Session 3C: Planning and Implementation of IADA
Panelists: *Scott Marion, Carla Evans*

[*Session 3C Planning and Implementation in IADA slides 1–17*]
Dr. Evans opened the session, encouraging session attendees to anonymously share knowledge of IADA and ask questions via a QR code or a URL. She also noted that the ED website shares completed IADA applications. One can see the questions asked and how states and ED responded, as well as APRs and the template, which have recently been updated.

Dr. Evans explained that there are three main sections to the IADA application: SEA assurances, project abstract, and project narrative. The project abstract is usually short. The project narrative contains more detail, including a TOA. Dr. Evans emphasized the decisions that need to be made before applying for IADA:

(1) Stakeholder involvement. Dr. Evans said to get in touch with many stakeholders (students, parents, educators, school leaders, groups representing subgroups of students, civil rights groups, and LEAs). If they are not already pointing to areas in need of improvement, IADA might not be the right path. If there are issues, lots of authentic engagement and information will help inform design and help with scaling.
(2) State vision, rationale, TOA, and detailed explanation of the innovative assessment system. When you start with a clear vision/rationale/TOA, implementation and evaluation are already built into the TOA.
(3) Itemized budget showing financial commitments to implement the innovative system. Depending on innovation, the state might seek outside or philanthropic support.
(4) Description of the innovative system and commitment from a set of LEAs or schools that plan to implement it in Year 1, ensuring that there are people behind it and that demographic representation is there (it need not be perfect, though) and that there is a plan to scale for all students.
(5) Detailed statewide scaling plan within the time frame of the demonstration authority.

There are six parts to the IADA application's project narrative. The session focused on state vision, consultation, and innovative assessment because the other components are self-explanatory.

Vision: Assessment should support the goals of a state's vision for its educational system. Does your state need a demonstration project to solve a problem or address a need? Dr. Evans used a flowchart (slide 11) and explained that a pilot could be applicable if the districts will be selecting the assessment in years other than high school and if districts will be allowed to use locally designed assessments for accountability.

Attendees broke into small groups to discuss ideas for innovation and why they might need an IADA to pursue them. Aurelia Shorty, an Education Specialist for School Improvement at the Bureau of Indian Education, is excited about the potential of IADA because tribes are seeking sovereignty and autonomy for their schools. Through IADA, tribes could incorporate their languages (when available) and culturally responsive teaching in curricula and instructional

practices. IADA could provide opportunities for more culturally specific education while possibly releasing tribes from some of the federal restrictions. Dr. Marion suggested looking at the IADA in Hawaii, which is undergoing peer review.

Consultation: Expert and stakeholder consultations are required in IADA application. Dr. Evans strongly advises consulting state policymakers, too. Leadership transitions are difficult for innovative programs, and orderly transition and buy-in are important. There are many ways to consult and have conversations with all stakeholders. Ensuring assessment literacy is critical. Be clear that state assessments must serve accountability purposes. Many people—including parents, educators, and school district officials—can be confused and erroneously believe that assessments can serve multiple purposes and do them equally well.

Innovative Assessment System: Peer review is not part of the IADA application; applicants should describe the potential to (1) meet the same reliability and validity requirements of any state assessment, including requirements around accessibility, accommodation, and participation; (2) align with the state's content standards for the student's grade level; (3) generate an annual summative determination achievement for each student in federally required grades and subjects; (4) generate comparable results; and (5) use results in the state comparability system.

[Session 3C Planning and Implementation in IADA slides 18–21]
Dr. Marion discussed how to support successful implementation of IADA in terms of design, technical components, policies and resources, culture and capacity, and structure. The conditions vary based on the system, the flexibility required, and the innovation.

Design: Inclusion of all students is required. When considering multiple tests versus one end-of-year test, which offers better access to students who are medically fragile? If you are doing something innovative, you hope to build in universal design and accessibility guarantees, and it is very challenging. Additionally, is the design worth scaling? Good design needs a defensible and well-articulated TOA. Can the design be iterated upon? It is difficult to design a program for seven years in the future. Expectations should be well communicated to all key stakeholders. Dr. Mbella commented that some stakeholders don't like changes to plans and can push back. Dr. Marion responded that people often don't like change but somehow want things to be better; innovators need to "square the circle," and communication is key. One must educate proactively, to prepare for potential complaints and think about how the innovation could be rolled out to the rest of the state in order to prevent surprises.

