

# Implications for long-term implementation: Findings from the teacher post-pilot data collection

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## Executive Summary

One of the goals of the K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium is to help Consortium states implement the K-3 Formative Assessment successfully in their state. As a part of the Consortium, four states participated in a pilot of the formative assessment process. This report presents findings from a data collection effort to gather feedback on the development of the K-3 Formative Assessment for future administrations and to understand how to implement the assessment effectively<sup>1</sup>. Data were collected after the winter/spring pilot of the K-3 Formative Assessment Process across Tier II states (i.e., Arizona, Iowa, Maine, and Rhode Island). The findings combine information collected from multiple data sources: an online background survey; an online teacher survey; and an online teacher focus group. Topics covered in the report include *awareness and perceptions about the K-3 Formative Assessment pilot process, assessment practices, benefits of the assessment, communication and collaboration, and support and resources provided*.

Below is a summary of the key findings:

- **Characteristics of participants:** Teachers from all Tier II states completed the surveys. Most teachers were kindergarten teachers, which is comparable to the population of teachers piloting the K-3 Formative Assessment. Teachers in the survey had at least two years of teaching experience.
- **Awareness and perceptions about the K-3 Formative Assessment pilot:** Teachers first heard about the K-3 Formative Assessment from individuals at different levels (e.g., other teachers who were previously involved or state-, district-, or school-level administrator). Generally, teachers initially had a positive perception of the K-3 Formative Assessment prior to using the assessment in their classrooms. However, many changed their perceptions after using the assessment because of challenges they faced integrating the assessment into their classroom routine.
- **Assessment practices:** Many teachers who participated in the data collection had previous experience using formative assessments in their classrooms. Teachers were able to see how the K-3 Formative Assessment provided them the opportunity to identify children’s developmental level, share this information with other instructors and families, and utilize the results to inform their instruction. The assessment materials (e.g., resource binder or checklists), resources (e.g., technology support), and technology devices (e.g., iPads or K-3 app) helped teachers use the assessment successfully. However, teachers still struggled to feel supported to use the assessment. They identified barriers, such as not having enough time to complete the assessment or not being able to integrate it into their normal routine. They suggested solutions, such as allowing more time for the assessment or collaborating with other individuals for data collection.

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<sup>1</sup> A corresponding report about administrators (e.g., principals and support staff) is available, *Implications for long-term implementation: Findings from the principal and support staff post-pilot data collection*.

- **Benefits of the assessment:** Teachers noted that the K-3 Formative Assessment benefits both children and schools. For instance, the assessment provided a complete picture of the child and helps guide teachers to individualize their instruction.
- **Communication and collaboration:** Teachers used a variety of settings to communicate and collaborate about the K-3 Formative Assessment process, particularly using informal conversations to discuss how to use the assessment. Teachers also reported multiple ways they could communicate with families about the assessment, whether to have an additional data point to share or to help parents come up with ways to participate in their child’s learning and development process.
- **Supports and resources:** Teachers received multiple supports and resources at the state-, district-, and school-level that helped them use the K-3 Formative Assessment. State and district leaders provided teachers with the necessary resources to start the assessment process (e.g., training to learn how to use the assessment, assessment materials to guide their use, access to technology to facilitate the use of the assessment). On the other hand, teachers primarily sought assistance from their school-level administrators for the day-to-day supports they needed to use the assessment. For example, teachers often asked building administrators for specific strategies they could use to collect evidences. Teachers proposed that administrators at all levels could work to build greater classroom support for using the assessment and involve teachers in any future improvements.

Based on the findings and suggestions offered by teachers, we recommend the following strategies state administrators can take to support long-term implementation:

- **Continue to provide current supports:** Teachers valued the supports that have already been provided in the pilot process (e.g., initial training and assessment materials). State administrators should consider ways that they can sustain the provision of these supports during future administrations of the K-3 Formative Assessment.
- **Encourage the use of building-level resources:** Teachers may be able to build in supports and resources at the building-level to ease the administration of the assessment. First, teachers can capitalize on meetings they already have to attend in order to discuss the K-3 Formative Assessment. Second, teachers and principals can discuss how to streamline the data collection process with innovative data collection strategies, such as using other assessments to inform the formative assessment or vice versa. Third, collaboration with their peers at the school-level may help teachers feel more supported when using the assessment in their classrooms.
- **Have teachers inform improvements to the assessment process:** State administrators should consider how to involve teachers who are actively engaged in the K-3 Formative Assessment process in the improvement process. Teachers are intimately involved in the assessment process every day, so they are the most informed on how the process, materials, and constructs can be improved. Additionally, gathering teacher feedback strengthens the message to teachers that their voices are being heard, which can lead to stronger engagement and buy-in.
- **Involve administrators at all levels:** Administrators at the school-, district-, and state-level are critical to ensuring a successful roll-out and implementation of the K-3 Formative Assessment.

Teachers often asked their principals and support staff for daily support when using the assessment. Likewise, teachers acknowledged how much the initial support (e.g., training and materials) from the district and state led to the uptake of the assessment in their school. As state administrators progress in the implementation process, they should consider strategies for capitalizing on the unique ways administrators at all levels support teachers.

