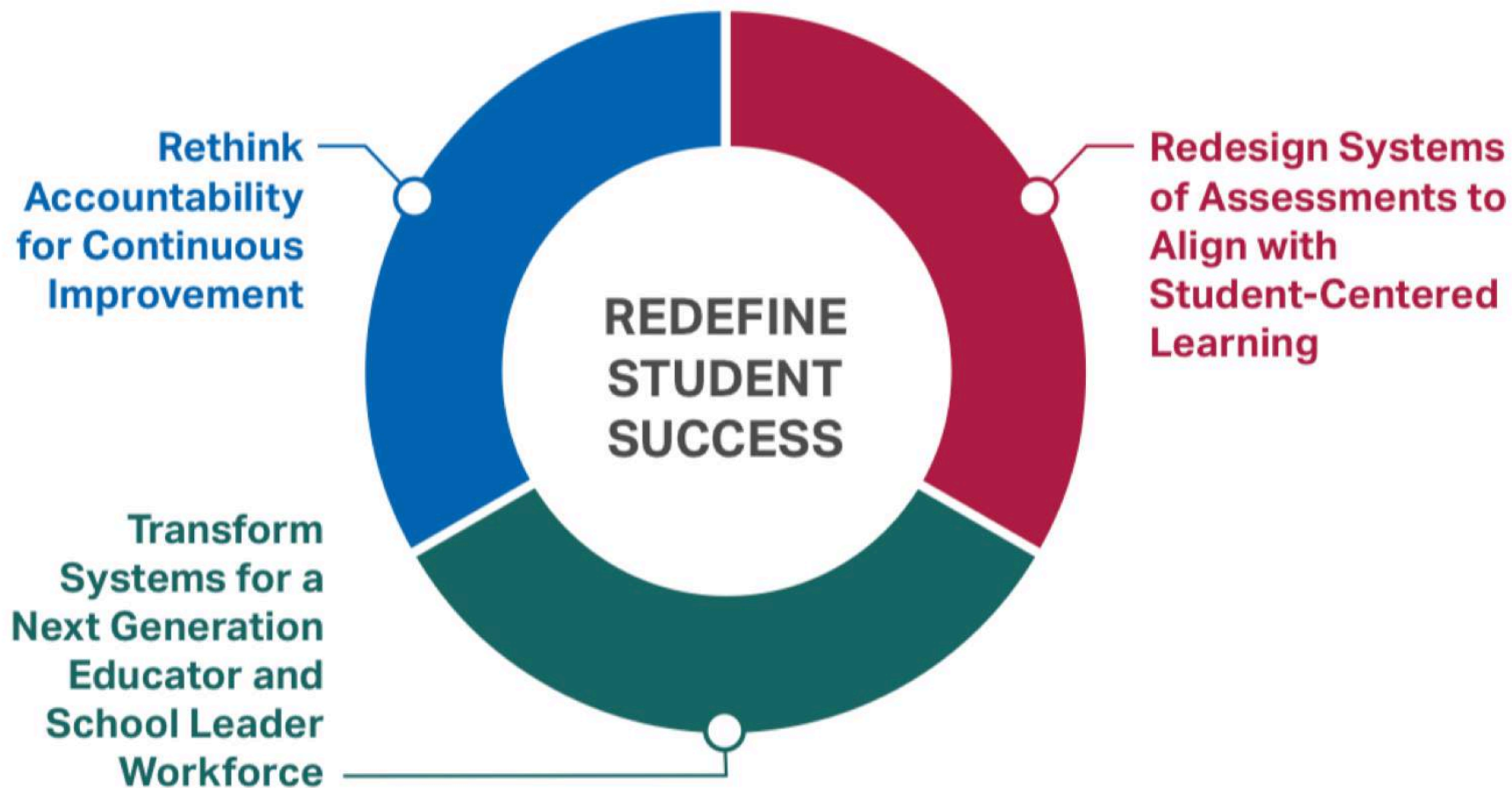
### New Policy Opportunities Under ESSA

- Rethink accountability for continuous improvement.
- Redesign systems of assessments to align with student-centered learning.
- Transform systems to build capacity for a next generation educator and leader workforce.

