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Assessment, Grading, and Reporting to Parents

Task Force Reporting Document
July 2020



Assessment



**District Diagnostic
Assessments**

**General Content
Based Classroom
Assessments**

Data System

**Validity of
Assessments**



District Diagnostic Assessments

District diagnostics will still be used to track summative student data and to track historical trends in all scenarios. It is important to have a consistent assessment system to monitor systemic and individual gaps and trends.

F&P Testing

- Grades K-8 are expected to conduct F&P testing on the same schedule currently used, in all scenarios
- For a Remote Scenario:
 - ◆ The curriculum office, with the help of a working group of staff, will vet digital books from Epic!, Reading A-Z, or similar resources
 - These will be used similarly to a traditional F&P, but would take place over Zoom/Google Meet
 - Specific procedures should be developed by Curriculum Office, using recommendation from: <https://www.fountasandpinnell.com/remoteteaching/>

i-Ready

- Administered in grades 2-8, three times a year (fall, winter, spring), in all scenarios
 - ◆ In a hybrid or remote model, i-Ready will take place remotely
 - ◆ Communication with families needs to happen in the beginning of the year to outline expectations and importance of diagnostic testing (see reporting to parents for more specific recommendations)
 - ◆ Extenuating/preferential circumstances will be reviewed on a case by case basis at the school level to have students take the diagnostic test in-person following all health and safety guidelines
 - ◆ Administered in Grade 1 at end of year

**Early Childhood
Diagnostic**

District Diagnostic Assessments



Is it not recommended to use i-Ready in grades K-1, as it is not developmentally appropriate, especially in a hybrid or remote scenario. Therefore, the following is recommended:

Dial-4

- For use as a beginning of the year Kindergarten assessment/screener
- District already has Dial-4 materials
- Administered 1:1 in-person the first 3 days of school before K students arrive in all scenarios
 - ◆ Should be scheduled to meet with parents, and to assess students
 - ◆ Veteran/skilled/trained tutors, paras, and other staff should be utilized to help administer assessments
- Will require teacher training

ESGI

- Recommended for use in Kindergarten and Grade 1 in place of i-Ready
 - ◆ Kindergarten: winter & spring
 - ◆ Grade 1: fall, winter (i-Ready in spring)
- Cost
 - ◆ ~\$175 per teacher based on quote received from ESGI
- Will require teacher training
- District will need to push out specific diagnostic tests
 - ◆ Utilize support of McAuliffe teachers who have already used this assessment tool and developed their own assessments



General Content Based Classroom Assessments

→ Digital platforms should be used as much as possible in all scenarios

- ◆ For example, SeeSaw can be used to facilitate many of the 1:1 assessments asynchronously in all 3 scenarios
 - Curriculum Office should recruit EC staff to create a bank of recorded assessment activity videos with educators explaining the directions so that students can be recorded performing the task and the teacher can evaluate mastery asynchronously, rather than watching the student in real time.

→ The district should continue to use standardized benchmark testing systems for all grade levels (i.e. i-Ready), but we recommend a move towards performance assessments for assessment of standards mastery in all content areas.

- ◆ Teachers will need to be trained on how to use performance assessments appropriately
- ◆ A Working Group should be created in collaboration with the Curriculum Office and staff members throughout the district. This Working Group should tap into the expertise of teachers with experience in developing and implementing performance assessments, such as teachers at the Pyne who have engaged in that work recently, as well as other teachers and administrators who attended MCIEA trainings. The goal should be to move towards providing students multiple ways of demonstrating mastery of standards in all scenarios through performance tasks embedded in modules that can be performed remotely or in-person, rather than traditional unit assessments performed in person at the end.
 - Click [here](#) for recommended goals of this working group
- ◆ While this bank is being developed, the curriculum office, in collaboration with teachers and staff members, should work to put currently used assessments into a digital format
 - Students should take all assessments digitally in all scenarios, when possible
 - Utilize the i-Ready standards-mastery tests
 - While we are converting all module assessments to digital formats and developing performance assessment banks, we recommend the use of i-Ready standards mastery tool to conduct shorter, more frequent formative assessments.