State administrators must consider the applicability and feasibility of the survey findings to their own state context as they seek to prioritize which improvements or recommendations to pursue. Each change to the system can result in stronger buy-in with stakeholders, but can also require additional time, capacity, and planning.

## Introduction

As a part of the K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium, teachers in four Tier II states (i.e., Arizona, Iowa, Maine, and Rhode Island) were asked to participate in two pilots of the enhanced K-3 Formative Assessment (one in the fall and one in the winter/spring). Some teachers participated in both pilots, and others participated in either the fall or the winter/spring pilot. The Research Partners for the K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium surveyed teachers to learn more about how schools were using the assessment in their state. Teachers completed a background survey prior to data collection; a survey midway through the pilot process to address any immediate issues; a post-pilot survey sixty days after the start of data collection; and a post-pilot online focus group sixty days after the start of data collection.

The purpose of the data collection was two-fold: 1) to elicit feedback on the development of the K-3 Formative Assessment for future administrations and 2) to explore implications for future implementation across the state. This report presents findings related to future implementation from the Tier II<sup>2</sup> teachers who participated in the winter/spring pilot and the online focus groups with Tier II<sup>3</sup> teachers.

An overview of the survey findings related to long-term implementation are provided. Data tables for teacher survey results can be found in Appendix 1 of this report, with table numbers provided throughout the document for reference. Respondents were allowed to skip questions; therefore, the number of respondents who answered each question is provided as a reference in each table. Many questions permitted respondents to provide multiple responses, so percentages may not equal 100%. Rather, percentages represent the percentage of respondents that endorsed that response. Open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively to identify the themes that best represented participant responses.

Focus group data are provided throughout the report to elaborate upon survey data, not as independent data points. In order to protect the identities of the individuals participating in the focus group, the transcripts recorded each response, but did not tie a response to a specific individual. Thus, the number of instances a response was provided, rather than the number of individuals, is presented throughout the report. Quotes from the focus group are provided to show what was captured in the focus group. Additionally, focus group information is not included in the tables since they were not quantifiable.

The topics covered in this report will focus primarily on survey items related to implementation of the K-3 Formative Assessment: *awareness and perception about the K-3 Formative Assessment pilot process, assessment practices, benefits of the assessment, communication and collaboration, and support and resources provided* (see Appendix 2 for the data collection instruments).

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<sup>2</sup> All Tier II states were represented in the online survey data (i.e., Arizona, Iowa, Maine, and Rhode Island).

<sup>3</sup> Maine and Rhode Island were represented in the online focus group data. Data from Arizona and Iowa were not made available for this report.

## Characteristics of the participants

Teachers responded to a series of background questions to help characterize the sample and provide some context for the findings (Table 1).

- **Respondents were from all Tier II states.** Teachers from Arizona (22%), Iowa (33%), Maine (24%), and Rhode Island (21%) completed the online teacher survey.
- **All grades (K-3) and roles were represented.** Most participants taught kindergarten (38%), but other grades were represented as well, such as first grade (21%), second grade (17%), and third grade (17%). Two respondents said that their classrooms were “mixed/multi age,” and one respondent said “other.”
- **Teachers in the survey are experienced teachers.** All of the teachers in the survey had at least two years of experience teaching. Almost half of respondents reported teaching between two and nine years (46%). Some taught between 10-19 years (29%), others between 20-29 years (15%), and a few reported teaching between 30-40 years (10%).

**Summary and Considerations:** The teachers sampled in the data collection process mirror the population involved in the K-3 Formative Assessment pilot<sup>4</sup>. All Tier II states are represented in the findings. Although none of the teachers were in their first years of teaching, many had less than ten years of experience. The most represented group was kindergarten teachers.

## Findings about Long-Term Implementation

### Awareness and perception about the K-3 Formative Assessment pilot

To learn more about initial buy-in and engagement from teachers, teachers were asked in focus groups about how they first heard of the K-3 Formative Assessment pilot process and their perceptions of the assessment before and after using it in their classrooms. Supporting schools to have and maintain a positive view of the assessment can help build strong engagement with the K-3 Formative Assessment process over time.

- **Teachers reported hearing about the K-3 Formative Assessment pilot from administrators at different levels.** In the focus group, teachers reported hearing about the assessment from various levels, including another teacher, principals, state-level administrators, and district-level administrators.
- **Initial perceptions of the assessment were generally positive.** Teachers in the focus group also expressed positive reactions about the assessment when they first heard about it. For example, one teacher was glad to have a way to look at the whole child as illustrated by the boxed quote. The only

“I had never heard of the five domains [or] saw them lined up that way. [I] never thought of all those constructs that way.”

<sup>4</sup> By March 2016, 69 teachers were participating in the pilot (55% kindergarten, 19% first, 12% second, 10% third, and 4% mixed age)

negative reaction was that administering the assessment seemed like “a daunting task.”

- **After the pilot process, some teachers’ perception of the assessment changed.** In the focus group, many teachers who initially felt positively about the assessment continued to have a positive perception after using the assessment. However, some teachers had less positive views after using the assessment because of challenges, such as having to observe “too many students and too many constructs.”