### Continuing Opportunities

- Create personalized, competency-based education systems.
- Build new learning models infrastructure.
- Create system coherence and build capacity for the long-term.

# REDEFINING STUDENT SUCCESS: DRIVING COHERENCE IN EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION



# The Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority

- New provision in Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 – Section 1204
- Allows the Secretary to grant states authority to pilot innovative systems of assessments
- Up to 7 states in first 3 years
- States may form consortia – up to four SEAs in a consortium

# Why is it necessary?

- Without innovative assessment demonstration authority, states must use the same assessments systems statewide in all districts and schools
- The authority provides an opportunity for states to pilot new systems of assessments and use their results for accountability purposes in required subjects and grades on a smaller scale and continuously improve as they scale up

**INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM DEFINED.—a system of assessments that may include—**

- (1) competency-based assessments, instructionally embedded assessments, interim assessments, cumulative year-end assessments, or performance-based assessments that combine into an annual summative determination for a student, which may be administered through computer adaptive assessments; and**
- (2) assessments that validate when students are ready to demonstrate mastery or proficiency and allow for differentiated student support based on individual learning needs.**

***--ESSA, Section 1204***

# Application Requirements

- (a) Consultation
- (b) Meets innovative assessment system requirements
- (c) Meets selection criteria
- (d) Assurances

# Requirement (a): Consultation

- Evidence that applicant has developed system in collaboration with:
  - Innovative assessment experts – may include external partners
  - Affected stakeholders including representatives of:
    - Subgroups including ELL and SWD
    - Teachers, principals, school leaders
    - LEAs
    - Indian tribes
    - Students and parents
    - Civil rights organizations



# Requirement (b): Innovative assessment system

- Meet same technical quality and validity requirements as statewide assessments in ESSA, except:
  - Need not be administered in all districts and schools in the state
  - Need not be administered annually in each of grades 3-8 and once in HS
- Align with state academic standards including the depth and breadth for a student's grade
- May measure student proficiency above and below grade level so long as it can also determine whether a student is proficient at enrolled grade level
- Must measure which students are not proficient and which students are not making sufficient progress towards proficiency
- Generate comparable results to the statewide assessments (more on this later from Scott Marion)

# Innovative Assessment System requirements, cont'd

- Provide for participation of all students, including English language learners and students with a disability
- Be accessible to all students, incorporating UDL principles
- Provide appropriate accommodations
- Assess  $\geq 95\%$  students (all and within each subgroup)

# Innovative Assessment System requirements, cont'd

- Generate annual summative determination of achievement for each student in a participating school that describes mastery of grade-level standards
- Provide disaggregated results by subgroup– timely and to appropriate stakeholders
- Unbiased, rational, and consistent determination of progress toward State's long-term goals, comparable to statewide assessment determinations

# Selection Criteria

- Project narrative (40 points)
- Prior experience, capacity, and stakeholder support (15 points)
- Timeline and budget (15 points)
- Supports for educators and students (25 points)
- Evaluation and continuous improvement (15 points)

# Assurances

- Continue use of statewide assessment system in non-pilot schools
- All students held to same academic standards
- Annual report to Secretary, including:
  - Implementation information
  - how scale up adds to achieving high quality and consistent implementation across demographically diverse LEAs
  - Stakeholder feedback
- Parent communication
- Coordination with IES for progress report

# Important Information for Interested States

**February 2, 2018**

Intent to apply (optional, non-binding)

**April 2, 2018**

Application deadline

Note: The Department wants to hear from states who may apply to the demonstration authority in the future

For more information and to apply, visit:

<https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/saa.html> (scroll down to #6)

For further questions, contact program manager Donald Peasley:

[donald.peasley@ed.gov](mailto:donald.peasley@ed.gov)

# Questions?

Staff from the U.S. Department of Education are on hand as invited participants to answer questions about the Notice Inviting Applications, the Dear Colleague Letter, and the application process

# Resources

- iNACOL Resources (visit [inacol.org](http://inacol.org)):

- Issue Briefs:

- Redesigning Systems of Assessments for Student-Centered Learning
    - Rethinking State Accountability to Support Personalized, Competency-Based Learning in K-12 Education
    - Redefining Student Success: Profile of a Graduate
    - State Policy & K-12 Competency-Based Education

