STI Education Data Management Solutions

STIAssessment v3.0

Quick Reference Guide

What Every User Should Know About STIAssessment

STI | Education Data Management Solutions

Introduction

STIAssessment gives users unprecedented control over every aspect of student assessment, from item creation and alignment to advanced TestSCOPE reporting.

To help users harness that power, the entire STIAssessment team—trainers, customer support, and sales representatives, as well as designers and engineers—have pooled our ideas in this document. We have also drawn upon customer queries and feedback to help ensure your success with STIAssessment.

This document is organized by STIAssessment functions to help you focus on your specific area of interest.

Please note that there are also very specific documents with in-depth information on all of these functions in the STIAssessment Resource Center. Please see IX. Resources for more on the Resource Center.

We expect this document to grow over time. As we add new features and enhancements, we will tailor this document to better serve your needs. Please check back periodically to see if a new version of this document has been posted.

In the meantime, we hope this document helps you fully utilize STIAssessment to facilitate the data-driven instruction that will improve student achievement in your district.

—The STIAssessment Team

STIAssessment Quick Reference Guide

I. Assessment Creation

Prior to Test Creation: Plan Ahead!

Train for Success

Taking advantage of STIAssessment training sessions is the first step toward trouble-free testing and accurate student data.

- **Identify key personnel.** Who will be your District Administrator? Who will write items? Who will create assessments? Who will assign assessments? <u>Ensure that all personnel who will be involved in classroom-based, school-wide or district-wide assessments are invited to all training opportunities</u>.

- **Give key personnel uninterrupted training time**. STIAssessment training is an *investment*. <u>Giving key personnel uninterrupted training time helps ensure successful assessment programs</u>.

- **Make sure key personnel "pass the baton."** <u>When there are personnel shifts, make sure new personnel are properly trained</u>.

STI can help make sure your key personnel, "old" or "new," are prepared to use STIAssessment to its fullest. For questions on identifying key personnel, training, or re-training, please contact us! See <u>XII. Contacting STI</u> for details.

Make the time

- Creating valid, meaningful assessments tailored to your students' needs is *not* an instantaneous process. Preview your steps and make sure you're allowing adequate time for item creation or item selection and modification, item alignment, and assessment creation.

Make a Blueprint

- Map out content and standards targeted for assessment, then draw up a plan ("testing blueprint") before logging into STIAssessment. Good preparation results in better assessments and even shortens assessment creation time. A solid blueprint makes the whole process go more smoothly

Follow Your Blueprint I: Alignment to State Standards

Correct alignment is the heart of accurate assessment and useful student data. Here are hints for getting it right from the start.

- Please note that no matter how many state standards an STI Library item is aligned to, only the alignment you choose <u>when you place the item on an assessment</u> will be tested.

- Before putting items from user folders on an assessment, make sure your alignments are correct. <u>Alignments cannot be changed once the test has been assigned</u>.

- <u>Even if an assessment has NOT been assigned, alignment of items on assessments cannot be changed directly</u>. This is a built-in safety feature. The only way to change alignments of an item already placed on an assessment is to remove the item altogether, then replace it on the assessment with the correct alignment. This is why it's most efficient to follow your blueprint to choose the correct alignment when placing the item on the assessment in the first place.

Follow Your Blueprint II: Library Items vs. User Folder items

It's quick and easy to create assessments using STI Library items. However, there are great benefits to copying Library items to your folders.

- **Pinpoint accuracy:** You are the best judge of how to assess your students' competency on a given state standard. Use STI alignments to state standards to find STI Library items. You can then copy those items to user folders and align in the way that suits your district.

- **Permanence:** Items in your user folder will not change unless you change them. Library items, on the other hand, are subject to enhancements that could affect the accuracy of alignments you've chosen. If your assessments must be "set in stone," please create them from items in user folders. THEN DO NOT ALTER THOSE ITEMS.

- **Content-creation flexibility:** STI Library items cannot be altered to mirror your district's curricular content. We urge you to use STI Library items as templates. Copy them to user folders, then use STIAssessment's advanced editing tools to tailor the items *exactly* to your students' needs.

Please see more on this in <u>III. Item Creation</u> and <u>IV. Item Management</u>.

Choose a Single Testing Method…and Stick to It!

