

DISTRICTWIDE ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY/RATIONALE

A comprehensive program and student assessment plan provides a foundation for decisions regarding curriculum design, curriculum delivery, and staff development. The district's plan for assessment is a vehicle for examining how well programs are producing desired learning results. The assessment program also provides feedback to the teaching staff regarding how classroom instruction can be improved and it yields data by which staff can compare the strengths and weaknesses of various programs and program alternatives.

Meaningful decisions about curriculum and instructional processes can only be made when achievement data are available for all areas taught in the curriculum. An effective assessment plan requires that the means of assessment is directly related to major learning objectives in every course of study at every grade level. In addition, the assessment system must address not only content knowledge and skills, but high level cognitive processes (e.g., critical thinking and reasoning skills, creativity, problem-solving abilities).

The assessment plan includes provisions for both formative and summative assessments. District-level criterion tests, on-going incremental assessments, diagnostic reading assessments, and teacher-made tests will be used as formative assessments by classroom teachers to help identify student learning needs and determine adjustments in instruction and in instructional assignments for students. Technology will be used to help manage student assessment data to facilitate accurate and timely instructional decisions to support student learning.

I. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSESSMENT

- A. The Superintendent and District staff members are responsible for the implementation of the policy and regulation. The Superintendent is to serve as the prime mover of the assessment system. Appropriate District staff members are to serve as technical advisors to principals and to establish the scope and pace of the assessment process. Appropriate district staff will assist the principals in implementation of the plan and look for ways to keep assessment practices practical and effective.
- B. The Associate Superintendent for Educational Services shall review the assessment plan annually to ensure the plan serves the function of student and program assessment for the District.
- C. The Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction shall ensure that the assessed (evaluated) curriculum is aligned with the written curriculum and that examples of various assessments are placed in the curriculum guides for use by principals and teachers.

- D. The Associate Superintendent for Educational Services will coordinate the districtwide assessment program.
- E. The building principal shall implement the assessment plan at the building level. The principal, in conjunction with building teams and District staff, shall identify student learning needs by analyzing both formative and summative assessment results.

Using the data driven decision making process, building teams shall develop a plan of action to address student learning needs at the school and classroom levels. Periodic reports will be presented to District staff and the Board of Education on progress toward meeting identified student learning needs. Principals will provide leadership for all building-level staff in the effective delivery and support of the District curriculum. Principals will monitor delivery of the written curriculum in classrooms and review teacher-made tests to help teachers ensure that tests are congruent with the written and taught curriculum.

- F. Teachers are responsible for teaching the written curriculum and for assessing the results of their teaching. Teachers utilize assessment information for decision-making regarding instruction.

II. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The District staff will design and implement an on-going staff development plan to prepare staff members to deliver the adopted curriculum and prepare principals to monitor delivery of the curriculum. Staff development will include training in the principles of sound assessment practices and data analysis. Assessment strategies will be utilized at the District, school, and classroom level. The ultimate goal of staff development is to help principals and teachers accomplish District and building achievement goals.

III. COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Communication and community relations activities will be carried out by staff, in conjunction with the Director of School and Community Relations, to help educate and inform the community and create and maintain a constructive environment for reporting progress on achievement goals. Progress on achievement goals will be reported in the Annual Progress Report (APR), the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP), and periodic building and district assessment reports to the Board of Education, parents, and community, all of which conform to all state and federal reporting requirements.

IV. SCHEDULING OF ASSESSMENTS

A schedule for districtwide assessment will be developed in the spring preceding the next school year. The schedule will include all types of group assessments for buildings throughout the district and will be made available to all educational personnel.

V. REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

- A. Assessment procedures will be reviewed annually by the Associate Superintendent for Educational Services. This review will be available to appropriate personnel and include recommendations regarding the districtwide assessment program.
- B. Requests for review of assessments and assessment procedures should be submitted to the Associate Superintendent for Educational Services.

