**SJR 2 Assessment Inventory Committee Meeting #3 Minutes**

**January 19, 2016**

**Townsend Building, Cabinet Room – 5:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Member Attendees:**

Representative Earl Jaques

Representative Timothy Dukes

Senator Ernesto Lopez

Senator David Sokola

Senator Nicole Poore

Beatrice Coker

Frederika Jenner

Deborah Zych for Dr. Vicki Gehrt

**Non-Member Attendees:**

Secretary Steven Godowsky Jennifer Boland

Lindsay O’Mara Deb Hansen

Michael Watson

Tina Shockley Christopher Ruszkowski

Susan Haberstroh Shanna Ricketts

Liz Farley Ripple Terri Hodges

Dr. Carolyn Lazar Natalie Ganc

Gloria Grantham Angeline Rivello

Liz Heist Greg Mazzotta

Representative Kim Williams

The third meeting of the SJR 2 Assessment Inventory Committee began at 5:05pm by Liz Farley Ripple. Introductions were made. Michael Watson noted he was now attending the meetings in place of Dr. Penny Schwinn who is no longer with the Department of Education.

There was one change to the minutes, which was to include attachments that were mentioned in the minutes. With that change, there was a motion by Lindsay O’Mara and Senator Sokola to approve the minutes. The motion carried by the committee with all in favor. The minutes were approved with that change.

Liz Farley Ripple gave, via the attached PowerPoint deck (Attachment 1), a brief review of what has been covered to date – specifically, grain sizes and purposes, the Comprehensive Framework consisting of summative, interim and post assessments. She reminded the group of Drs. Susan Bunting and Louann Hudson’s presentations last month where we looked at how they conducted their district assessment inventory. It was also noted that Dr. Carolyn Lazar presented on DOE summative assessments at that meeting.

Liz reminded the committee of last month’s discussion items which included:

* All assessments students take and at each grade level
* Clarification of assessments that need changes
* Assessments which can be eliminated or changed significantly
* Assessments required by state or federal law
* Time spent testing
* Benefits of assessments
* Alignment of testing in line with state assessments

She suggested the group utilize a three question “tool” as it looks at assessments. It consists of:

* Here’s What
* So What? – Why?
* Now What?

By answering these questions the group would be able to assess and sort out the varied information that has been and is still to be presented before the committee.

Dr. Steven Godowsky commented on the challenge of Measure Bs and other indicators. He noted DOE is analyzing responses from district assessments which will be available online by our next meeting.

Lindsay O’Mara summarized that last month the committee was interested in a summary document of state assessments. Therefore, the attached “Estimated Student Testing Time For Delaware Mandated Assessments” (Attachment 2) was handed out to the group. It lists every required state assessment in grades K-12 and the time students spend taking each assessment. Michael Watson explained the assessments including PSAT, DCAS Social Studies, Early Learner Survey and which tests students with disabilities would take.

A third attachment entitled “Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA) Assessment Descriptions (Attachment 3) was distributed. It provided descriptions and purposes of each statewide assessment.

Several questions were asked about both attachments. Michael Watson, with the help of Carolyn Lazar, gave several examples and answered questions relative to students taking ELA and Math, DCAS-Alt1 assessments, as well as Access Tests provided to English Language Learners, using Grade 3 as an example.

It was noted that DOE is currently developing DCAS-Alt 2, which will flow from Alt 1 process, and include a portfolio system in 2016. Alt 2 will replace Alt 1 for some students. Further discussion was around NAEP and that student’s taking Alt 1 generally do not participate in NAEP. There is further discussion on that by the IEP team. Mr. Watson noted that there has been a 35% reduction in testing time for 3rd graders since 2013, which allows more time for learning in classroom. It was noted that 4.5 hours represents the total time taking the test in the fall, spring and 2nd spring assessment period.

It was asked that for the total time of 9 hours, how many days is that stretched over. Carolyn noted that is a local scheduling issue, as some districts do it in chunks of time over several days, and others may not. Testing could be spaced out. It was asked if that breaks up the day for the student in terms of disrupting the student’s or teacher’s day. It was noted that some schools have opted to take ELA in chunks, so the total test is not taken on the same day. Likewise, older students take the ELA at one time and then Math at one time. Teachers adjust their schedules to minimize giving up instructional time.

It was asked “What do we do with the data, and are we using it to impact future student learning or teacher evaluation/development?” Mr. Watson noted that we are using the assessment data in important ways. For example, these assessments provide a yearly check up to see what students are learning, but it doesn’t provide the whole story. Assessments are an important tool for principals and educators in the educational system. It was also noted that these assessments are summative and give information after instruction has been completed. The student’s teacher will not get assessment information from these summative assessments during mid-course or mid-year to make ongoing instructional changes, but parents and students do get a comprehensive summary of learning strengths, weakness after instruction has occurred, and information about where they meet standards and how they align to the curriculum. This is helpful in determining if students are meeting state standards. When we put all this information together with other assessments we are receiving a comprehensive picture of what is happening at the state, district and school level.

One member noted that in 9th grade there appears to be a significant reduction in testing. Mr. Watson explained that some of the assessments are codified. For example, science is assessed once at the middle school and high school level. However, 8th grade is the year we test students the most. Likewise, it is codified in state law that the Social Studies assessment is to be done in 7th grade.

Districts are able to reduce their district assessments, which we will see once we have those results. It was noted that our goal is not to reduce assessments specifically at equal amounts for each grade. Our purpose is to look at the who, what, where and why of assessments and consider the big picture of the assessments.

There were further questions about third grade and the state summative assessments being done in spring and no assessments for the rest of that school year. Additional local assessments are used during the year, as decided upon locally to address student needs. The outcome of the 3rd grade summative tests will be available earlier online this year. Also, the 4th grade teacher will be able to use that information in conjunction with other information to improve that student’s education as needed.