General Content Based Classroom Assessments



A working Group should be created in collaboration with the Curriculum Office and staff members throughout the district. This working group should recruit the expertise of teachers with experience in developing and implementing performance assessments, such as teachers at the Pyne who have already created and implemented several performance assessments in recent years, as well as other teachers and administrators who attended MCIEA trainings. The goal should be to work towards giving more frequent, smaller performance assessments throughout a unit to determine student mastery of a standard, rather than one large unit test at the end. This provides more actionable data for teachers. Students will still have data from benchmark assessments through i-Ready.

- Goals of this working group would include:
- Creating a bank of performance assessments aligned to the curriculum for each grade level that can be performed by students in all scenarios
 - Developing performance assessments for end of unit assessments, as well as shorter performance assessments task to be given within a unit
 - Creating rubrics to be used with each performance assessment, and providing guidance on how those rubrics will translate into grades consistent with the report card
 - Tapping into existing examples of performance assessments, such as those from the MCIEA performance task bank and [these examples](#) from the Parker School to drive work



Data System

The district is in need of a functional data system for all schools. Although some schools have developed their own data systems to inform school improvement, sustainable, district-wide data systems are needed to ensure ready access to actionable data in all schools. Student and school data needs to be easily accessible for all stakeholders at every level.

District and building based data dashboards must be developed to make a variety of assessment data readily available to allow staff to compare data across assessments, buildings, grade-levels, etc

- ◆ Data Studio vs. Tableau

- Data Studio

- Limitations

- ◆ Cannot connect directly to Aspen; requires manual export
- ◆ Can only house limited amounts of data without additional purchases
- ◆ Cannot currently be used on a district scale

- Benefits:

- ◆ Can be updated instantaneously from a local data source

- Tableau

- Limitations

- ◆ Currently data is unorganized and does not automatically update from Aspen
- ◆ Only a certain number of licenses in the district
- ◆ No one in the district has had extensive training
- ◆ Previous implementation has lacked structure and organization, making it difficult to use and leading to negative impressions among building leaders

- Benefits:

- ◆ Has tremendous functionality when organized correctly
- ◆ Connects directly with Aspen
- ◆ Can be updated regularly based on set parameters (daily, hourly, etc.)
- ◆ Student historical data from Aspen can be easily visualized and accessed

**Further
Recommendations**



Data System



This group recognizes the current use of Tableau is not functional, but believes it can be utilized differently and effectively. Therefore, the following is recommended:

- District Data Team be re-convened with additional interested teachers/administrators to develop district data dashboards. The goals of this team will be to:
 - ◆ Create data views at district, school, grade, teacher, and individual student level based on priorities that have been established by Leadership Team
 - ◆ Determine the appropriate information to include and how it will be organized with the ability to filter down by reporting groups
 - ◆ Create templates for local, school-level data that can be shared and used in Data Studio, with data exported from Tableau
- Tableau training is recommended for all members of this team
- For individual school-based needs, data from Tableau will be exported easily for a variety of uses
 - ◆ Schools are still encouraged to use Data Studio for systems that are specific to their school (i.e. class placements)
 - ◆ Data Team should work with schools to create Data Studio templates aligned to Tableau exports
- All summative assessment data must be housed in Aspen so it can be easily accessed when needed

Validity of Assessments



The validity of any assessment taken remotely will always be a concern. Clear communication with parents about expectations and importance of assessment data must occur from the start of the school year. The following is recommended:

