



**Arizona Department of Education**  
Office of Student Achievement and Educator Excellence

**FAQ – Benchmark Assessments**

*Updated on September 17, 2020*

**Background**

Executive Order 2020-41 requires LEAs to submit distance learning plans that include detailed plans on how the school district or charter will conduct benchmark testing within the first six weeks of the school year in math and English/language arts for all students in kindergarten programs and grades one (1) through twelve (12).

**When does the six-week window for benchmark testing begin?**

The English language arts (ELA) and math benchmark assessments must be given within six weeks from August 17, 2020.

**Could we use our district/charter created or teacher created assessments to meet this benchmark testing requirement?**

If your LEA assesses ELA and Math using district/charter or teacher created assessments, you may use those tests as your benchmark assessment. LEAs are encouraged to use assessments that are currently in place within the LEA to meet this requirement.

**Can LEA pre-tests, especially at the high school level, be used as benchmark assessments?**

Yes, since high schools are structured by individual courses, utilizing the ELA and Math pre-tests as benchmark assessments would be appropriate.

**Is benchmark testing required for AOI schools and programs?**

Benchmark testing is required if a brick & mortar school is utilizing the flexibilities under the Executive Orders to facilitate distance learning, including incorporating an AOI school or program as part of its distance learning plan.

Benchmark testing is not required if an AOI school or program is not leveraging the flexibilities under the Executive Orders for distance learning purposes and is continuing to operate under its regular business and instructional model.



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**How will be this benchmark assessment data be used by the state?**

The benchmark test results will not have to be sent to ADE; however, will have to be made available- upon ADE request.

**At the high school level, we only use mid-terms and final exams across the LEA. Can we use midterms as our benchmark assessment for ELA and Math courses?**

Midterm assessments may be used at the high school level if they are provided within the timeframe of the Executive Order, six weeks from August 17, 2020.

**What if our mid- term assessments are given at 9 weeks? Is there an exception that can be made for high school requirements?**

ADE does not have the authority to provide exceptions to this requirement. The benchmark assessment must be administered within 6 weeks of August 17, 2020 per the executive order.

**Does it matter that LEAs might assess different standards during the first quarter or have benchmark assessments with varying levels of difficulty per the design (growth model versus a mastery model, e.g.) for ADE to review in terms of an established standard/criteria across districts/charters?**

No, it is up to the LEA to determine the assessments and what ELA/Math content is appropriate for each grade level.