STIAssessment is a powerful tool, and it offers several convenient testing methods. These methods are carefully designed to deliver maximum assessment validity and student data accuracy.

- If you want to administer a test online, please create online items. Think twice before administering an offline test online (this is a "hybrid" process requiring students to go back and forth between a hard copy of an assessment and an offline scoring assessment taken online). With this kind of "hybrid" administration, you may not be

testing the content standards; you may be testing student vision, coordination, and data-entry skills—and by definition, if an assessment does not test what it's supposed to test, it is not valid.

- For paper-and-pencil tests, be sure to use the official STI scanning forms.

- Make sure everyone knows how the test should be taken. For example, if a District Administrator assigns an online test with randomized questions but a teacher decides to use an unsupported "hybrid" testing scenario (for example, letting students bubble in copies of the test, then entering their results online) the student responses and item keys won't match up. Communication on HOW the test should be taken helps avoid scoring issues.

Please see more about this in V. Administering Tests to Students.

Questions about Assessment Projects? Call Us Early!

STI Support personnel and STIAssessment's Product Manager are always available to help. If you're not sure your assessment program is on track, please contact STI with questions about turning your blueprint into a reality. See XII. Contacting STI for details.

During Test Creation

- STIAssessment is carefully designed with buttons and links to take you through the assessment creation process. *Never* use your browser's **Back** button to navigate from page to page while you are creating an assessment.

- When creating an offline assessment, make sure your alignments and answer choices are correct *before* submitting the offline score key.

- Always give each test a unique name so that it can be easily identified and distinguished from other tests.

After Test Creation

Keep a Record

- Generate a PDF of the final version of your test and print it out for your files. Give your PDF a descriptive name so you can find it again if you need it.

Publish District Assessments

- If you created a district assessment, don't forget to "publish" the district assessment, especially if using constructed response items.

- Failure to publish a district assessment will prevent others in the district from pre-slugging the test, scanning the test, assigning the test to students, or allowing them to grade constructed response items.

- Note that district assessments can be published at any time and can be un-published at any time.

II. Assessment Management

Printing Your Assessments

- Do not print an assessment through your web browser. Use the new 3.0 PDF generator to create the most useful copies of your assessment. On the STIAssessment *View/Print* page, click the printer icon in the top right corner of the page. Then customize the print settings and generate the test in PDF format. This ensures proper printing.

- If a question is cut off or "split" over two pages on your PDF, try adjusting the item and answer spacing to "0" on the PDF generator settings page. Please bear in mind that long reading passages or items with large graphics, especially in answer choices, will necessarily print on multiple pages.

Copying Your Assessments

- When you copy an assessment, this generates a new assessment with a new assessment ID number. Be sure when testing you are using the correct assessment ID number. Giving the copy a unique name can help prevent confusion.

- If another user shares an assessment with the District Administrator, make sure that the District Administrator copies that assessment and assigns the *copy* to students—not the original.

III. Item Creation

Visit the STIAssessment Resource Center

- Please see IX. Resources for information on accessing the Resource Center.

- Documents of particular interest to content creators include
  - **Constructed_Response-2007-08-27.zip** (item creation section)
  - **Expanded_Job_Aid_Equations_073007.doc** (for math items)
  - **Job_Aid_Transferring_Items.doc** (for items from other sources)

o **Job_Aid_HTML.doc** (HTML input isn't necessary in STIAssessment v3.0, but this capability is available for "power users.")

Creating Items

- Before creating items, be sure you've searched the STIAssessment Library for items you can tailor to your needs. Don't be afraid to copy an item to your user folder and rewrite it, change its alignment, add a picture, etc. The items are meant to be springboards for your own item creation; no one can create assessment items for a district as well as the educators in that district.

- Do not type directions or instructions in the instruction textbox when creating items. If you know the instruction ID, please type it in the box. If you do not know the instruction ID or wish to create your own instruction, click the "Attach Instruction" link to the left of the text box.

- Make sure that user-created multiple-choice items have ONE correct answer, no more and no less. Double-check to see if the correct answer has been marked.

IV. Item Management

In Folders

- Under **Assessment | Items**, you can create your own user items. This is like building your own item bank. This can be as "organized" or "loose" as you like. However, STI highly recommends you name folders by state standard and place all items related to that state standard in that folder. This process makes it easier to manage and find items to add to assessments. Another organizational method is to group items in folders by assessment name if you don't plan to search them by standard ID.