Summary and Considerations: Teachers heard about the K-3 Formative Assessment pilot process from a variety of individuals at different levels throughout the state. As states move forward in the implementation of the assessment, state administrators may want to consider how to leverage the relationships teachers have at different levels in order to engage them early in the process and to support them continually as they use the assessment. Some teachers may be more likely to use the assessment depending on who initially introduces the assessment to them and what is communicated. States may want to focus attention prior to a full-state roll-out to determine the best method to communicate to teachers about the assessment. It may be that a multi-level communication approach (utilizing champions at the state, region, district, or building level) is necessary to engage teachers and schools.

To maintain engagement and buy-in for the assessment, state administrators can understand what contributes to a teacher’s change in perception. Findings indicated that teachers may have started with an initial positive perception of the assessment, but some had less positive views after the pilot process. State administrators may be able to develop solutions to ease the types of challenges that may lead to a less positive perception of the assessment. State administrators can encourage and foster strategies to promote a more positive view of the assessment (e.g., hearing from other teachers about the benefits of using the assessment), while developing solutions to the challenges teachers experience that might lead to a less positive view (e.g., streamlining the data collection process so that it is not as time-consuming or overly complicated).

### Assessment practices

To understand how the K-3 Formative Assessment fits into what schools are already doing, teachers responded to questions about the current use of formative assessments, how teachers can use the information from the K-3 Formative Assessment, and challenges teachers face administering the K-3 Formative Assessment (Tables 2a and 2b).

- **A majority of teachers had previously used formative assessment in their class (Table 2a).** Most teachers in the survey said they had previously used formative assessment (83%).
- **Teachers identified multiple ways that information from the K-3 Formative Assessment could be used (Table 2a).** Although a few teachers did not think they could use the results of the K-3 Formative Assessment in any way (16%), many detailed the many ways teachers were already using the information in their classrooms.
  - **To identify a child’s skill level:** Teachers reported that they used the information from the assessment to identify a child’s skill level (41%): “I was able to look where my kids were and know where I needed to take each.”

- **To guide and individualize instruction:** More than a third of teachers used the assessment results to help inform their instruction (36%). For example, one teacher described her process: “I used the gross motor data to help integrate more skills into my daily routine to help where students were struggling. I also have changed how I have done vocabulary instruction by changing how I scaffold to help students develop a more rich vocabulary.” Teachers also used the information to help group students in their classroom (11%).
- **To share results with others:** Teachers noted various ways that they could use the information to share with others. For instance, teachers could use the information as an additional data point when they reported about a child (25%) or to share about the child with parents (11%). Teachers also said that they would share the information with other instructors or specialists (7%).
- **Materials, resources, and technology greatly facilitated the use of the K-3 Formative Assessment (Table 2b).**
  - The most helpful resource mentioned by teachers was the K-3 app that allowed teachers to collect evidence on their phones or iPad (24%): “The K-3 app was a wonderful and useful tool to use. It allowed me to capture organic situations that were happening in my classroom. I found by using this tool I did not have to set up any situations to capture evidence.”
  - Teachers said that the assessment materials provided during training (e.g., checklists, timelines, documentation forms) were also helpful in using the assessment (22%) as presented by the boxed quote. In addition, the technology platform (20%) and technology devices, such as the iPad (15%), facilitated the use of the assessment.
  - Other helpful supports included being able to use the assessment multiple times, having technical support throughout the process (e.g., technology support or SRI staff), example strategies for collecting the evidence, and being able to collaborate with other teachers.
- **Teachers reported that feeling unsupported during the process was the biggest challenge to using the K-3 Formative Assessment (Table 2b).** Some teachers did not face any challenges when using the assessment (13%), but others identified some barriers to using the assessment.
  - **Insufficient classroom staffing:** When it came to having sufficient staff for the assessment pilot process, almost half of teachers (43%) noted that they did not have enough support in the classroom to do the assessment. They also indicated that there were not enough staff in the school that were trained on the assessment (39%), and they felt a lack of support from their school administrators to use the assessment (13%).
  - **Insufficient time or training:** Teachers also mentioned that there was either not enough time to implement the assessment or not enough time dedicated to training them on the assessment process. For instance, over a third of teachers said that they lacked the

“The documentation form was the most useful of all aspects of the assessment. It was helpful in collecting data, in recording data and in uploading data. Since it was similar to the on-line rating page, it made that step easier as well.”

time to complete the assessment (39%) and did not have enough practice with the technology platform or app during training (35%). While only a few teachers mentioned not being clear about the *expectations* for the assessment (2%), more reported that they did not receive enough information about the *content* of the assessment (20%). Teachers suggested that providing more information about how the assessment aligned with state standards would have been helpful (35%).

- **Difficulties with technology:** Some teachers had trouble when using (28%) or accessing (17%) the technology platform or app, but none of the teachers reported that they lacked support from the technology provider— which suggests that they were able to get help to overcome technology challenges.
- **To address challenges, teachers offered multiple solutions.** Teachers suggested that more staff should be involved in the assessment process (by administering the assessment or by providing instructional support while the teacher uses the assessment); more staff should be trained on the assessment; and the assessment should be better integrated into current classroom activities and instruction. Other suggestions included amending the assessment timeline to match the school calendar better, allowing teachers more preparation time for the assessment, and allowing more time to administer the assessment.