- Reports:

- Current to Future State: Issues and Action steps for State Policy to Support Personalized, Competency-Based Learning
    - Fit for Purpose: Taking the Long View on Systems Change and Policy to Support Competency Education

- Contact the iNACOL Center for Policy Advocacy:

- Maria Worthen [mworthen@inacol.org](mailto:mworthen@inacol.org)
    - Natalie Truong [ntruong@inacol.org](mailto:ntruong@inacol.org)
    - Dale Frost [dfrost@inacol.org](mailto:dfrost@inacol.org)

- [InnovativeAssessments.org](http://InnovativeAssessments.org) - toolkit from [KnowledgeWorks](http://KnowledgeWorks) and the Center for Assessment



# *The Innovative Assessment and Accountability Demonstration Authority under ESSA*

Scott Marion, Center for Assessment

iNACOL National Webinar on Section 1204

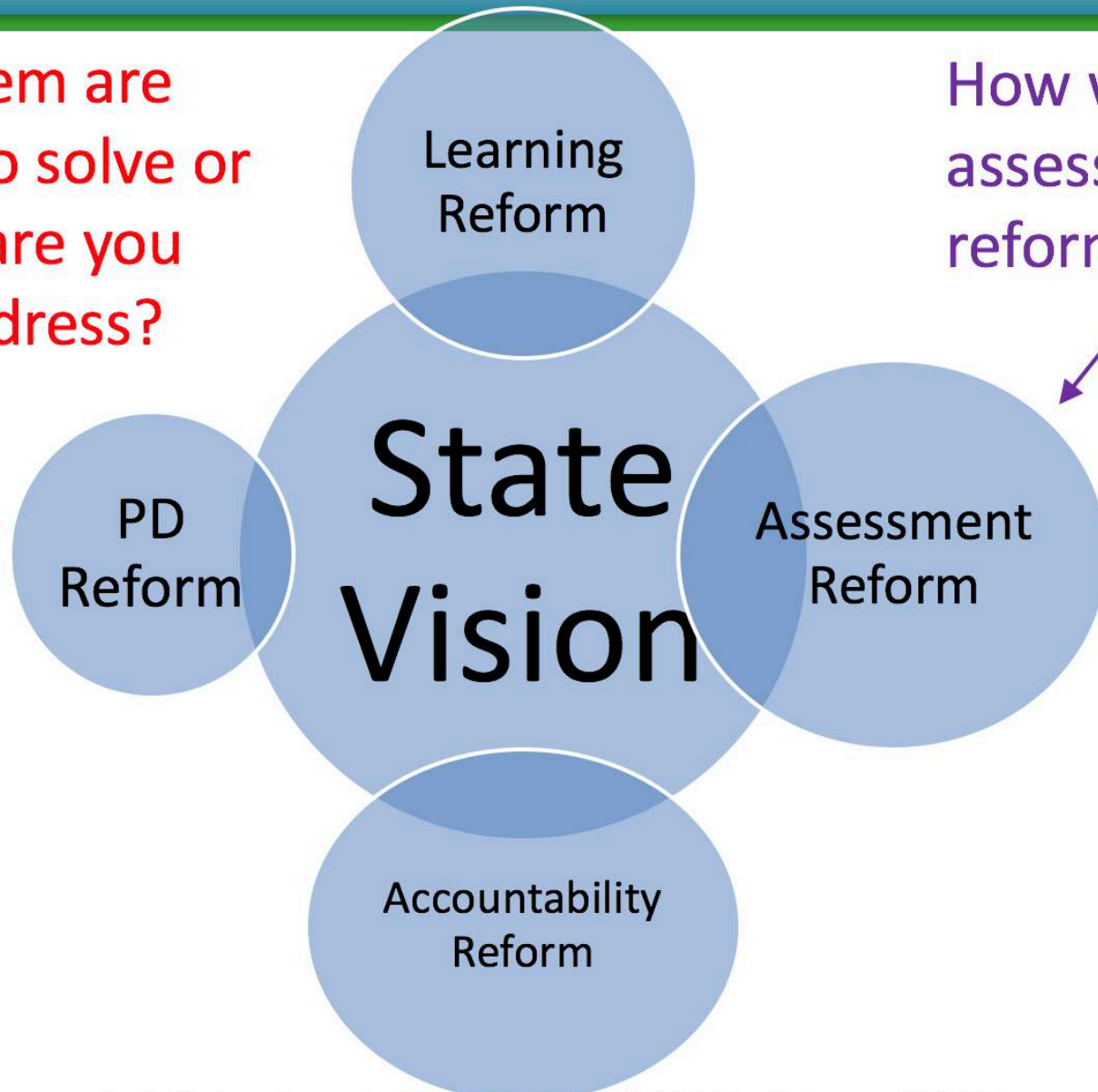
# Advance Organizer

- Why “innovate?”
- Critical issues for the pilot
  - Technical requirements
  - Comparability
  - Scaling requirements
- Some options for starting small
- Closing thoughts

# What is your vision for your system?

What problem are you trying to solve or what need are you trying to address?

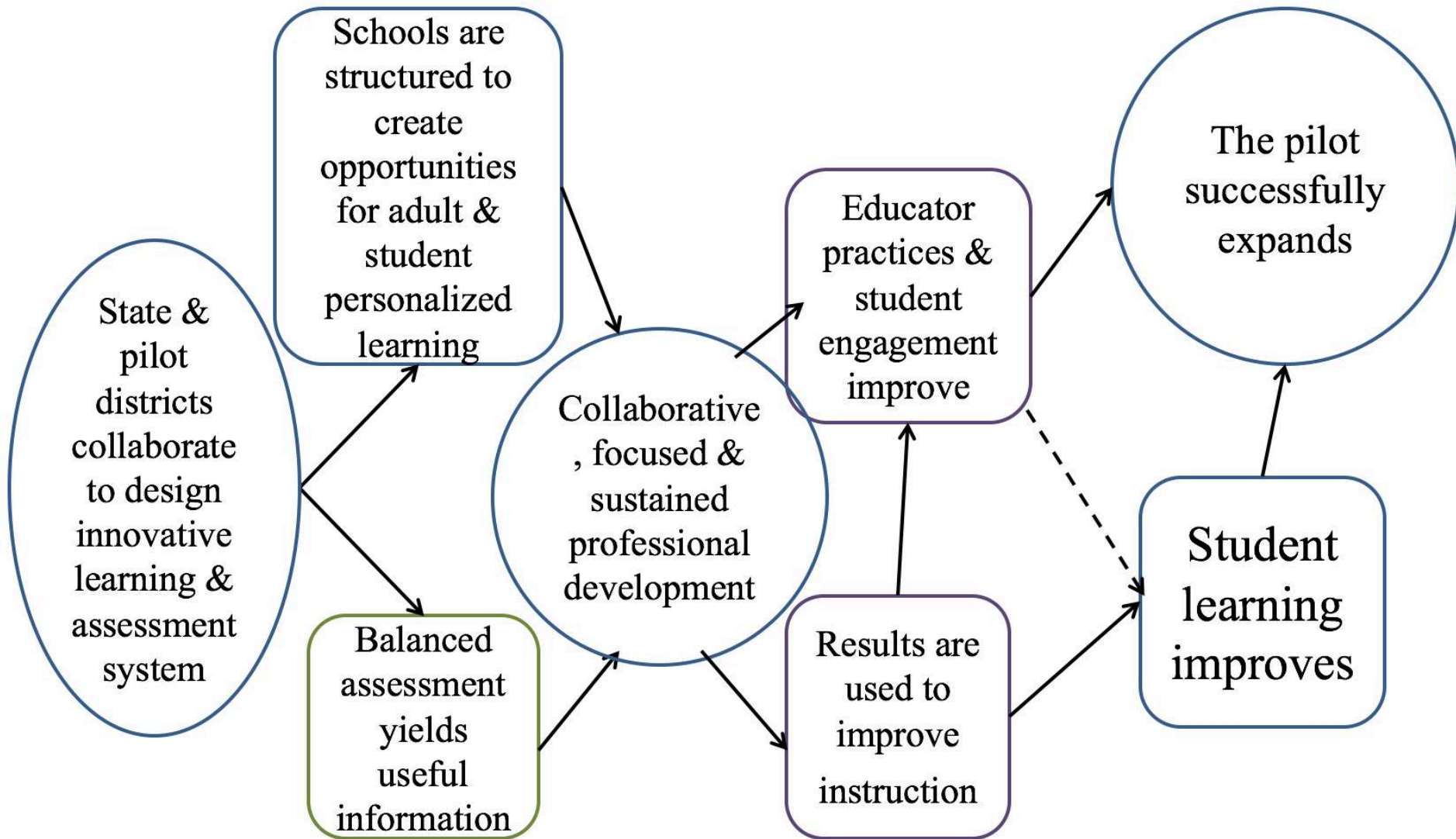
How will an assessment reform help?



