Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about Acadience Math

Question:	What is the purpose of Acadience Math? How is it different from RISE or district benchmark assessments?
Answer:	There is not currently a statewide assessment in grades 1-2. The Acadience Math assessment will provide data for Grades K-3 to assess early learning of mathematics. Acadience Math is a screening assessment that is a quick and efficient measure to identify students who may be at risk for developing difficulties in mathematics. As part of a comprehensive assessment and intervention system, research recommends screening all students to identify those at risk for potential mathematics difficulties and provide interventions to students identified as at risk. RISE and benchmark assessments assess achievement in standards, but do not necessarily identify students for potential risk in a timely manner.

Question:	In an effort to reduce the time devoted to testing, is there a way that assessments districts and charters are already using could be substituted for Acadience Math?
Answer:	No. We understand that many districts and charters already have assessment practices of core standards in place and these are great measures of students' mastery of standards. At this time we do not have a state-wide standardized measure for students in mathematics in the early grades. District-based assessments vary widely from district to district and are not administered in a standardized way. We understand the concern with an additional assessment, but also view the potential assessment as one piece of data in a student's mathematical knowledge and skills.

Question:	Some mathematics research indicates that timed tests create anxiety for students and may cause students to dislike math or label themselves as bad at math because they are not fast at computation. Why is the state implementing an assessment with a timed component?
Answer:	Current mathematics research does cite negative implications for timed testing in mathematics; however, the emphasis on those studies is regarding regular timed testing based on fact fluency. While the new assessment will have a timed component for administration, the emphasis would not be on the time. The benchmark assessment must be timed to keep the assessment standardized.

Question:	How is a screening assessment different from a diagnostic assessment?
Answer:	Acadience Math is a screening assessment that is a quick and efficient measure to identify students who may be at risk for developing difficulties in mathematics. Diagnostic assessments provide in-depth information about a student's performance in a particular concept or skill. It may be appropriate to use diagnostic assessments for some students demonstrating a need for intervention in particular areas of mathematics. The screening assessment is a quick and efficient measure for all students.

Question:	This assessment doesn't seem to assess the problem solving and thinking my students do in class. How is it useful? How can this assessment measure my students' understanding when the assessment items do not align to what instruction (discourse, tasks, etc.) looks like in my classroom?
Answer:	High quality mathematics instruction should include effective teaching practices based on problems solving and discourse. Classroom assessments may be used to assess these skills. Acadience Math is a screener used to identify students in need of intervention. Other assessments should be used to assess student understanding of standards and ability to problem solve.

Question:	Are there consequences for districts, schools, or teachers that don't meet the growth goals or requirements on the mathematics and literacy assessments?
Answer:	Districts and charters are already required to write and achieve state and local goals for literacy. The new legislation adds math to the requirements for the Early Learning Plan. Districts and charters will be expected to meet both state and locally-written goals based on assessment data. If the goals are not achieved at the district or charter level, then USBE increases their support to the district and charter leaders to further support in achieving their goals. If the district or charter does not achieve their goals for consecutive years then the support from USBE increases each year of failure.

Question:	Why should assessment items not be taught directly?
Answer:	The assessment items are predictors of success in mathematics. Teaching items directly will skew the data and not show an accurate picture of student understanding. It is best to implement effective instruction on the standards. In the same way it is not recommended to teach nonsense words in reading instruction, it is also not recommended to teach specific math measures.

Question:	Is the Acadience Math assessment available for grades 4-6?
Answer:	The Acadience Math assessment is available through Acadience Learning for grades K-6. Utah is funding the assessment for grades K-3. If an LEA would like to administer the assessment in grades 4-6, they may, but will need to work with Acadience Learning to pay for the data management from the LEA level. The cost is about $1.50 per student.

Printing Notes to consider:

- Printing instructions indicate that legal-size paper should be used when printing the Scoring Booklets (K-3). It works on letter-size paper, too. The print will be smaller, but only the tester reads anything in the Scoring Booklet.
- Since 2nd and 3rd grade measures are not one on one, the Scoring Booklets are not used for scoring, but the Computation and the Concepts & Applications totals can be written on the cover. Inside the Scoring Booklets are Response Pattern charts which list the problems and the skill tested. It can be used to analyze the student's performance on the Computation and the Concepts & Applications measures.