Summary and Considerations: The results indicate that teachers are familiar with formative assessment processes and are interested in using them in their classrooms. Teachers were aware of the benefits and challenges of using the K-3 Formative Assessment. They noted that the various materials and technological resources from the initial training were the most helpful to them for using the assessment, but they were upfront that the biggest challenges were related to a general lack of support to implement the assessment on an ongoing basis. Thus, states may want to find ways to continue to provide the current supports, while also finding ways to increase classroom support for teachers. Increased classroom support may occur naturally as the formative assessment process is scaled up and rolled out across the state. For instance, teachers who had participated in the fall pilot process recruited teachers in the winter/spring pilot process thereby increasing the number of teachers within a school who were using the K-3 Formative Assessment. By increasing the number of teachers who are familiar with the assessment, more teachers are available to share with one another about data collection strategies or uses for the information gathered from the assessment. State administrators can create learning communities across the state for teachers to share with one another; district administrators can utilize already-scheduled district meetings to allow teachers to collaborate; and building administrators can dedicate standing meetings for the purpose of teacher collaboration (e.g., Professional Learning Communities).

Likewise, states may want to consider training more administrators so that they are aware of how to best support teachers during the assessment process. State administrators may want to consider ways that they can continue to highlight the benefits of using a K-3 Formative Assessment in schools while also addressing and alleviating any the challenges that teachers experience.

## Benefits of the K-3 Formative Assessment

Teachers provided insights into the benefits the K-3 Formative Assessment offers to teachers and schools (Table 3).

- **Teachers generally felt that the assessment was a helpful resource to drive instruction in their classroom.** The majority of teachers (61%) see the K-3 Formative Assessment as helpful to driving instruction.
- **Teachers identified benefits both for children and for teachers because of implementing the assessment.** A few teachers (11%) could not see a benefit to using the assessment, but many teachers listed ways that the assessment has been helpful in their classrooms and schools.
  - **Benefits for children:** Over half of teachers said that a primary benefit of the assessment was that they had a whole child or developmentally appropriate perspective on their students (52%). In addition, teachers liked that the assessment provided an additional piece of data that they could use to understand their students (20%) and was easy to use (6%).
  - **Benefits for teachers:** Teachers noted that by using the assessment, they were able to inform and tailor their instruction (17%). The materials and resources, like iPads or additional compensation that were provided because of the pilot process, were also helpful to the teacher in other areas of instruction (6%). A few teachers also explained that the assessment pilot process provided an opportunity for teachers to collaborate with one another (2%).

Summary and Considerations: Buy-in for the K-3 Formative Assessment process seems to have a strong foundation as teachers understand the many benefits that the assessment offers. Teachers acknowledge how the K-3 Formative Assessment benefits both the classroom and the school. State administrators may want to continue to monitor how teachers view the assessment to make sure that the benefits outweigh the challenges to sustain strong engagement and support for the process.

## Communication and collaboration

Teachers were asked to respond about how they communicate with each other at the building, district, or state level (Table 4). To support the use of the K-3 Formative Assessment, teachers may use a variety of means to communicate and collaborate with other teachers about how to administer the assessment. In addition, what and how teachers communicate to families about the assessment sheds light on how schools have been supporting the use of the assessment.

- **Teachers reported that they communicated and collaborated with other teachers in a variety of ways.** Teachers mainly used informal discussions to communicate with other teachers about the assessment (74%). Others used grade-level meetings (57%), teacher-principal meetings (50%), or Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) (14%). A few teachers said that they did not communicate with other educators about the assessment (6%).
- **The K-3 Formative Assessment can be used to communicate with families about a child's skill level and growth.** In the focus group, many teachers reported that they would share

information about a child's skill level with families. One teacher specifically mentioned that he or she would use the information to report the child's growth. Another highlighted that the social-emotional constructs were useful to share with families.

**Summary and Considerations:** Although teachers utilized multiple strategies to discuss the K-3 Formative Assessment, all teachers reported using informal discussions to communicate and collaborate about the K-3 Formative Assessment. School-level administrators may not have offered a formal, structured time to discuss the assessment, thereby increasing the likelihood that informal discussions were used for communication and collaboration. Administrators, whether in the school or at higher levels, may find it useful to promote the use of other communication and collaboration venues. For example, principals can dedicate time in principal-teacher meetings to confer about the assessment, or they can encourage teachers to use a grade-level meeting to discuss how to integrate the assessment into instruction. In addition, schools may want to dedicate a Professional Learning Community solely on how to administer and use the data from the K-3 Formative Assessment.

When communicating to families, teachers were able to identify multiple pieces of information that they may want to share with families. Curriculum specialists or principals can help teachers determine what and how information from the assessment can be shared with families with a focus toward the child's development. Perhaps, principals can encourage teachers to share with families during a parent-family conference about strategies that the family can use to help a child continue to develop based on the child's development as observed using the K-3 Formative Assessment. State administrators can offer guidance to schools about how they can leverage these communication settings to continue to support the use of the assessment.

## Support and resources

To learn more about what supports and resources were most helpful for teachers, teachers were asked to share about the types of supports and resources teachers received and identify the most helpful for administering the K-3 Formative Assessment (Tables 5a and 5b).