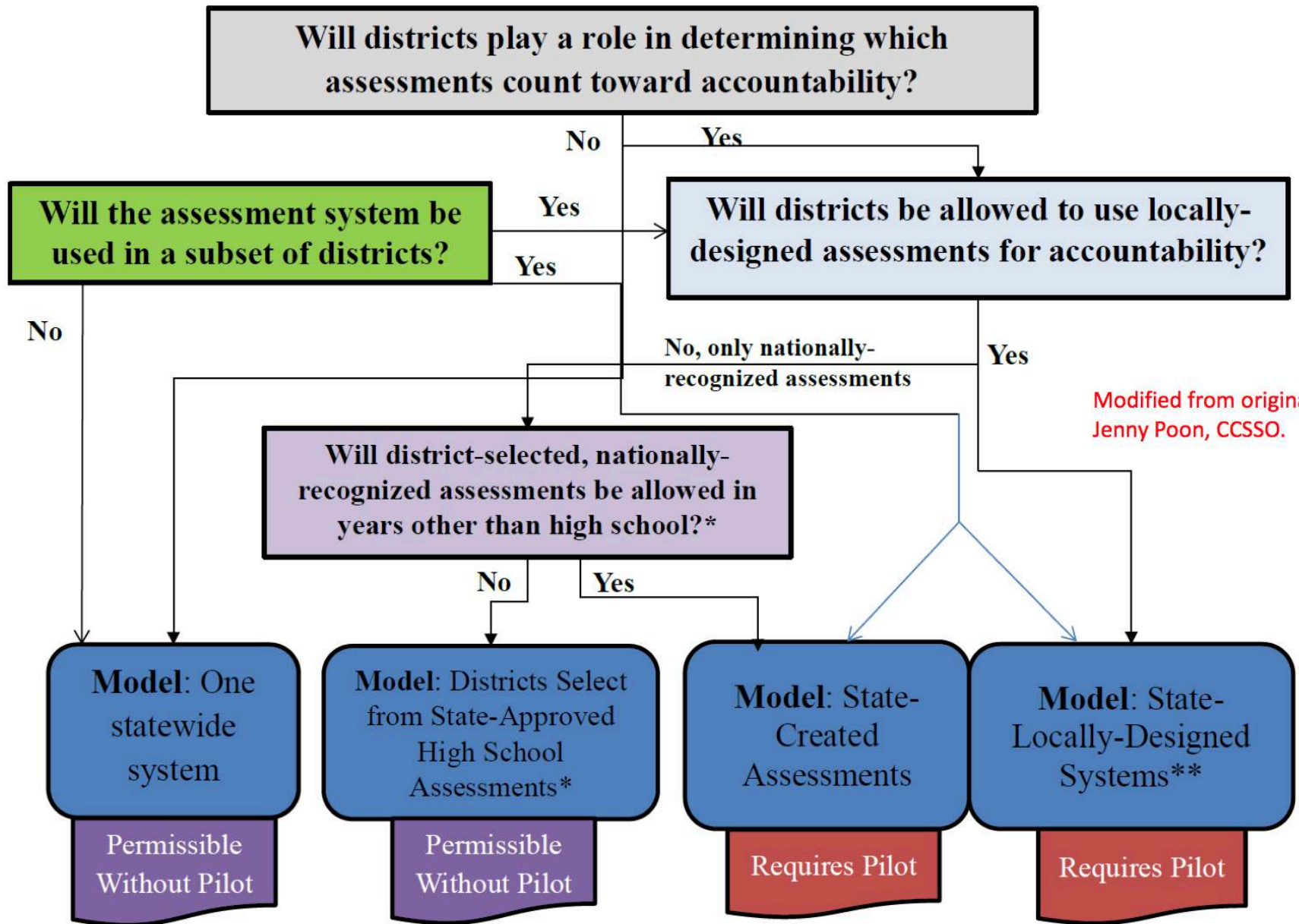
# Theory of Action

- A theory of action should make the links explicit among the various aspects of the system
- The theory of action should reveal testable hypotheses that can be verified with evidence through the implementation of the pilot
- This accumulation of evidence would support the on-going validation of the assessment and accountability system.

# Example of a theory of action



# Does a state need a demonstration authority?



Modified from original by Jenny Poon, CCSSO.

# Assessment requirements & flexibility

- Assessments are not required to be the same statewide
  - States can pilot the assessment system with a **subset of districts** before scaling the system statewide by the end of the Demonstration Authority
- Assessments may consist entirely of performance tasks
  - States can design an assessment system that consists entirely of performance tasks, portfolios, or extended learning tasks [**they can now!**]
- Assessments may be given when students are ready
  - States can assess **students when they are ready** to demonstrate mastery of standards and competencies

# Four Major Guardrails

## Assessment Quality

- System comprised of high quality assessments that support the calculation of valid, reliable, and comparable annual determinations as well as provide useful information to relevant stakeholders

## Comparability

- Produce yearly, student-level annual determinations that are comparable across LEAs

## Scale Statewide

- Must have a logical plan to scale up the innovative assessment system statewide

## Demographic Similarity

- Make progress toward achieving high-quality and consistent implementation across demographically diverse LEAs



# Comparability by Design

The focus of  
the regulations

How does the design of the innovative assessment system yield evidence to support comparability claims?

How will the state evaluate the degree of comparability achieved across differing assessment conditions?

If comparability is not achieved, how will the state adjust the classification scale to account for systematic differences across assessment systems?

# Threats to Real Innovation

## Legitimate reasons for non-comparability:

1. To measure the state-defined learning targets more **efficiently** (e.g., reduced testing time);
2. To measure the learning targets more **flexibly** (e.g., when students are ready to demonstrate “mastery”);
3. To measure the learning targets more **deeply**; or
4. To measure targets more **completely** (e.g., listening, speaking, extended research, scientific investigations).

***“Perfect agreement would be an indication of failure.” – Dr. Robert Brennan***

# Comparability Options in the Regulations

## Audit

- Administering both the innovative and statewide assessments to all students in pilot schools **at least once in any grade span**

## Sample

- Administering full assessments from both the innovative and statewide assessment system to a **demographically representative sample of students** at least once every grade span