VI. BUDGET FOR ASSESSING

The Associate Superintendent for Educational Services will administer the budget for the districtwide assessment program and will include in the district's annual budget.

VII. TYPES OF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

School districts in the State of Iowa are judged by performance and improvement on the Iowa Assessments under the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, Public Law 107-110) and No Child Left Behind legislation. The results of the Iowa Assessments, in conjunction with the results of other district assessments, including both formative and summative assessments, will be used to identify student learning needs and determine how well programs are producing desired learning results.

A. DIAGNOSTIC READING ASSESSMENT KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 6

Diagnostic reading assessments that meet state requirements will be administered at the beginning and end of each school year. Selected parts of the assessment will be administered at the mid-year. The information obtained will be used for diagnosing the individual student's needs and planning the student's program. Additional testing during the school year for assessing skills is recommended on an individual basis.

B. NORM-REFERENCED ACHIEVEMENT ASSESSMENT

Norm-referenced assessment involves comparison of student performance to a normed group of children of comparable grade levels. Achievement comparisons of individual children will be reflected in percentiles, standard scores and/or grade equivalencies as appropriate to the grade level of assessment. Two major uses of standardized assessments are recommended: (1) norm-referenced assessment annually for individual, building level, and system level assessment of educational progress, and (2) norm-referenced assessment for special programs and projects for measuring student growth. Time periods for assessment will be appropriate to the assessment instruments and the requirements of the program.

C. CRITERION-REFERENCED ACHIEVEMENT ASSESSMENT

Criterion-referenced assessment will be encouraged for diagnosis of educational needs of students. Criterion-referenced achievement assessment refers to assessment instruments which are designed to assess student performance according to established criteria. Teacher-designed assessment and book unit assessments are examples of criterion-referenced assessments. These assessments may be used for diagnosis or measurement of growth.

D. CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE ASSESSMENT

Constructed response assessment includes grade-level appropriate selections, skills, questions, and problems. The assessment includes both classroom and real-life activities. Because students use higher-order thinking skills to generate and justify their own responses, the open-ended format provides a measure of reasoning ability. Scores are both norm-referenced and content-referenced. For content information, student performance on each question is analyzed in terms of the quality of the response. The publisher scores student responses and submits a report to the district as appropriate.

E. APTITUDE ASSESSMENT

Aptitude assessment will be completed to determine the current ability level of students. Assessment is recommended for grade 3. Additional aptitude assessments will be given on an as-needed basis.

F. CAREER GUIDANCE ASSESSMENT

Career guidance will be required to provide students and teaching personnel with additional information on student career interests and aptitude. Information from this testing will be used as one of the bases for instructional activities in the classroom, scheduling, and career planning required by legislation. Testing of student aptitudes and occupational interests is recommended for middle level students. Continued emphasis at the high school level is encouraged to assist students in making decisions concerning their future careers.

G. AFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT

Affective assessment will be encouraged at all grade levels when appropriate to the needs of individual children. Affective assessment involves measurement of student attitudes about self-esteem, self-concept, and other personality characteristics. The purpose of this assessment is to identify student needs for program planning in the affective curricular area and identifying individual student needs.

Assessment will be encouraged for special projects and programs. Requests will be directed to the assessment office for permission to assess students.

H. SPECIAL NEEDS

Individualized assessment will be provided for students who have been referred for consideration of entitlement for special education services and re-evaluation of special education services. These assessments are individually administered by school psychologists, consultants, speech clinicians, special needs personnel, and staff responsible for general education interventions.

Parent/Guardian consent for evaluation must be obtained prior to conducting the individualized assessment. Authorization for this assessment is the responsibility of the Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education and Special Education.

I. ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

Students who because of language, cultural or disability needs cannot be included in districtwide assessment will be administered an alternative assessment. Criteria for determining when to exclude students for language, cultural and disability needs shall be coordinated by the Director of Special Education.

ADOPTED: 9/98
5/1/03
6/5/08

Reviewed: 5/1/03, 6/5/08, 6/6/13, 1/4/18