- Do not delete items in your folders after you've added them to your tests. <u>Deleting an item from a folder permanently removes it from all tests that contain it, including shared tests that have not been copied</u>.

- Just because items are in your folders doesn't mean they are automatically added to your test. You must create the test and add those items to the test.

On Assessments

- Please remember that you cannot make changes to STIAssessment Library items placed directly on a test.

- It is highly recommended that you NOT make any changes to items that are on an active test. *Never* make changes to items once testing has begun.

- If need be, you can make changes to items that you have created and are located in your user folder (even if the test has already been assigned). However only changes to the question text, answer choices, or stimulus will be reflected on the test. Alignment changes will not be reflected.

- Don't edit your items for a new test until the previous test using those items is safely out of the way. Changing an item in a folder changes it for past as well as future tests.

V. Administering Tests to Students

Prior to Students Taking Test

- Always check your student rosters just prior to taking online assessments or assessments for scanning. Make sure rosters are complete so that there are no delays for any students during testing.

- If you are doing a paper-based test and are going to be using STIAssessment scanning forms, be sure that a student number has been entered in the area provided on the scan form for student ID. This can either be pre-slugged or manually written in by the student. The ID must be correct in order for the scanner to grade the form.

- Do not mix testing formats for a test. Administer online assessments online, and administer paper-based assessments with official STI scanning forms. Unsupported "hybrid" testing can cause serious scoring issues. Please see <u>Choose a Single Testing Method</u>, pg. 3.

While Students Are Taking Test

- Note that once a student clicks the **Submit** button, the test is over. To help prevent accidental submissions, a confirmation box appears when the **Submit** button is clicked

- Clicking the **Back** button on the web browser will not let the student retake the test. No matter how many times a student clicks the **Submit** button, only the data for the first submission is recorded.

- Students should not use their browser's **Back** button to navigate the test; there are links provided to let them navigate to any part of the test they need to see. Use of **Back** buttons could cause problems in submission of the test.

VI. Pre-Slugging

- Before a system-wide testing event, it may be recommended that you "upload all" data from your student information system to STIAssessment immediately before pre-slugging and again immediately prior to scanning. Avoid pre-slugging scan forms for any school that does not successfully "upload all" until that takes place.

- If you are having problems logging into the pre-slug utility, this may be due to either an incorrect login or password. It may also be due to not having the latest version of the utility.

- Any time you open the pre-slug utility, it will display *Checking for updates.* If it does not do this, then you do not have the most current version of the utility and will not have access to the application. It will not let you log in.

- The pre-slug utility's version number will display in the bottom of the screen just to the left of the current date and time.

- Try not to pre-slug weeks before you give an assessment, as student schedules may change.

- If you do pre-slug early, note that some students who were not on the class roster at the time of pre-slugging may need to fill in their student IDs. In addition, other scan sheets that were pre-slugged may no longer be usable or valid due to schedule changes or student withdrawals.

- Be sure that the number of questions on your test does not exceed the number of questions you can fill in on the scanning form. The number of questions on an answer sheet varies according to what scan form you are using.

- If you are pre-slugging a district assessment and do not see it in the drop-down list of tests, check whether the District Administrator has published that assessment. If an assessment has not been published, you cannot pre-slug answer sheets for it.

VII. Scanning

Before Scanning an Assessment

- Before a system-wide testing event, it may be recommended that you "upload all" data from your student information system to STIAssessment immediately before pre-slugging and again immediately prior to scanning.

- If you are having problems logging into the scanning utility, this may be due to either an incorrect login or password. It may also be due to not having the latest version of the utility.

- Any time you open the scan utility it will display *Checking for updates*; if it does not do this then you may not be on the most current version of the utility and will not have access to the application. It will not let you log in.

- The scanning utility's version number will display in the bottom of the screen just to the left of the current date and time.

- If you slug forms manually, you will need to include more than just a student name for the scanner to be able to score the test. Be sure to include the student's student ID number bubbled in at the top of the scan sheet in the area provided and write the test's ID number somewhere on the scan sheet.

- Be sure that a student number has been entered in the area provided on the scan form for student ID. This can either be pre-slugged or manually filled in. The ID must be correct in order for the scanner to grade the form.

