



# **District In Need Of Improvement**

## **ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

Prepared by the Assessment Team:

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# Introduction

The District Improvement Assessment Team has been meeting monthly since November 2005 with a break. The purpose of this team was to investigate and create an assessment program that would increase student achievement.

Committee members worked on four specific goals:

1. To develop a district assessment program that utilizes formative assessments
2. To identify a data collection system for the district
3. To create a data analysis structure and process for the district
4. To develop a professional development program for the effective implementation of the district assessment program

To accomplish these tasks, team members engaged in the following:

**Vision** - The team began by creating a vision statement for assessment in the Manchester School District.

The Manchester School District is committed to implementing and sustaining a uniform assessment program which addresses the needs of the various learners within our diverse community. This program will provide valid and reliable data to drive instruction that promotes student learning. This data will be multi-functional, meaningful, and shared with all stakeholders (Community, District, School, Teachers, Families and Students).

**District:** At the district level, the program will measure school and district-wide progress toward promoting student learning in relation to the State Frameworks. The data will be used to:

- revise curricula
- design professional development programs
- improve instruction and student achievement
- report valid and meaningful information to the community

**School:** At the school level, the program will monitor school, grade-level, classroom and student progress over time. The data will be used to:

- provide feedback on instructional practices
- monitor adherence to curriculum
- identify professional development needs of the staff
- report valid and meaningful information to the school community
- create smooth transitions between grade levels and schools
- improve instruction and student achievement

**Staff:** At the staff level, the program will monitor classroom and individual student progress. The data will be used to:

- provide feedback on instructional practices
- monitor adherence to curriculum
- identify professional development needs of staff members
- report valid and meaningful information to students and parents
- identify strengths and weaknesses of individual students and class as a whole to focus instruction appropriately

**Student/Family:** At the student/family level, the program will determine what the student knows and is able to do in relation to the curriculum. The data will be used to:

- identify areas of accomplishment and needed growth
- create and implement personal academic goals
- increase student motivation and self-reflection
- promote a positive parent/teacher/student academic interaction study plan.

**Book Study** – The team conducted a book study of “Assessment for Learning” by Paul Black, Christine Harrison, Clare Lee, Bethan Marshal and Dylan William. This book was a summary of a current research study done on formative assessment and its impact on student achievement. The book helped to bring the team together in discussions on quality assessment practices and procedures. The book was very teacher-centered rather than an administrator-centered work. As a result of this study, the team was able to identify essential professional development that is located under goal number four as well as create the assessment calendar which contains various formative assessment tools that will aid in identifying individual student needs. Also, the team chose assessment tools that would provide immediate feedback to all teachers which will help drive instruction. This was highly recommended by the study.

**Assessment Tools Investigations-** The team investigated various assessment tools by meeting with vendors, talking with other school districts and conducting on-line research. The following tools and vendors were considered by the team:

NWEA	Gates McGinitie
Terra Nova	WIDA/ACCESS
Iowa	Writing prompts and samples
Edusoft	District created assessments
Scantron	Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)
Galileo	Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)
Test Wiz	California Achievement Test
WestEd	PALS
Dibbles	Plato

## Goal 1: To develop a district assessment program that utilizes formative assessments

The team worked collaboratively with the Language Arts, Mathematics and Science Curriculum Committees and others to develop the following assessment calendars.

### Elementary School

What?	Who?	When?	Why?	For Whom?
Creative Curriculum	Preschool	Throughout the school year	Progress Monitoring and Establishing baseline data	District School Teacher Parent
Idea Proficiency Test (IPT)	Incoming ELL Students	Throughout the school year	Determine English Language Development and Placement	District School Teacher Parent
Mathematics Kindergarten Assessment	New incoming Gr. 1	September	Grade 1 Math Readiness	District School Teacher Parent Student
Reading and Mathematics NWEA	Gr. 3 -5	September	Inform Instruction and Monitor Progress and Placement Decisions	District School Teacher Parent Student
PALS	PreK and K	September	New Student Information	District School Teacher
Informal Reading Inventory	New students in Gr. 1-5	September	New Student Information	District School Teacher
Phoneme Segmentation	Gr. 1	September	Phoneme Awareness	District School Teacher
Phoneme Blending	Gr. 1	September	Phoneme Manipulation	District School Teacher
Letter Identification	Gr. 1	September	Letter Knowledge	District School Teacher
Schlagal Spelling	Gr. 1 and 2 Optional 3-5	September	Sound Letter	District School Teacher
Writing Prompt	Gr. 1-5	Due by end of September	Written Expression	District School Teacher Parent Student