### Support and resources provided to teachers (Table 5a)

- **Most teachers reported receiving state-level support or resources.** Over half of the teachers indicated that they received support or resources from the state (59%). State supports included trainings or meetings (17%); resources and materials, like iPads or assessment materials (33%); communication, such as reminders or regular check-ins (6%); or compensation for participation (15%).
- **Some teachers reported receiving district-level supports and resources.** In the focus group, teachers detailed supports at the district level, including a workshop with other people in the district and materials (i.e., iPad).
- **Some teachers reported receiving school-level supports and resources:** Focus group teachers reported receiving supports at the school level, primarily general support from school administrators.

### Suggested supports and resources for teachers (Table 5b)

- **Teachers suggested other support or resources that would help them to administer the K-3 Formative Assessment successfully.** Several teachers reported that the supports they received were sufficient (23%), but several teachers detailed other supports that would be helpful.

- **Refining assessment processes:** Teachers suggested supports that would ease the administration of the K-3 Formative Assessment, such as providing them more time to do the assessment (20%) or reducing the data collection expectations (e.g., observing fewer kids or collecting fewer pieces of evidences; 11%). They also proposed ways to refine the K-3 Formative Assessment itself. For example, teachers who used the assessment previously could provide real-life strategies for collecting evidence or observing children (13%), or could help ensure the progressions accurately captured children’s development (7%). Additionally, providing more information for how the progressions aligned with standards in the assessment materials would help teachers (4%).
- **Increased school involvement and collaboration:** Teachers requested that schools or districts provide additional staff to watch their class while the teacher focuses on administering the assessment or to help collect evidences for them (11%). They also wanted more collaboration among teachers using the assessment, either by training more teachers to use it or by finding opportunities for them to work together (9%) as illustrated by the boxed quote. In addition, teachers commented that having school- and district-level administrators understand the assessment process would help teachers to communicate better about ways they can be supported (5%). Some suggested that regular check-ins would keep teachers on track (4%).
- **Technology changes:** Some teachers suggested making changes to the technology platform or app to make it easier to use (14%). For instance, one teacher said, “I would love to be able to click on one tab that would show me my students, what constructs were completed/not completed, where they fell on the progressions each time and what evidence I entered. It would make it a lot easier.” They also said that having technology devices or more training on the technology devices would assist in successful administration of the assessment (7%).

“I think it will be helpful if/when other teachers in my school participate so we can discuss and have someone almost back score me so I can see if I am accurately assessing the students and be able to have planning sessions based around the progressions.”

**Summary and Considerations:** Teachers recognized that state and district administrators were able to provide supports that helped schools start the formative assessment process (e.g., training, compensation, and technology devices). Nonetheless, state administrators can support teachers’ use of the assessment by seeking their feedback and input on future refinements of the assessment process. Teachers can offer examples of successful strategies that could be integrated into future trainings for how to collect evidence or pace data collection. They also have knowledge about how to improve

progressions to match what they know of children’s development at various levels. Lastly, teachers can provide the most informed feedback on how to improve the technology platform and app to meet the needs of teachers best since they have used it day-in and day-out. Teachers can also shed light on common challenges state administrators could be addressing in initial or ongoing training.

Other than the supports that generally facilitate the use of the assessment, the supports that teachers need to move forward with using the assessment to inform instruction require engaging teachers more deeply with the assessment process. For example, after the initial training, teachers still sought support from principals and support staff about how exactly they could collect evidences. School-level administrators have a more refined knowledge of the teacher, the children, and the school context to provide more tailored assistance than district- or state-level administrators. Additionally, school-level administrators can find ways that fit within the school’s particular context for teachers to collaborate with one another about the assessment. State administrators may want to integrate strategies for supporting teachers into administrator-specific trainings so that principals and support staff can assist teachers to use the assessment.

## Final Recommendations

The information we gathered from a sample of pilot teachers after the winter/spring pilot for the K-3 Formative Assessment pilot process offers a chance for the Research Partners and Consortium states to evaluate practices to support teachers in using the K-3 Formative Assessment over time. Findings suggest that teachers think the K-3 Formative Assessment has many benefits, but they struggle with administering a seemingly cumbersome assessment. State, district, and school administrators have found ways to support teachers to use the assessment, but more can be done to ensure a successful scale-up of the assessment. We have identified overall recommendations for future piloting, field testing, and full-scale implementation. State administrators will want to continue gathering feedback as the K-3 Formative Assessment is implemented over time and across states to inform the long-term usefulness of the assessment.

**Continue to provide current supports:** Teachers reported that they found the training materials developed to be helpful in easing the administration of the K-3 Formative Assessment process. From checklists to documentation forms to iPads, all of the resources that have been offered to teachers have helped them use the assessment. As state administrators move into recruiting new teachers to participate in the assessment process, they will want to find ways to continue offering these supports. State administrators will need to identify an individual or team who can be in charge of refining current resources, continuing to provide initial training, and communicating with stakeholders.

**Encourage the use of building-level resources:** To ease and assist the use of the K-3 Formative Assessment, state administrators may want to examine what resources and supports teachers could use at the school-level .

