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For Immediate Release

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New statewide test providers selected for Utah students

Grade 3-8 assessment renamed RISE, and 9-10 assessment to be hybridized with ACT

SALT LAKE CITY— The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) announced it approved a new testing contract with Pearson to offer the Utah Aspire Plus test to students in grades 9 and 10 beginning in the 2018-19 school year. Today’s approval marks the completion of extensive searches to secure new providers for the statewide assessments in grades 3-10 in public schools.

Earlier this year, USBE approved a testing contract with Questar Assessment Inc. to offer the RISE (Readiness. Improvement. Success. Empowerment.) test for grades 3-8.

Pearson and Questar were selected through two required request for proposal (RFP) processes after the existing contract for SAGE, through the American Institute of Research (AIR), expired. Legislation both requires and funds a standards assessment for grades 3-8 and a high school assessment for grades 9 and 10. Students in grade 11 will continue taking the ACT.

Both Utah Aspire Plus and RISE will allow for the continued calculation of Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) and student achievement. The continuity will provide important trend data to educators, parents, and students that will continue to be used to track individual student growth and school accountability.

The assessment offered by Pearson is a hybrid between the ACT Aspire and Utah’s current grade 9 and 10 test questions.

“Utah Aspire Plus is an innovative assessment solution that is unique to Utah and a first-of-its-kind,” said Darin Nielsen, USBE assistant superintendent of student learning. “It will give students an experience similar to that of taking the ACT by providing them with a score predictive of their college readiness, and it will also support the continued instructional emphasis on the Utah Core Standards.”

Questar Assessment Inc. will offer RISE to students in grades 3-8 beginning in the 2018-2019 school year. The test offers a new user interface and slightly different functionality, but will maintain Utah item bank questions and trend data obtained through SAGE testing over the past five years. RISE will be completely aligned with Utah standards, as required by law. RISE will also continue to be criterion referenced and use the same performance level descriptors and similar scale scores.

While the test will continue to be delivered online, students and educators will experience a new interface. One major change includes the test’s new multistage adaptive functionality. This will allow students full navigation – backward, forward, review, and revise – within each stage or test section.

Additionally, RISE will include new and enhanced reports available for the individual student and educator. Writing has also been removed from the assessment for all grades except fifth and eighth, in which students will respond to a single prompt and receive a separate score.

“The process that led to these new assessments focused on the best interest of Utah parents, students, and educators. It was conducted in accordance with procurement laws and has ended with two exceptional vendors that we look forward to working with,” said USBE Chair Mark Huntsman. “I am confident these tests will require minimal transitions in our schools and improved readiness in our students.”

Both Questar and Pearsons’ contracts run 10 years. Questar’s contract is for \$41,565,145, and Pearson’s contract is for \$38,678,497.

Additional information about [RISE](#) and [Utah Aspire Plus](#) is available at on the [Assessment](#) section page at schools.utah.gov.

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