- A district-wide communication campaign for all stakeholders, including students, families, and teachers, to promote an understanding of different aspects of remote and in-person learning by using consistent language across schools and grade-levels.
 - ◆ District-wide catch phrases that could be used to help parents understand their role in supporting remote learning during instruction and assessment, and help students understand expectations in all scenarios
 - ◆ Short videos created by District/teachers accompanying each assessment would outline expectations using the consistent language
 - ◆ Possible examples of consistent language/phrases:
 - “Be in the Background” - support your child by being nearby to encourage engagement, help identify break-time, provide encouragement, etc.
 - “Show What You Know” - when your child is in this mode, it is important that he/she/they not receive any help from home, so we get an accurate look at where he/she/they is in the learning
 - “Independent Learning” time - your child should be able to do this activity entirely by him/herself
 - “Learning Together” - these activities are designed for students to do with someone else, be that a sibling or other family member or a peer (remotely)



**PreK-12
Updates**

Elementary

Middle

High School

PreK-12 Updates

COVID Response

The subcommittee believes that adjustments to existing grading and reporting practices are necessary to provide consistency in practice across all three scenarios. We recommend the following adjustments to existing grading and reporting practices .

- All grades elementary through high school will use codes of “M” for medical, and “IE” for insufficient evidence
 - ◆ A code of “M” will be used for clear, documented circumstances
 - ◆ A code of “IE” will be used for any extenuating circumstances related to COVID or otherwise
 - Use “IE” similarly to current practice of using “I” at the high school
 - Use “IE” rather than “I” in all grade levels to eliminate confusion and/or perceptions of I=incomplete
 - Comment codes should be developed by Report Card Task Force
 - ◆ A code of “M” or “IE” must be approved by school level administrators
- Make-up policy
 - ◆ If a student receives an “M” or “IE”:
 - Family of student is contacted and student is provided with a contract similar to the contract used at the high school for second chance learning -- this contract can be altered by each school depending on the circumstances
 - This will provide a timeline and expectations of students when they are out of school and should be made in collaboration with families
 - The general understanding is that if a student is able, they will continue their work from home (this is determined by the situation and what a student can feasibly do given the individual circumstances)
 - A target date is set for when the M or IE will be converted to a grade.
 - All M or IE will be converted to numeric grade prior to next grading period.

**Further
Updates**

PreK-12 Updates



- Student engagement and content knowledge should be graded separately, and clear and consistent expectations for each must be in place.
- Grades need to be based on regular, consistent, tracked data
 - ◆ Should be consistent across grades and schools
- Report Card Task Force should be developed and work prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year
 - ◆ Goals of the task force would include:
 - Setting clear expectations and rubrics for teachers and parents for what evidence of engagement is in each of the three scenarios
 - Creating expectations for report card grades: What types of assessments are included on the report card and what is the weight of those assessments? Is this based on standards mastery or an “average” grade? Is it the same for all grade levels, or does it differ at elementary, middle, high school?
 - Are these expectations equitable?
 - Does homework count towards content knowledge or engagement?
 - Create specific comment codes for elementary report cards related to standards
 - Create specific comment codes for the category of “IE”
 - For example: “Extended Time Granted”, “Unable to grade due to excused absences”
 - Investigate benefits and limitations of aligning the reporting periods for grades preK-12 (quarters/trimesters)
- Category of “IE” (insufficient evidence) should be included for both content areas and engagement/responsibilities
 - ◆ This shows that the teacher does not have enough evidence to accurately assess a student (due to health reasons, attendance issues, etc.)

Elementary



→ Standards for each subject area will be condensed into domains (see example)

- ◆ Specific comment codes need to be created to provide additional information to parents
- ◆ Since we are eliminating specific standards on the report cards, comments should be created, especially for students who are scoring a “1” in certain areas to indicate specific supports needed
- ◆ Comments should be in the form of codes so that they can be easily translated and are consistent across grade levels, making it easier for parents to understand
 - For example:
 - “Reads on grade level”, “Reads one grade level below”, “Reads more than one grade level below”, etc.
 - “Knows multiplication facts to 12”, “Can add and subtract using standard algorithm”, etc.