What?	Who?	When?	Why?	For Whom?
Reading, Mathematics and Writing NECAP	Gr. 3 - 5	October	Standards-Based State Assessment	District School Teacher Parent Student
PALS	Preschool	October	Progress Monitoring	District School Teacher Parent
Mathematics Basic Facts Benchmarks	Gr. 1-4	November	Measure Automaticity	District School Teacher Parent Student
Informal Reading Inventory	Gr. 1-2, Gr. 3-5 (if Sept. NWEA indicates a need)	November	Accuracy, Level Comprehension, Fluency	District School Teacher Parent
Reading and Mathematics NWEA	Gr. 3 -5	January	Inform Instruction and Monitor Progress and Placement Decisions	District School Teacher Parent Student
Schlagal Spelling	Gr. 1-2, Optional Gr. 3-5	January	Sound/Letter	District School Teacher Parent Student
Sight Word	Gr. K-2, 3-5 (below grade level students)	January	Recognition	District School Teacher Parent Student
Writing Prompt (teachers choice)	Gr. K-5	Due by end of January	Written Expression	District School Teacher Parent Student
Mathematics Basic Facts Benchmarks	Gr. 1-4	January	Measure Automaticity	District School Teacher Parent Student
ACCESS	ELL Students	January-March	Progress Monitoring of English Language Development	District School Teacher Parent
Informal Reading Inventory	Gr. K-2, Gr. 3-5 (below grade level students)	February	Accuracy, Level Comprehension, Fluency	District School Teacher Parent

What?	Who?	When?	Why?	For Whom?
Genre Update	Gr. K-5	February	Check Genre Instruction	District School Teacher
Mathematics District Created Assessments	K - 5	March	Inform Instruction and Measure Mastery of Curriculum Standards. Placement for flexible grouping	District School Teacher Parent
Basic Facts Benchmarks		April	Measure Automaticity	District School Teacher Parent Student
Writing Prompt	Gr. K-5	Due by end of April	Written Expression	District School Teacher Parent Student
Informal Reading Inventory	Gr. K-2, Gr. 3-5 (below grade level students)	April/May	Accuracy, Level Comprehension, Fluency	District School Teacher Parent
PALS	Incoming Kindergarten and 1 <sup>st</sup> graders	April/May	Kindergarten and Grade 1 Readiness	District School Teacher Parent
Schlagal Spelling	Gr. 1-2, Optional Gr. 3-5	April/May	Sound/Letter	District School Teacher Parent Student
Creative Curriculum Math Assessment	Incoming K	April/May	Provides Baseline For Any Incoming Student	Teacher District Parents
Mathematics Kindergarten Assessment	New incoming Gr. 1	April/May	Grade 1 math readiness	District School Teacher Parent Student
Science NECAP	Gr. 4	May	Standards-Based State Assessment	District School Teacher Parent Student

What?	Who?	When?	Why?	For Whom?
Reading, Mathematics and Science NWEA	Gr. 3 -5	May	Inform Instruction and Monitor Progress and Placement Decisions	District School Teacher Parent Student
Math Trimester Assessments	K - 5	June	Inform Instruction and Measure Mastery of Curriculum Standards Placement for flexible grouping	District School Teacher Parent Student
Gates MacGinitie	Gr. 1 and 2	June	Vocabulary/ Comprehension	District School Teacher Parent Student
Sight Word	Gr. K-2, 3-5 (below students)	June	Recognition	District School Teacher Parent Student
Genre Update	Gr. K-5	February	Check Genre Instruction	District School Teacher