During Scanning

- Make sure that you have the correct class selected prior to scanning the sheets. If the student/student number you scan happens to exist in the "wrong" class, then the data will be recorded to the wrong class.

- If you are scanning a district assessment and do not see it in the drop-down list of tests, check whether the District Administrator has published that assessment. Assessments that have not been published cannot be scanned.

VIII. TestSCOPE Reports

- After testing, some reports are available immediately for viewing in TestSCOPE reports. These include individual student reports and Overview reports. Other reports take overnight to process.

- On the TestSCOPE reports page, click on the *When can I see my reports?* link to find out when reports are available.

IX. Resources

- You can access the Resource Center by clicking the **Resources** link in the top left corner of any screen in STIAssessment.

- The Resource Center contains documentation, job aids, and other helpful information that can help you use STIAssessment.

- Download and read the documentation in the Resource Center for insight on utilizing different aspects of the application.

- Pay particular attention to the information in the documents that is italicized, underlined, or otherwise highlighted as important.

X. Integration & User Management

This section is intended for users who are integrated with our STI Student Information System (SIS) products such as STIOffice or *Information*NOW. If you use one of our SIS products, then your data is integrated with STIAssessment and is uploaded to STIAssessment on a regular basis. *All information should be managed in your SIS and not STIAssessment itself if you are an integrated user*.

- If teachers, classes, or students are not uploading, do not enter them manually into STIAssessment. Contact STI support about this.

- Never manage teacher, class, or student information in STIAssessment; this should be done in STIOffice or *Information*NOW.

- Do not change teachers' user names and passwords in STIAssessment. This should be done in your SIS (STIOffice or *Information*NOW).

- If you are an *Information*NOW user, do not change student passwords in STIAssessment. This should be done in *Information*NOW in the student's profile under the *Misc* tab.

- If you are a legacy SIS user (STIOffice), you can change student passwords in STIAssessment. Again, never change passwords in STIAssessment if you are an *Information*NOW user.

- For STIOffice users, teachers' logins and passwords for STIAssessment are the same as for STIClassroom or STIOffice.

- For *Information*NOW users, teachers use the same login and password as for *Information*NOW .

- For *Information*NOW users, students use the same login and password as for the Home (Parent) portal of *Information*NOW .

- If you are an integrated user, rosters in STIAssessment display passwords as encrypted and will not display the actual password. If a user doesn't know his/her password, an administrator will have to retrieve this from STIOffice or *Information*NOW .

- If you need to change a student number in STIOffice, go *first* into STIAssessment and change the number there; *then* change it in STIOffice. If you don't do this, a duplicate record may be created.

XI. District Technical Staff

- Successful outcomes for large school-wide projects, and district-wide projects in particular, depend on close communication and working relationships between the technical and curricular/assessment staffs.

XII. Contacting STI

- If you ever have questions or encounter any problems with STIAssessment, contact STI Support for help at 1-800-844-0884 or online at http://support.sti-k12.com.

- Submit a call to our call board any time you have questions or problems so that someone can contact you in a timely matter to help resolve your issue or answer your question.

- Questions regarding product enhancements should be directed to our STIAssessment Product Manager. You can contact STI and ask to speak with the product manager for STIAssessment.

- Before launching a project or making major changes, always contact STI. Either the STIAssessment Product Manager or Support can help you make wise decisions that will ensure the success of your project.

STIAssessment Quick Reference Guide Checklist

I. Assessment Creation

Prior to Test Creation: Plan Ahead!

Train for Success
- Identify key personnel. ☐
- Give key personnel uninterrupted training time. ☐
- Make sure key personnel "pass the baton." ☐

Make the time ☐

Make a Blueprint ☐

Follow Your Blueprint I: Alignment to State Standards
- Alignments cannot be changed on assigned tests. ☐
- Alignments on any test cannot be changed directly. ☐

Follow Your Blueprint II: Library Items vs. User Folder items

Consider your options in terms of
- Pinpoint accuracy ☐
- Permanence ☐
- Content-creation flexibility ☐

Choose a Single Testing Method…and Stick to It!
- For online testing, create online items. ☐
- For paper-and-pencil tests, use STI scanning forms. ☐
- Make sure everyone knows the testing method. ☐

