

## **FRANCIS HOWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT** **ASSESSMENT INFORMATION**

Assessment is the intentional process of gathering information, both formal and informal, to understand a student's learning and performance in order to facilitate and communicate achievement and levels of proficiency.

The Francis Howell School District Assessment Committee is charged with evaluating the use of assessments and with recommending a District assessment plan to be approved by the Board of Education each school year. The assessment committee members are a combination of teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. The evaluation process involves making sure District assessments are high quality, and that the loss of instructional time due to assessment is worth the data and evidence gained to drive instruction. High quality assessments are based on what students should know and be able to do. High quality assessments accurately measure student achievement. High quality achievements yield results that are effectively communicated to their intended users. The highest quality assessments involve students in the assessment process through self-assessing, goal setting, and sharing their knowledge, which is one area that can be strengthened in Francis Howell. The Assessment Committee will have continued discussions on the best way to encourage student involvement in the assessment process. During the month of February, an after school professional development opportunity was offered to high school teachers on involving students in the assessment process.

During January 2017, the teachers completed an assessment survey on the use of assessment in their grade level and/or subject area. Teachers were asked which assessments are most beneficial, least beneficial, and why they were perceived in that way. The following are trends that surfaced from the survey results.

More District and classroom level assessments were perceived as beneficial, than non-beneficial. Pearson assessments from the district mathematics programs were perceived as very beneficial at both the elementary and middle school levels. Lucy Calkins pre-tests and post-tests were considered useful by elementary teachers in the area of English Language Arts. In addition, formative assessments, both district developed and teacher

developed, were perceived useful in driving instruction. Any assessment that shows student growth from one period of time to another period of time came up as beneficial, as well. Running records, SRI, and Gates were also perceived as very beneficial in the area of elementary ELA.

The most common perceived non-beneficial assessment was the Galileo benchmark assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Feedback given about the Galileo benchmark assessments included: too many standards addressed on one assessment; questions are too hard; not enough time and training on what to do with the assessment results; and that the program is not user friendly. Another trend that surfaced was that the writing rubrics used to assess writing tasks is too complicated and too time consuming to use effectively. A third trend was that all district assessments were useful and beneficial. Finally, at the middle school level, document-based questions on Social Studies assessments were not beneficial.

Teachers were also asked to give some additional comments about the district use of assessments if they had some. One theme that became evident was that there were too many end-of-quarter assessments. In addition, teachers would like additional training on district assessment tools such as Mastery Connect and Galileo. Another general theme was that too much instructional time is dedicated to assessing students and preparing to assess students. Finally, district teachers are interested in understanding the purpose of assessment data at the district level.

The Assessment Survey results were shared with the Assessment Committee during its spring meeting. The committee discussed the results during the meeting, and used them to drive recommendations to be made to the District Assessment Plan.

To view a list of assessments given in Francis Howell for the 2016 – 2017 school year, [click here](#).