MATHEMATICS	Fall	Winter	Spring
Numbers & Operations – Base 10			
Operations & Algebraic Thinking			
Geometry, Measurement & Data			
Numbers & Operations – Fractions			

SCIENCE	Fall	Winter	Spring
Physical Science			
Life Science			
Earth & Space Science			
Technology/Engineering			

ELA	Fall	Winter	Spring
Reading			
Writing			
Speaking & Listening			
Language			

Social Studies	Fall	Winter	Spring
Written work and knowledge			

Further
Updates



Elementary

- Responsibilities and expectations will be revised to apply to all three learning models (see recommendation below)
- Code of “M” will be used for “Medical” and code of “MG” or “MC” will be created
 - ◆ Current “M” for Modified Grading under IEP will be changed to either “MG” for Modified Grading or “MC” for Modified Curriculum
- Science and social studies
 - ◆ There needs to be clear expectations for what is graded for these subject areas district wide
 - Curriculum maps, content, and time on learning need to match these expectations
 - ◆ Consider specialists who teach these content areas being responsible for grades (Content Literacy, Science/STEM Specialists, etc.)
- Digital gradebooks should be kept on SeeSaw/Google Classroom
 - ◆ Required digital platforms (Google Classroom/SeeSaw) should be able to communicate with Aspen to streamline the report card process and provide parents with weekly access to their student’s progress
- i-Ready scores should be included on the report card
 - ◆ Specific scores for each domain tested within ELA and Math to give parents a clearer picture of how their student is performing compared to grade level expectations
 - ◆ i-Ready testing windows would need to be revised to correspond to report card deadlines (or vice versa)

Responsibilities & Expectations	Fall	Winter	Spring
Asks for help, when needed			
Participates in learning activities			
Completes work on time			
Follows procedures for turning in work			
Demonstrates effort and perseverance			
Accepts suggestions and applies feedback			
Uses digital learning platforms appropriately			

Middle



Phase 1 suggestion is to keep middle school report cards the same, with the revision of changing “conduct” in “conduct” and “effort” to “participation”. Phase 2 recommends the following changes to the middle school report card:

- “Conduct” and “Effort” should both be changed
 - ◆ Conduct -----> Evidence of Engagement (On report card will show as “Engagement”)
 - Expectations for each code should be developed by proposed report card task force for use in all scenarios. Already created rubrics from remote learning should be used as a starting point:
 - Insufficient evidence
 - Limited evidence
 - Partial evidence
 - Full evidence
 - ◆ Effort -----> Responsibilities and Expectations (On report card will show as “R&E”)
 - Expectations for letter grades should be developed by proposed report card task force for use in all three scenarios. The proposed, revised elementary responsibilities and expectations indicators should be used to help create these expectations.
 - Will use the same codes as Evidence of Engagement (insufficient, limited, etc.)
- “Grade” should be changed to “Content”
 - Helps distinguish between the content knowledge grade for that subject area

High School



A separate section needs to be included on the report card, similar to middle school's "evidence of engagement" and "responsibilities and expectations" to distinguish between content knowledge/course credit and student engagement and social responsibility.

- Will follow the same coding as middle school
 - ◆ Evidence of Engagement (On report card will show as "Engagement")
 - Expectations for each code should be developed by proposed report card task force for use in all scenarios. Already created rubrics from remote learning should be used as a starting point:
 - Insufficient evidence
 - Limited evidence
 - Partial evidence
 - Full evidence
 - ◆ Responsibilities and Expectations (On report card will show as "R&E")
 - Expectations for letter grades should be developed by proposed report card task force for use in all three scenarios. Proposed, revised elementary responsibilities and expectations indicators should be used to help create these expectations.