### Middle School

What?	Who?	When?	Why?	Audience
Idea Proficiency Test (IPT)	Incoming ELL Students	Throughout the school year	Determine English Language Development and Placement	District School Teacher Parent
Reading and Mathematics NWEA	Gr. 6 - 8	September	Inform Instruction and Monitor Progress	District School Teacher Parent Student
Language Arts Writing Prompt	Gr. 6 - 8	September	Inform Instruction and Monitor Progress	District Teacher Parent
Reading, Mathematics and Writing NECAP	Gr. 6 – 8 Writing Gr. 8 only	October	Standards-Based State Assessment	District School Teacher Parent Student
Mathematics District Benchmark Assessments	Gr. 6 and 7	November	Measure Student Progress on Basic Computation Skills	District School Teacher Parent Student
Language Arts Writing Sample	Gr. 6 - 8	January	Inform Instruction and Monitor Progress	District Teacher Parent
Mathematics District Created Assessment	Gr. 6 - 8	January	Inform Instruction and Measure Mastery of Curriculum Standards. Placement Decisions	District School Teacher Parent
Reading and Mathematics NWEA	Gr. 6 - 8	January	Inform Instruction and Monitor Progress	District School Teacher Parent Student
ACCESS	ELL Students	January-March	Progress Monitoring of English Language Development	District School Teacher Parent
High School Mathematics Placement Assessment	All grade 8 except Algebra Students	February	High School Placement Decisions	District High School Teacher Parent Student
Language Arts Writing Prompt	Gr. 6 - 8	March	Inform Instruction and Monitor Progress	District Teacher Parent

What?	Who?	When?	Why?	For Whom?
Mathematics District Benchmark Assessments	Gr. 6 and 7	March	Measure Student Progress on Basic Computation Skills	District School Teacher Parent Student
Reading, Mathematics, and Science NWEA	Gr. 6 – 8	May	Inform Instruction and Monitor Progress. Assess Curriculum & Instruction	District School Teacher Parent Student
Science NECAP	Gr. 8	May	Standards-Based State Assessment	District School Teacher Parent Student
Language Arts Writing Sample	Gr. 6 - 8	June	Inform Instruction And Monitor Progress	District Teacher Parent
Algebra Placement Exam	Gr. 8 Algebra Students	June	Determine high school course placement	District High School Teacher Parent Student
Mathematics District Created Assessment	Gr. 6 – 8 (Except 8 <sup>th</sup> grade algebra students)	June	Inform Instruction and Measure Mastery of Curriculum Standards. Placement Decisions	District School Teacher Parent

## High School

What?	Who?	When?	Why?	Audience
Idea Proficiency Test (IPT)	Incoming ELL Students	Throughout the school year	Determine English Language Development and Placement	District School Teacher Parent
Reading and Mathematics NWEA	Gr. 9 and 10	September	Inform Instruction And Monitor Progress	District School Teacher Parent Student
Language Arts Writing Prompt	Gr. 9-12	September	Inform Instruction And Monitor Progress	District School Teacher Parent
Reading, Mathematics and Writing NECAP	Gr. 11	October	Standards-Based State Assessment	District School Teacher Parent Student
Language Arts Writing Sample	Gr. 9-12	January	Inform Instruction And Monitor Progress	District School Teacher Parent
Mathematics District Created Mid-Terms	Gr. 9 - 12	January	Assess Curriculum and Student mastery of Curriculum Standards. Inform Instruction	District School Teacher Parent Student
ACCESS	ELL Students	January-March	Progress Monitoring of English Language Development	District School Teacher Parent
Reading and Mathematics NWEA	Gr. 9 and 10	Beginning of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	Inform Instruction And Monitor Progress	District School Teacher Parent Student
Language Arts Writing Prompt	Gr. 9-12	March	Inform Instruction And Monitor Progress	District School Teacher Parent
Reading, Mathematics, and Science NWEA	Gr. 9 and 10	May	Inform Instruction and Monitor Progress. Assess Curriculum & Instruction	District School Teacher Parent Student
Science NECAP	Gr. 11	May	Standards-Based State Assessment	District School Teacher Parent Student