- **Pre-existing meetings:** Almost all of the pilot teachers used informal discussions to help communicate and collaborate about the K-3 Formative Assessment. This means that teachers

are interested in communicating and collaborating about the assessment process. However, teachers noted that very few of regularly-scheduled meetings were dedicated to discussing the K-3 Formative Assessment. If schools could dedicate some time during pre-existing meetings or one standing meeting on a regular interval to discuss topics related to using the assessment, teachers may feel better supported to use the K-3 Formative Assessment in their classrooms.

- **Data collection strategies:** Teachers mentioned that they would prefer to assess fewer children or to collect fewer evidences per child in order to ease the burden of the assessment. However, the purpose of the assessment is to use multiple observations of a child to inform where children are developmentally to help teachers tailor their instruction for individual children. Ideally, the observations could be integrated into a teacher's normal routine. Thus, gathering fewer evidences or examining fewer constructs may not yield sufficient information for teachers to use the K-3 Formative Assessment as intended.

Teachers' ability to use the K-3 Formative Assessment effectively and as intended is strengthened by their **own experience** after multiple uses of the assessment.

However, teachers can find alternative and innovative ways to collect data more effectively. They can design classroom activities to maximize their ability to observe multiple constructs or children at one time, or they can use information from other required assessments to inform the formative assessment. To help teachers collect a sufficient number of observations for each of their children, they can collaborate with other instructors who could help provide additional evidences for children during regular classroom routines. For example, teachers can ask art teachers to take note of whether their children can hold writing utensils appropriately, or a physical education teacher may be able to share about a child's physical mobility. In conjunction with others collecting evidence, teachers who have used the assessment more than once noted that they are better able to integrate activities into their instruction that help to capture their children's skills. Thus, teachers' ability to use the K-3 Formative Assessment effectively and as intended is strengthened by their own experience after multiple uses of the assessment.

- **Collaboration:** While it was unclear whether the survey respondents were the only implementers of the K-3 Formative Assessment in their schools, many teachers indicated that they would find it beneficial to increase collaboration with other teachers to use the assessment. Teachers wanted to know how others were integrating the assessment into their daily routine, about strategies they could use to collect evidences, and about how they could use the results from the assessment. In order to increase collaboration, more teachers in the school can be trained on the assessment so that everyone is speaking the same language. If one teacher finds the assessment useful, but cannot communicate about the information gathered to another teacher, the benefits are short-term. Although it may require additional funds, state administrators could encourage schools to send specialists, instructional coaches, special education educators, physical education teachers, or other support staff to training so that they could learn about the assessment. If funding is unavailable to train additional staff, state administrators can exercise a variety of strategies for teachers to share with others about the assessment. For example, trainers can highlight ways to communicate with others about the assessment during the initial training, or state administrators could develop a fact sheet or one-pager to disseminate to other instructors at the school. Additionally, an online web-training

video could be developed that others could watch to familiarize themselves with the assessment. If having more teachers in a school is not feasible, state administrators can also encourage ways for teachers across a state to communicate and collaborate. For example, an online learning community could be established or statewide meetings can be held for teachers to meet one another.

**Have teachers inform improvements to the assessment process:** Because teachers are the ones who are using the materials and technology to administer the assessment, they are well versed in what

Consider creating a teacher advisory group or systems to collect feedback regularly.

works and what does not work. As states consider how to roll out and scale up the use of the K-3 Formative Assessment, it is critical that they find ways that teachers can provide the necessary feedback to improve the assessment process. For example, many teachers suggested ideas for how to improve the technology platform to facilitate entering the

data and using the information from the assessment. A technology developer can only surmise how a teacher might want to see the information, but a teacher knows the best way to display information for use in their classroom. When the state reaches a point where they can make changes to the technology, they can consider collecting feedback from teachers so that it is user-friendly. In another instance, teachers noted that the way constructs and progressions were worded were unclear. As states refine the K-3 Formative Assessment, they may want to take some time to ask teachers to review and revise the wording so that it is understandable for other teachers. States may consider creating a teacher advisory group or systems to collect feedback regularly. State administrators can also improve stakeholder buy-in when teachers and schools have their concerns heard and addressed.

**Involve administrators at all levels:** The findings suggest that school-level administrators are on the same page as their instructional team and understand their teachers' experience using the K-3 Formative Assessment. Across many of the topics, principals and teachers offered similar responses to questions albeit at varying frequency for some areas like how often teachers are using certain settings to communicate and collaborate. Regardless, state administrators will want to consider the ways that they can engage administrators at all levels, not only to build awareness of the K-3 Formative Assessment, but also to help them support teachers. For instance, teachers first heard of the K-3 Formative Assessment from administrators at the school, district, and state level. Teachers also acknowledged that they were able to receive resources and supports from state- and district-level administrators. Additionally, they often sought support from their school-level administrators about how to use the assessment effectively. Therefore, administrators were critical at all levels to support teachers' use of the assessment. State administrators can find ways to talk about the assessment process at various meetings, presentations, or conferences to familiarize different administrators with the purpose and goals of the K-3 Formative Assessment. State administrators can also develop training, resources, and communication that are tailored to administrators about how they can be involved in the process, even if they are not the ones collecting the data. Any way that state administrators can familiarize administrators at all levels with the K-3 Formative Assessment process will help build support by allowing them to know how they can be the most useful in their particular role.