Questions about Assessment Projects? Call STI Early! ☐

During Test Creation
- Never use your browser's **Back** button. ☐
- Offline assessments: check alignments and answers on score key.
- Give each test a unique name. ☐

After Test Creation

Keep a Record ☐

Publish District Assessments ☐

II. Assessment Management

Printing Your Assessments
- Use PDF generator and settings. ☐

Copying Your Assessments
- Give copies unique names. ☐
- Assign copies of shared tests, not originals. ☐

III. Item Creation

Visit the STIAssessment Resource Center ☐

Creating Items
- Search the STI Library for templates first. ☐
- Do not type instructions in the Instruction ID box. ☐
- Validity: create items with one correct answer ONLY. ☐

IV. Item Management

In Folders
- Name folders by state standard or assessment name. ☐
- Do not delete items on tests from your folders. ☐
- Items in folders must be added to tests for students to be tested on them. ☐

On Assessments
- You cannot make changes to STIAssessment Library items. ☐
- Folder-item content changes appear on all tests containing those items. ☐
- User folder alignment changes don't change tests. ☐

V. Administering Tests to Students

Prior to Students Taking Test
- Check that student rosters are complete. ☐
- Check that student IDs are correct on scan forms. ☐
- Do not mix testing formats. ☐

While Students Are Taking Test
- When a student clicks **Submit**, the test is over. ☐
- A browser **Back** button won't let students retake tests. ☐
- Students should not use their browsers' **Back** button. ☐

VI. Pre-Slugging
- "Upload all" from SIS before preslugging and before scanning. ☐
- Log-in issues? Check login, password, utility version. ☐
- If pre-slug utility doesn't "check for updates," it's not the most current version. ☐
- Pre-slug utility version displays at the bottom of the screen. ☐
- If you pre-slug early, some "new" students may have to manually slug their scan sheets, and some scan sheets may be unusable or invalid due to schedule changes or withdrawals. ☐
- Be sure the number of questions on your test does not exceed the number of questions on the scan form. ☐
- If a district assessment has not been published, you cannot pre-slug answer sheets for it. ☐

VII. Scanning

Before Scanning an Assessment
- "Upload all" from SIS before scanning. ☐
- Log-in issues? Check login, password, utility version. ☐
- If scanning utility doesn't "check for updates," it's not the most current version. ☐
- Scanning utility version displays at the bottom of the screen. ☐
- Be sure student IDs are correct on scanning forms. ☐

During Scanning
- Make sure you're scanning to the correct class. ☐
- If a district assessment hasn't been published, you can't scan to it. ☐

VIII. TestSCOPE Reports
- Click **When can I see my reports?** on TestSCOPE reports page to see when reports are available. ☐

IX. Resources
- Click the **Resources** link in the top left corner of any STIAssessment screen ☐

X. Integration & User Management
- If teachers, classes, or students are not uploading, do not enter them manually into STIAssessment. ☐
- Never manage teacher, class, or student information in STIAssessment; this should be done in STIOffice or *Information***NOW** . ☐
- Do not change teacher's user name and passwords in STIAssessment. This should be done in your SIS (STIOffice or *Information***NOW**). ☐
- If you are an *Information***NOW** user, do not change student passwords in STIAssessment. This should be done in *Information***NOW** in the student's profile under the *Misc* tab. ☐
- If you are a legacy SIS user (STIOffice) you can change student passwords in STIAssessment. Never change passwords in STIAssessment if you are an *Information***NOW** user. ☐
- For STIOffice users, teachers' logins and passwords for STIAssessment

    are the same as for STIClassroom or STIOffice.   ☐

    • For *Information***NOW** users, teachers use the same login and password
as for *Information***NOW** .   ☐

    • For *Information***NOW** users, students use the same login and password
as for the Home (Parent) portal of *Information***NOW**.   ☐

    • If you are an integrated user, rosters in STIAssessment display
passwords as encrypted and will not display the actual password. If a user
doesn't know his/her password, an administrator will have to retrieve this
from STIOffice or *Information***NOW**.   ☐

    • If you need to change a student number in STIOffice, go *first* into
STIAssessment and change the number there; *then* change it in STIOffice.
If you don't do this, a duplicate record may be created.   ☐

XI. District Technical Staff   ☐

XII. Contacting STI

• 1-800-844-0884, http://support.sti-k12.com   ☐