## Common Items

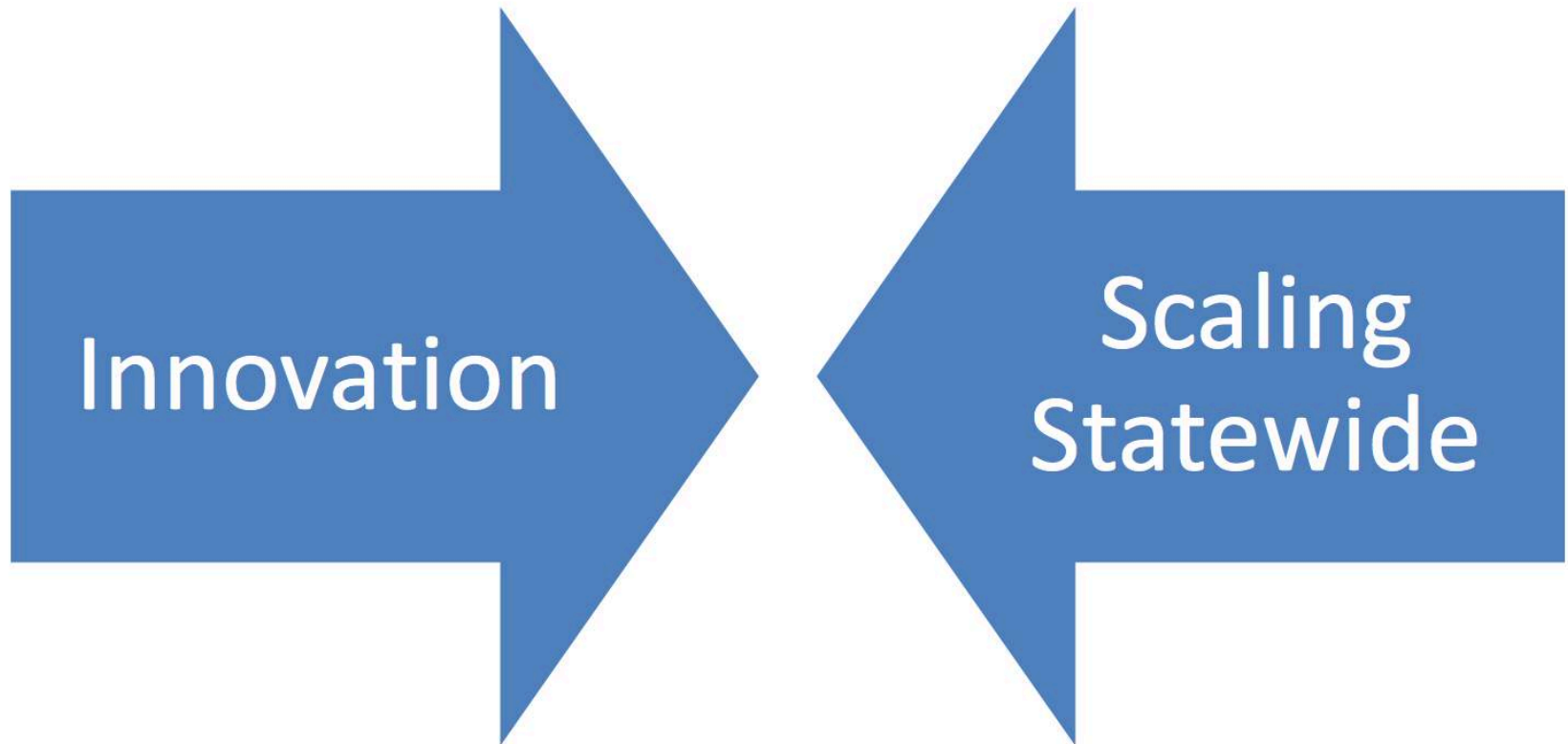
- Including **common items in both the statewide and innovative assessment system**

## Other

- We and several national experts have created more than a dozen options to evaluate comparability ([www.nciea.org](http://www.nciea.org))

# A Fundamental Tension in the Pilot!

*If the assessment system is truly innovative, 5-7 years is an extremely challenging timeline to think it can be adopted by all schools in the state*



# Scaling Statewide?

- This is probably the biggest challenge of the pilot, depending on how innovative of a system is being proposed
- If your state wants real innovation, how can you deal with this tension?
- **One way is to narrow the focus of the innovation**

# Timeline

## Initial

- Up to **seven states** may be awarded initial 3-year application
- Up to four states may be part of a consortium

## IES

- Progress **reviewed by “Director of IES”** after 3 years

## Expansion

- Secretary of Ed may extend Authority to additional states after 3 years
- Initial states may request an **additional 2 year** extension

## Transition

- At the end of the authority, the Secretary, based on peer review, will determine if the state can fully transition to the pilot system

# Some options for narrowing the pilot

- NH is creating a K-12 innovation in its education and assessment system, but its long history of competency-based education and small size are advantages
- What are some other options?
  - Narrow the content areas
  - Narrow the grade levels/spans
  - Narrow both grade spans and content areas

# Narrowing the content areas

- There is no requirement that the pilot needs to be implemented in all three required content areas
- Depending on perceived needs (e.g., our students do not write argumentative papers well enough or we need higher levels of scientific literacy), states can choose to focus the pilot on only one content area



# Narrowing the grade spans

- There could be many reasons to focus only on elementary, middle, or high school for the pilot
- How does such a decision fit with the state's theory of action?
  - Does the state intend for this to spread to all grade spans?
  - Does the state intend for this to remain only at a single grade span (e.g., graduation exhibitions)?