As state administrators prioritize which of these recommendations they are able to pursue, they will want to consider how they can implement each of these supports. They will need to think of the steps required to implement each of these supports successfully and consider whether their budget can sustain the supports. To assist in prioritizing supports, state administrators may want to build buy-in by gathering feedback from key stakeholders involved in the process to make sure that they are addressing the concerns at the forefront of stakeholders' minds. Lastly, state administrators will need to identify who will help drive the implementation process to ensure successful implementation.

## Appendix 1: Data tables

**Table 1. Respondent Characteristics**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>State (n=63)</i>	
Arizona	22%
Iowa	33%
Maine	24%
Rhode Island	21%
<i>Grade (n=42)</i>	
Kindergarten	38%
1st grade	21%
2nd grade	17%
3rd grade	17%
Mixed/Multi-Age	5%
Other	2%
<i>Years teaching (n=41)</i>	
2-9 years	46%
10-19 years	29%
20-29 years	15%
30-40 years	10%

**Table 2a. Use of formative assessments**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Using formative assessments in early primary grades (K-3) (n=42)</i>	
	83%
<i>Ways to use data* (n=56)</i>	
To identify child's skills	41%
To guide and individualize instruction	36%
As a data point for other assessments or reporting	25%
To share with families	11%
To group students	11%
To share with other instructors and specialists	7%
Did not use any information/Not sure	16%

\*Respondents were able to provide multiple responses; therefore percentages will not add to 100%. Percentages represent the percent of respondents that mentioned a particular response.

**Table 2b. Facilitators and challenges to using the assessment**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Facilitators to using the assessment (n=54)*</i>	
K-3 app	24%
Materials and resources (e.g., checklists, timelines, documentation forms)	22%
Technology platform	20%
Technology to collect evidence (e.g., iPads)	15%
Construct progressions	13%
Using the assessment multiple times	9%
Support staff (e.g., SRI staff or technology support)	9%
Ways to collect the evidence	6%
Collaboration with other teachers	6%
<i>Challenges to using the assessment (n=54)*</i>	
Not enough support in the classroom	43%
Not enough staff in the school were trained	39%
Not enough time to implement	39%
Lack of alignment with state standards	35%
Not enough practice with the technology platform or app in training	35%
Difficulties using the technology platform and/or app	28%
Not enough information about the content of the assessment in the training	20%
Difficulties accessing the technology platform and/or app	17%
Lack of support and/or buy-in from school administrators	13%
Not enough information about expectations in the training	2%
Lack of support from the technology provider for issues	0%
No challenges	13%
Other	7%

\*Respondents were able to provide multiple responses; therefore percentages will not add to 100%. Percentages represent the percent of respondents that mentioned a particular response

**Table 3. Benefits of the K-3 Formative Assessment**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Helpful resource for informing instruction in your classroom (n=54)</i>	
Yes	61%
No	39%
<i>Benefits of implementing the K-3 Formative Assessment (n=54)*</i>	
Gave a whole child or developmentally appropriate view	52%
Offered a new way to gather information on a child	20%
Informed instruction	17%
Received additional resources by participating	6%
Had an assessment that was easy to use	6%
Offered a chance to collaborate with other teachers	2%
No benefits	11%

\*Respondents were able to provide multiple responses; therefore percentages will not add to 100%. Percentages represent the percent of respondents that mentioned a particular response.

**Table 4. Communication and collaboration**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Settings used for teacher communication and collaboration (n=54)</i>	
Informal discussions with other teachers	74%
Grade-level meetings	57%
Teacher-principal meeting	50%
Professional Learning Communities	26%
Other	7%
I did not communicate or collaborate with others.	6%

**Table 5a. Supports and resources provided to teachers**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>State supports for the K-3 Formative Assessment (n=54)*</i>	
Trainings or meetings	17%
Resources (e.g., iPads, resource binders)	33%
Communication (e.g., emails, reminders)	6%
Compensation for participation	15%
No resources	41%

\*Respondents were able to provide multiple responses; therefore percentages will not add to 100%. Percentages represent the percent of respondents that mentioned a particular response.

**Table 5b. Supports and resources to use the assessment**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>What other supports would be helpful to successfully use this assessment? (n=58)*</i>	
More time to do the assessment	20%
Changes to the technology platform or app to make it easier to use	14%
Teacher-informed examples or scenarios for collecting evidences	13%
Classroom support to collect evidence or watch kids	11%
Reducing data collection (e.g., observing less kids, collecting fewer evidences)	11%
Collaboration among other teachers using the assessment	9%
Teacher-informed clarifications to the progressions	7%
Additional technology devices or more training on technology	7%
Administrator support (district and school level)	5%
Alignment of progressions with standards	4%
Regular check-ins	4%
No other supports were necessary	23%

\*Respondents were able to provide multiple responses; therefore percentages will not add to 100%. Percentages represent the percent of respondents that mentioned a particular response.

## Appendix 2

### Teacher Background Survey

What state are you in?

What grade are you going to teach this year?

- Kindergarten
- 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- Mixed-age (please identify grades)
- Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been a school teacher, including part-time teaching?

### Teacher Online Survey

#### Initial Thoughts

Is this your first experience with formative assessment? YES/NO

- (If yes): Tell us about how the experience went:
- (If no): How did you use formative assessments in your classroom before the K-3 Assessment?
- (If no): How is this experience the same or different?