Technical Components: To innovate successfully, one must address comparability, quality and rigor, validity, reliability, and generalizability. One can test a subset of issues, but one needs to be clear about what one is generalizing to and how one is collecting and verifying evidence.

Policies and Resources: IADA is not cheap to implement. To achieve stability, one has to limit the number of initiatives. Accountability is necessary, and assessment literacy is needed to achieve it.

Culture and Capacity: Political will and buy-in are also important. Leaders above you need to understand why innovation is important. Complaints will most likely go to them. Layering big changes into an existing structure can be a surprise. The TOA should carefully consider what needs to change—and what can realistically change.

Structure: How do state and school district budgets need to change to support these initiatives? How do other major structures—e.g., time, calendars, grade levels, staffing patterns—need to change to support these major learning initiatives?

[Session 3C Planning and Implementation in IADA slides 22–27]
Dr. Marion proceeded to discuss planning an orderly transition from legacy assessment programs. Communication is key in preparing stakeholders in advance for the inevitability that a demonstration program will either become the statewide system or cease to exist and districts in the pilot will return to traditional testing. Stakeholders should understand from the start that a program's not becoming the state assessment does not equate to failure because important knowledge and lessons will be gathered. For example, although New Hampshire left IADA, as a result of its participation, the state conducts performance assessment work that wasn't there before. Dr. Mbella asked for clarification on the slide stating, "If States transition to IADA pilot as State assessment, they submit evidence of that assessment for the Department's peer review after the first operational year Statewide." Dr. Peasley, Supervisory Educational Research Analyst at ED, responded that projects should go under peer review when they are ready. Dr. Marion added that peer review is the last part of the process and that APRs gather information for peer review; you will have a lot of protocols in place, but not everything.

Dr. Marion added that the notion of "failing fast" is another way to build toward transition. If a state had enough districts willing to try innovations, the state could try multiple approaches simultaneously and then finesse those that it found to be most successful. Dr. Marion provided an update on several states. Massachusetts plans to go statewide once it is done tinkering. Louisiana is wrestling with getting all LEAs to do the TYA components. North Carolina made check-ins optional. New Hampshire couldn't overcome the orderly transition hurdle.

IADA does not provide a formal planning period. To avoid "building the plane while flying it," Dr. Marion suggested that one could build capacity through professional development with early adopters (including policymakers and district leaders not in the program) before implementation, use dedicated planning time to design and prepare an IADA application before submitting the application (planning grants may be available), or use the first couple of years of IADA to plan a new assessment system. Dr. Peasley added that there is no formal structure within the law; short of a change in the law, states can plan for IADA before applying to IADA. If planning eats a lot of time, states can ask for more time. Dr. Mbella commented that it is difficult to persuade people to do something different without having ED's approval of the application and that a planning period could be beneficial.

Questions and Comments

What types of expertise will be represented in the review of an application?

Dr. Peasley replied that with at least three rounds of IADA applications, ED has recruited people with experience in curriculum and assessment development, people with expertise in special populations, and people who have served as assessment peer reviewers. There is always an open call for reviewers to broaden the base. The panel is never all "testing people." The process is similar to that for pulling together grant review panels. Typically, about five people review the applications. Dr. Peasley said ED is always looking for additional qualified reviewers. Dr. Marion added that serving as a reviewer is a great way to gain experience for developing an application. He explained that there are no shortcuts. Dr. Evans added that a well-articulated TOA can help. Dr. Marion is an advocate of "long cuts," such as deep stakeholder involvement and thinking about everything that could go wrong.

Dr. Peasley asked Dr. Evans and Dr. Marion what advice they would give to states about the complicating factors of the relatively long IADA demonstration timeframe and states changing of content standards, which tends to happen every five to seven years. Dr. Marion replied that this situation is part of the planning and that states should identify these changes ahead of time. Dr. Evans added that one should get policymakers on board and ask them to consider IADA when thinking about changes in academic standards.