



Department of Assessment, Research & Evaluation

Dearborn City School District

18700 Audette
Dearborn, MI 48124

Phone: 313.827.3040
Email: dept-assessment@dearbornschools.org
Blog: <http://assessment.dearbornschools.org>

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As our community is aware, there has been considerable discussion the last few years about 'over-testing' in American schools. We have heard concerns from parents, teachers, staff and board members. The topic has been consistently raised by teachers and parents at our recent Coffee with the Superintendent meetings. While some of these assessments are required by the state or federal government, such as M-STEP and SAT, we have control over what other assessments are required by our district. The district Assessment Committee (administrators, teachers) has also studied the issue of percent of time spent on assessments for the past year and concluded that much time is being spent on summative assessments.

To allow greater flexibility to each school's Professional Learning Community (PLC) process **we have decided to eliminate all district required assessments other than NWEA K-8 and final exams at the high school level.** The district will still create common assessments and projects that can be used by schools, but we will leave it to the school PLC to decide how and when they are used.

Effective 17-18 school year:

District required: NWEA, final exams

State required: M-STEP, CTE, PSAT/SAT

There is little evidence that *summative* assessments have a large impact on *immediate* student learning. However, used properly they can help us track long term progress and evaluate our educational programs. Conversely, research on the use of *formative* assessment and feedback is very strong. Formative assessment is the moment-by-moment feedback provided to students about how to close the gap between their current work and a desired goal. Most often it does not take the form of what we typically think of as an assessment - true/false, multiple-choice, or fill in the blank questions. Formative assessment is about posing questions, eliciting discussions, and challenging students to explain their thinking through various activities. Formative assessment is intricately tied to both good instruction and our district's philosophy of Professional Learning Communities.

The reduction in district required assessments will allow us to have better balance in our assessment system. School PLCs can place a greater emphasis on the use of formative assessments to conduct discussions and plan lessons for greater student learning.

We will continue to communicate with you and support you through this process. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Patterson'.

Daniel L. Patterson, Ph.D.

Director of Assessment, Research & Evaluation