One member applauded the Department of Education’s efforts to reduce testing time, but asked what have we taken away, or is more just being crammed in the same timeframe? State reductions in testing time did not occur between SJR Committee meetings, but occurred before and during this assessment inventory process. The two handouts helped to answer this question.

There were concerns with the delay in parents getting testing results and what to do with them. Last year it was understood that the Smarter Balance results would not be available until July, but people like getting results quickly so they can make instructional changes quickly. It was explained that the new federal law allows for a pilot for up to seven states. Preliminary Smarter Balanced test results will be available online approximately three weeks after students complete the assessments. The final score reports will be available in July.

The facilitator brought the group back to the goal - what assessments we have at the state level, what federal and state requirements are in place, what can and cannot be done and why. She noted summative vs. interim assessment have different purposes.

DOE committed to providing specific examples of how it uses assessments, outcomes of testing, etc.

At this point, Christopher Ruszkowski gave the attached (Attachment 4) presentation on the Continuous Improvement & Inclusiveness: Delaware’s Student Growth Measures.

Highlights include:

* 700 educators development multiple measures of student growth by grade/subject
* LEAs are streamlining assessments for multiple purposes.
* Local student growth measures can be submitted for state approval
* Work to prove the validity and reliability of student growth measures
* We have significantly reduced student growth measures.
* Measure Bs assessment that provide pretest and a post test (summative) to understand how students are doing in that grade and subject area.
* 3 types of Measure Bs, external, internal and alternate assessments - examples of each were presented
* Measure Cs – Student Growth Goals, developed by various educator/professionals, reviewed by outside vendor, based on professional standards; provided examples of Measure C
* Quality of assessments – 4 year wash cycle was explained

A testimony of how the pre and post assessments are working in the Art field was given by Deb Hansen and Jennifer Boland of Campus Community School. Such assessments are showing that both teacher and student know they are doing their job. She noted that through a posttest/self-portrait project, kids were able to see their own growth.

An example of assessments was also given by April McCrae, as she noted that 247 courses have a Measure B and 102 courses have developed assessments which are in use. She noted that she is working with districts to ensure all CTE programs of study are the same, so that higher education institutions know what that means. The result is building partnerships and students entering college with credits and a basic knowledge. April specifically noted partnership with New Castle County VoTech, Sussex Tech and Colonial School District.

Jon Neubauer discussed how pre and posttests fit with interim and summative assessments, specifically ELA and Math. Teachers need high quality data, and they are using it to access resources to address gaps in learning. He noted that through AMPLIFY assessment information is available immediately, and therefore this is an easy tool for teachers to use.

He noted that assessments are 90 minutes each, but that via AMPLIFY interim assessments are 60 minutes each. This provides a quick check. This is available to all schools.

It was asked how much instructional time is used for the assessments and Jon noted that it is not excessive. He also noted that we are starting to see data in the system and are anticipating seeing some good outcomes at end of school year.

The cost of AMPLIFY is $3400per school for a total of $250,000 currently. We could have more schools participate. It was noted that AMPLIFY trainings consist of 1-2 hours with additional training available if needed. Additionally, this can be used for progress monitoring, RtI purposes, preparation for Smarter Balance, and educator evaluation.

It was asked if access to computers is a problem. Yes, it has been, but we have kept assessments window open so they can accommodate students.

Measure Cs are designed to be open ended and authentic assessments. Liz noted that we need to make sure these Measure Bs and Measure Cs are accounted for in the results.

It was also noted that missteps and lessons have been learned, and that in the last 12-18 months there have been improvements. Much of it is the perception. We have to overcome perception. The committee needs to determine value of each assessment.

Liz reiterated what had been discussed using our three prong tool so far:

Here’s What?

Timeline

Days vs. hours of assessments

So What?

Can it be used? And by who?

Purpose of testing?

Alignment with state standards/curriculum/ instruction

One educator asked what assessments tell us in terms of what does the student know and how do they know it, what are responses based on, is this relevant information, is it timely and useful to stimulate teacher thinking. It is important to see their work (online you can’t see the test) to determine what they are getting right and wrong. What does the number mean for the student?

Another member noted that the student comes first and the student must understand what the teacher taught them. We have a learning opportunity gap. We must first determine if our current assessment system does that? What can the committee do on this front?

Lindsay suggested that we view this from the teachers perspective - - - what do they see, evaluate, what does the student get, what does the family get? The committee agreed we need to look at district inventories first, and then look at usefulness/alignment questions.

Liz noted that next time we will focus on the results of the district assessment inventories which will be available January 29. She asked the group to think about what they still want to know about state inventories. Committee members were encouraged to post any here’s what/so what/ now what on the sheets in the room.

The group discussed the next meeting date of Feb 22, from 4pm – 6pm and that Tina Shockley would conduct a doodle poll to determine if this worked for a majority of the group.

Next Public Comment occurred as follows:

Natalie Ganc – teacher at Nellie Stokes Elementary - wants more educators and parents on the committee, wants Smarter Balance results earlier (which will occur next year), currently the information is not useful to teachers, and wants to view the Smarter Balance test itself.

Terri Hodges – President of PTA – thanked the committee for its work. Wants to know why parents are not on this committee. They are important in determining the value of assessments and would provide valuable information to this committee.

Rep. Kim Williams – She questioned if we have data on schools testing 300 students in March and 900 students in May. She wants to ensure we are comparing factual data. She agreed we need more teacher representation, and more parent representation on the committee. She asked how can we arrange testing so that doesn’t happen. DOE to follow up with committee.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

Tms

4 Attachments

Approved 02.25.16