

# Common Core and More – 10 Steps to a Successful Digital Readiness Assessment

## 10-STEP DIGITAL READINESS ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

1. Define your vision
2. Conduct a gap analysis
3. Provide regular progress reports
4. Address security issues
5. Anticipate assistive technology needs
6. Make sure students are tech-ready
7. Schedule dry runs
8. Avoid surprises
9. Learn from others
10. Plan for ongoing change

If you're in a district that will soon be implementing Common Core Digital Assessments, or other state testing standards, there is no such thing as being over-prepared! While digital assessments offer exciting possibilities such as immediate score reporting, increased security of testing materials, and decreased administrative demands, they also require a lot of preparation. Here's a handy checklist of things to remember as you get ready.

## 1. Define your vision

While it may sound obvious, **it's important to invest adequate time in planning for what "ready" looks like** — not just a plan for the coming school year but a game plan for the next three to five years. In defining your vision, think about the following:

- **What are your end goals?** What do you want to accomplish?
- **What are the resources you will need?** (Budget, technology, capabilities, etc.)
- **What plans and policies will need to be put in place?** (Mobility and usage policies, technology lifecycle management, distance learning, etc.)
- **Which stakeholders do you need to engage?**
- **How will you roll out changes?** (Pilot program, phased deployment, all at once, etc.)
- **What are the key milestones along the way?**

## 2. Conduct a gap analysis

**Stress test your current resources.** Use the **Technology Readiness Assessment Tool** at [www.techreadiness.net](http://www.techreadiness.net) to help determine, for each testing location, how ready you are in the following areas:

- **Devices** (Specifications, security, etc.)
- **Network** (Bandwidth, speed, etc.)
- **Inventory** (Device to test-taker ratio)
- **Personnel** (Capabilities, preparation, availability, etc.)

**Stakeholder engagement is a critical component of any successful technology strategy.**

**Preparing students to do their best on digital assessments includes ensuring they have the technology skills to take online tests.**

### 3. Provide regular progress reports

Stakeholder engagement is a critical component of any successful technology strategy. **Keeping them apprised of progress and raising concerns early will go a long way to keeping the momentum moving forward.** The range of stakeholders includes:

- Educators
- Administrators
- IT Staff
- District leadership
- Parents and students

### 4. Address security issues

**Ensuring the safety of students and school data is a baseline requirement.** Make sure you have policies and procedures to address both physical and virtual security, particularly during an assessment.

- **Physical security tools**—Asset management and tracking, intrusion alerts, computer locks, active hard drive protection, fingerprint readers
- **Virtual security tools**—Threat management software to prevent viruses, malware, and phishing; data encryption; authentication tools; remote monitoring and lock down capabilities

### 5. Anticipate assistive technology needs

While properly designed digital assessments will be more accessible to students with special needs than the paper tests of yesterday, **it's important to prepare for students who may need special accommodations during the testing timeframe**, such as speech-to-text software, visual or audio amplification equipment, and specialized testing settings.

### 6. Make sure students are tech-ready

Preparing students to do their best on digital assessments includes **ensuring they have the technology skills to take online tests**, such as selecting and highlighting text. This is especially important for children who may not have ready access to computers at home.

### 7. Schedule dry runs

**Digital assessment rehearsals allow you to test out both equipment and processes within the testing environment**

**Building a resilient digital assessment program entails thinking ahead about changing standards, curricula, educational tools, and technology.**

to make sure devices are available, prepared, and properly deployed. Including IT and instructional support staff as well as educators will allow for a more coordinated response to any glitches that arise as well as better preparation for test day.

## 8. Avoid surprises

**Keep your environment stable during testing time.**

Hold off on rolling out any new applications or software revisions until you get through the testing period.

## 9. Learn from others

**Seek out best practices to build upon for your school** by networking with counterparts in other districts and tapping into state resources. For those in states that have adopted Common Core standards, take advantage of publicly available research and writing, as well as training resources and programs offered by technology partners.

## 10. Plan for ongoing change

As the saying goes, the only constant in life is change. Building a resilient digital assessment program entails thinking ahead about changing standards, curricula, educational tools, and technology. Whatever strategy you use to address digital assessment, make sure it supports a long-term vision for building a reliable, robust, and flexible infrastructure for teaching and learning.

**Meeting digital assessment requirements is both a challenge and an opportunity—and a commitment to comprehensive security and manageability makes all the difference. From BIOS-level security to LanSchool classroom management software, learn more about the Lenovo advantage at [www.lenovo.com/resources](http://www.lenovo.com/resources) and [www.lenovo.com/education](http://www.lenovo.com/education).**

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- “Getting your School Tech Ready for Common Core Assessments.” *T.H.E. Journal*
- “Implementing Common Core State Standards and Assessments: A Workbook for State and District Leaders.” Achieve and US Education Delivery Institute
- [www.pearsonassessments.com/nextgenroadmap](http://www.pearsonassessments.com/nextgenroadmap)
- [www.techreadiness.net](http://www.techreadiness.net)