#### Assessment

What ways, if any, have you communicated or collaborated with other professionals about the K-3 Formative Assessment? (Check all that apply)

- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Grade-level meetings (e.g., K meeting or 3rd grade meeting)
- Teacher-principal meeting
- Informal discussions with other teachers
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- I did not communicate or collaborate with others about this assessment. (if selected skip to Q.15)

For each of the above communication and collaboration strategies you used, please tell us how helpful it was in supporting the implementation of the assessment. (only list strategies selected above)

	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful	Not sure
Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)	( )	( )	( )	( )
Grade-level meetings (e.g., K meeting or 3rd grade meeting)	( )	( )	( )	( )

Teacher-principal meeting	( )	( )	( )	( )
Informal discussions with other teachers	( )	( )	( )	( )
Other, specify	( )	( )	( )	( )

### Implementation Supports

Did anyone else provide data/evidence for you during the assessment process? YES/NO

- (If yes): Specify:
- (If no): Would it have been helpful for others to provide data/evidence for you during the assessment process? YES/NO
  - Please explain

Did you receive any resources and/or support from the state for implementing the K-3 Assessment? YES/NO

- (If yes): Please describe:
- (If yes): What about the resources or support from the state was helpful? (Optional)

What support did SRI staff provide that was helpful to you when implementing the K-3 Assessment (e.g., being available to answer questions or providing resources to help administer the assessment, etc.)? How was this support helpful?

Other than the supports we've already mentioned, what else would be helpful to support implementation of the K-3 Formative Assessment in the future? Why?

Based on your experience with the K-3 assessment process this spring, what challenges did you face in implementing this assessment? (Select all that apply)

- Not enough practice with the technology platform or app in training prior to using it in the classroom
- Not enough information about the content of the assessment in the training (e.g., uncertainty about the purpose or use of the assessment, individual constructs)
- Not enough information about expectations for implementing the assessment in the training (e.g., the cluster scheduling or dates for uploading evidence)
- Not enough staff in the school were trained (e.g., it would have been helpful for administrators to be trained; it would have been helpful to have more teachers in my school piloting the assessment).
- Lack of alignment with state standards
- Not enough time to implement
- Lack of support and/or buy-in from my school administrators
- Not enough support in the classroom (e.g., it would have been helpful for aides to help collect evidence)

- Difficulties accessing the technology platform and/or app (e.g., downloading the app or issues accessing internet to use the app)
- Difficulties using the technology platform and/or app (e.g., understanding how to use the platform or app or difficulties locating items on the platform or app to complete the assessment)
- Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- No challenges

What recommendations/ideas do you have for addressing those challenges you have identified?

### **Opinions and Final Reflections**

Overall, has the K-3 formative assessment been a helpful resource for informing instruction in your classroom? YES/NO

- (If yes): How so?
- (If no): Why not?

What worked well when implementing this assessment?

What benefits have you experienced as a result of implementing the new assessment in your classroom this spring?

### **Teacher Focus Group Questions**

#### **Initial Thoughts**

1. How did you learn about the K-3 Assessment pilot? When you first learned about the K-3 Assessment, what were you told is the purpose of this new assessment?
2. What was your initial perception of the K-3 Assessment? How has that changed now that you've been using it?
3. What other assessments did you use this winter? Did you use other assessments in conjunction with this assessment? If so, how? Probe for alignment and completion.

#### **Assessment Process**

4. Tell us about your system for data collection and any strategies you used to collect evidence. How did you use the materials in your binder? What would you do differently in the future? What would you do the same?
5. Now that you have gone through the entire assessment process, what else could you have used to more effectively complete this assessment? (Additional training? Materials? Resources?)

#### **Technology Platform**

6. What aspects of the platform were most helpful? Least helpful?
7. Did you find the K-3 Evidence app to be a helpful resource? Why or Why not?

8. How did you use the evidences you entered in the platform to make decisions about children's status summary ratings?
9. Did you explore using the reports tab on the tech platform? If yes, what did you think about them? Were they useful?

### **Assessment and Instruction**

10. Tell us about your planning process for including the assessment in your regular classroom routine.
11. How did you use the data you collected from this assessment?
  - a. Have you been able to individualize instruction using the learning status ratings? Can you give me an example?

### **Implementation Supports**

12. What resources and support, if any, did you receive from your building administration for implementing the K-3 Assessment?
13. What resources and support, if any, did you receive from your district for implementing the K-3 Assessment?
14. What suggestions do you have regarding building or district support for the K-3 Assessment? Are there any actions that the leadership either in your school or district could have taken to make your experience with the assessment more successful?
15. Are there any other types of formal or informal help or assistance you have received or provided to others that we have not yet discussed?
16. Of all the supports you've received, what was the most helpful?
17. What additional supports would you need to implement the K-3 Assessment?

### **Opinions and Final Reflections**

18. Did the implementation of the assessment positively or negatively affect other activities in your classroom? How so?
19. Do you feel the K-3 formative assessment construct progressions and ratings provide meaningful data about your students' abilities?
  - a. Can you share some examples?
  - b. How could the assessment be improved?
20. Once the K-3 Assessment is valid and reliable, how would you envision using the information to share with parents and families?