What?	Who?	When?	Why?	For Whom?
Language Arts Writing Sample	Gr. 9-11	June	Inform Instruction And Monitor Progress	District Teacher Parent
Mathematics District Created Semester Exams	Gr. 9 - 12	June	Assess Curriculum and Student mastery of Curriculum Standards. Inform Instruction	District School Teacher Parent Student

**Implementation and Modification of the above Calendars:**

The DI Assessment Team is recommending that the above calendars be implemented through a phase-in process. Once the necessary assessment tools are acquired/developed, implementation of them may begin. An evaluation of each assessment tool should be coordinated by the Assessment Coordinator in conjunction with affected district personnel on a minimum of an annual basis in order to determine the validity and effectiveness of the tool to the Manchester School District. It is the teams’ understanding that the recommended calendar will and should change to meet the needs of the students of the Manchester School District.

**NWEA Phase-in Implementation Plan:**

**Beginning in January**

- Year 1 (2008) Grades 4 and 7
  - Year 2 (2009) Grade 4, 5, 7,8 and 9
  - Year 3 (2010) Grade 3-10
- Testing takes place in September, January and May

**Technical Needs:**

- Server at each school (We currently have this in place)
- Laptop acquisition: It is recommended that the following laptops be added to the existing instructional laptops at each school and be devoted to teacher work in the areas of curriculum, assessment and professional development
  - Year 1: All elementary and middle schools - mobile lab with 10 laptops
  - Year 2: All elementary and middle schools – increase mobile lab to 20 laptops  
All high schools - mobile lab with 30 laptops
  - Year 3: All elementary and middle schools - increase mobile lab to 30 laptops  
All high schools – a second mobile lab with 30 laptops

**Staffing Needs:**

NWEA contact person will need to be designated at each building. The team recommends this individual be part of the school’s data team.

## **Goal 2: To identify a data collection system for the district**

An on-line web-based data collection system is essential to the effective implementation of this program. The Assessment Team recommends the acquisition of the student management system, X2, as well as utilizing the data warehousing program being offered by the State Department of Education, Performance Pathways. Both of these systems will help the Manchester School District to better record, analyze and communicate student progress with instructional staff as well as parents.

## **Goal 3: To create a data analysis-structure and process**

### **A. Data Collection Chain**

#### Elementary Language Arts

Teacher→ Reading Supervisor→ Principal→ Implementation Specialist→  
Assessment Coordinator

#### All Other Subject Areas

Teacher→ Principal < Assessment Coordinator  
and/or  
Coach→ Assessment Coordinator

### **B. Framework to support the process**

#### **Administrative Support**

The team recommends that all elementary schools have a full-time Assistant Principal to adequately support this assessment program.

#### **Data Teams**

A data team will be created at each school to facilitate and coordinate the data-analysis process in each school. The Assessment Team is recommending 3-5 people per school be on the Data Team and receive a \$500 annual stipend. Responsibilities: To guide the school staff through the data-analysis process indicated in the data-analysis calendar.