Reporting to Parents

Clear parent communication will be essential to the success and implementation of all recommendations. Therefore, no recommendations should be considered without the implementation of the following:

- Videos, as well as remote/in-person trainings should be provided by the district for parents on all platforms used (Aspen, Google Classroom, SeeSaw, Remind, etc.)
 - ◆ Groups of teachers, administrators, and parents can begin working on these videos before we return to school, so there is a ready-made bank of videos to be used
- The first weeks of school:
 - ◆ At the building level, families should be contacted individually preferably by one of the student's teachers. Highly recommend a Zoom, in-person, or phone meeting to explain the changes and new expectations of the given model.
 - Each family should have one main staff member as a regular contact
 - Schools should use tracking tool, such as the one used during remote learning
 - Teachers and staff members should have access to the Language Line
 - ◆ There should be a focus on SEL, relationship building, establishing new routines, and assessing all students
 - ◆ District and schools should hold parent information sessions
 - ◆ Kindergarten and first grade parents should be given an in-person training on the platforms used
 - This can happen when parents pick up technology
 - ◆ The district/school should send out a letter, as well as a video explaining the changes and expectations. Clear outlines on what will happen if students do not complete work should be clearly communicated.
 - Both a letter and video will provide ease of translation
- Any letters/videos should be:
 - ◆ Posted on district/school website
 - ◆ Sent directly to teachers to be sent out from them through their classroom communication platform
 - ◆ Parents should have access to videos/instructions on how videos can be translated

**Further
Recommendations**

Reporting to Parents



- Parent conferences should take place in all three scenarios
- Communication about report card changes and grading expectations
 - ◆ New codes will be communicated to parents by:
 - ◆ A code explanation on the report card of 200 words or less
 - ◆ A letter home that can be included with the report card and shared by teachers through the district communication platform so it can be easily translated
 - ◆ Videos should also be made available with explanations and walkthroughs of the report card so it can be easily translated
 - ◆ “How to read your report card” in-person or virtual sessions when report cards are released
- Consistent reporting to parents
 - ◆ Digital gradebooks should be kept and updated regularly, giving parents weekly access to grades in all grade levels
 - ◆ High School will continue to use Aspen Parent Portal and Aspen Gradebook
 - ◆ Google Classroom weekly automatic upload to Aspen for 5-8
 - This will allow parents to access grades in Aspen, and keep the same login information for their student’s entire time in the Lowell Public Schools
 - Teachers will be able to assign and give feedback in one platform



Training Implications for Staff

Staff training will be essential to the success and implementation of all recommendations. Therefore, no recommendations should be considered without the implementation of the following:

- In all scenarios teachers should have at least one half day of learning/professional development a week
 - ◆ This time should be dedicated time where teachers are focused on learning/data analysis
 - ◆ Examples for each scenario:
 - In person:
 - Early release/late start day once a week
 - ◆ Students would complete remote learning activities, while teachers engage in PD and common planning
 - ◆ Flexibly use staff to support student remote learning, so in-person classroom teachers can focus on the professional development and planning.
 - Hybrid:
 - For week on/week off model, follow a similar structure to in-person example
 - For two day on/one day off model, use the off day as a learning/PD/data day for teachers
 - Remote:
 - Dedicate one day a week to teacher PD/planning and work on a four-day remote learning schedule (similar to phase 1 recommendations)

**Necessary
Training**

Training Implications for Staff

Assessment, grading, and reporting to parent recommendations require staff training in the following:

- ESGI (Grades K-1)
- Dial-4 (Grade K)
- Aspen
- Google Classroom (2-8)
- SeeSaw (K-2)
- Tableau
- Report Card Changes
- Performance Assessments
- i-Ready Standards Mastery or district digital assessments



Further Questions



- Things to consider when connecting Aspen and Google Classroom:
 - ◆ Distinguishing between quarters
 - ◆ Uploading different classes/subjects for one student
 - ◆ Aspen is already looking to connect Google Classroom as other districts have requested this capability

- Google Classroom/Seesaw automatic upload to Aspen for K-4 OR Aspen gradebook aligned to elementary report card

- What can we put in place for parents, such as the Language Line, where they can easily make phone calls/communicate in their home language?