# Narrowing both grades & content

- Appears to be a very promising option to allow states to step their “toes in the water”
- The same questions about a theory of action apply here as well

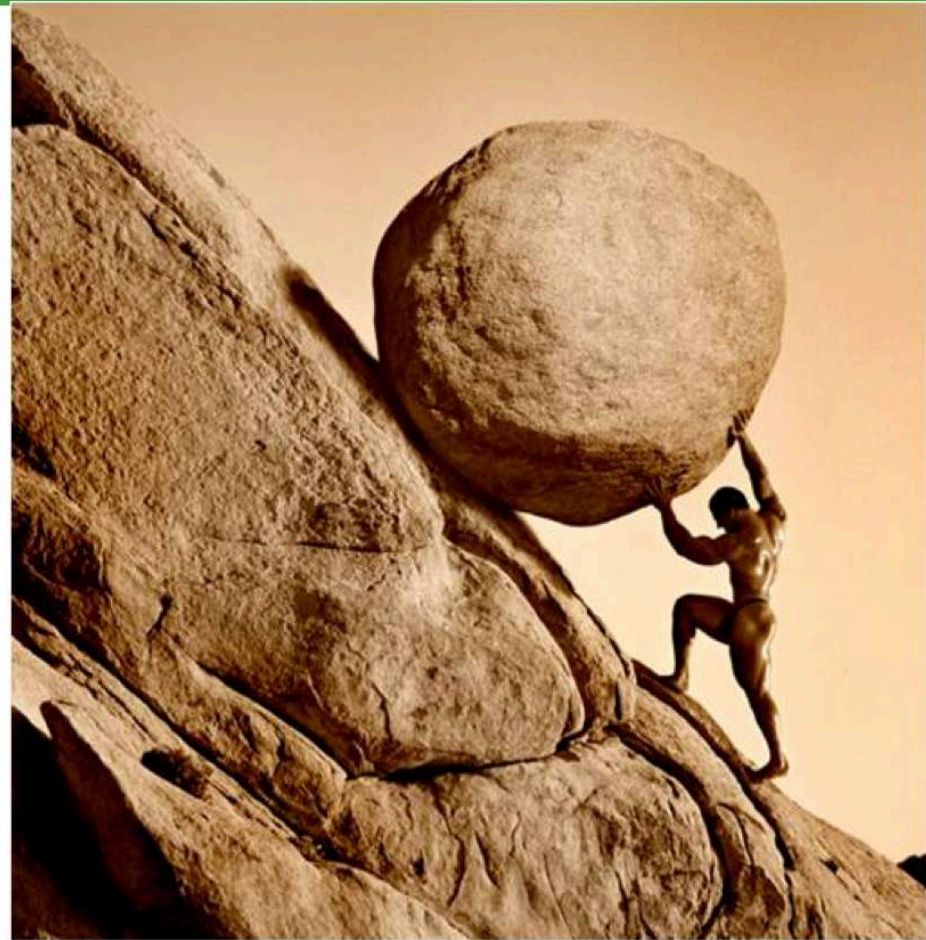
# What are some potential options?

- Innovative 3-D science assessment systems (relying on local and state tasks) at one grade span
- Intensive focus on producing extended writing such as research papers or multi-media presentations in high school or middle school
- Tying reading/writing assessments to known full length texts and/or materials and any grade span
- Engaging in inter-disciplinary project-based learning and assessment at one grade span
- What are some that you've been thinking about?

# State and District Roles

Innovative pilots require more work for local districts than simply maintaining the current system, but it is the “right work,”

- Commit to a shared educational vision
- Build capacity among the staff
- Structure budgets to provide funding
- Create time for collaborative and individual planning
- Implement record keeping and student management systems
- Embrace that increased flexibility leads to increased responsibility



# Ongoing Implementation Challenges

- Assessment literacy
- Local and state capacity
- Local and state resources
  - Remember, this is an “opportunity” with no money!
- Clarity of expectations and communications
- Maintaining political will

# Yes, this is hard!!

- This is not for the faint of heart!



For more information:

Center for Assessment

[www.nciea.org](http://www.nciea.org)



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