#### **Assessment Coordinator**

##### Minimum Qualifications and Requirements:

- Master's degree from an accredited college or university; preferably in educational administration or curriculum and instruction;
- Valid educator's certification ;
- A minimum of 5 years experience as a classroom teacher;
- Graduate work in education in the areas of curriculum, assessment, and/or instructional practices;
- Practical experience in assessment planning, analysis, and evaluation and supervisory experience;
- Such alternative or additional qualifications as the Board of School Committee or Superintendent may find appropriate or acceptable

Specific Core Function:

To provide leadership in the development, implementation and evaluation of the district-wide data-analysis process

Job Responsibilities:

- Publicize to all stakeholders the assessment calendar PK-12;
- Ensure all individuals understand their responsibilities in relation to the implementation of the assessment calendar and data collection;
- Oversee the implementation of the assessment calendar;
- Collect and report district-wide assessment data;
- Create data-analysis procedures to be utilized by each school in the district;
- Train and coordinate data teams at each school to implement the data analysis process at individual schools;
- Coordinate/facilitate the professional development program for effective implementation of assessment, analysis of data and the use of data;
- Help individual schools plan assessment implementation;
- Evaluate and revise the district-wide assessment calendar PK-12 and data-analysis process annually;
- Provide necessary data for district-wide coordination of curriculum and professional development;
- Educate all stakeholders on the importance of assessment and its relevance to student achievement;
- Plan and present a series of meetings each year for the express purpose of reporting assessment data to the Board of School Committee, district administration and other groups as directed by administration;
- Keep abreast of, and interpret for the staff, current research in the area of assessment;
- Assist in the development and coordination of the sections of the budget that pertain to assessment;
- Maintain liaison and active participation with educational leaders in curriculum, assessment and instruction at state, regional and national levels;

**C. Data Analysis Calendar**

Month	Action	Outcome	Deadline	Who's Responsible/Who's Involved
July	Creation of District Data Summary	District Data summary from the previous school year	July 31	Assessment Coordinator/ Assessment Team
August	Train and coordinate data teams	Coordinate data team work for the upcoming school year	By beginning of school year	Assessment Coordinator/ Data Teams

Month	Action	Outcome	Deadline	Who's Responsible/Who's Involved
September	Analyze NWEA data	Identify areas for remediation before NECAP, guide instruction and create flexible groupings	October 15th	Individual classroom teachers
October	Each school analyzes data from district assessments (see assessment calendar)	Each school would identify building strengths and weaknesses as well as PD needs and communicates those to the Professional Development Coordinator	October 31st	Principal and Data Team/ Teaching Staff
October	Language Arts teachers grades 1-12 analyze writing prompt information and make instructional decisions	Instruction is modified to meet student needs	October 15th	Reading Supervisors, Middle School Language Arts Implementation Specialists and High School English BLICS/ Language Arts Teachers
December	Elementary Teachers analyze math and language arts trimester data and make instructional decisions	Instruction is modified to meet student needs	December 20 <sup>th</sup>	Elementary Math Implementation Specialists and Reading Supervisors/ Teachers of Math and Reading
January	Analyze NWEA data	Identify areas for remediation, guide instruction, create flexible groupings and guide course placements	January 31st	Individual classroom teachers
February	Language Arts teachers grades 1-12 analyze writing sample information and make instructional decisions	Instruction is modified to meet student needs	February 15th	Reading Supervisors, Middle School Language Arts Implementation Specialists and High School English BLICS/ Language Arts Teachers

Month	Action	Outcome	Deadline	Who's Responsible/Who's Involved
February	Grade level, subject and school wide data analysis of NECAP data for each sub-group	Identify instructional alignment to the State GLEs and GSEs	Last school day of the month (or 1 month after data release date)	Principal and Data Team/ Teaching Staff
February	Middle school and high school teachers analyze math semester data and make instructional decisions	Instruction is modified to meet student needs	Feb. 20 <sup>th</sup>	Middle School Math Implementation Specialists and High School Math BLICS/ Math Teachers
March	District data analysis of NECAP data for each sub-group	Evaluating alignment of the curriculum and instruction to the GLEs and GSEs	Last school day of the month (or 1 month after grade level, subject and school wide analysis is complete)	Assessment Coordinator/ Assessment Team
April	Elementary Teachers analyze math and language arts trimester data and make instructional decisions	Instruction is modified to meet student needs	April 10 <sup>th</sup>	Elementary Math Implementation Specialists and Reading Supervisors/ Teachers of Math and Reading
April	Language Arts teachers grades 6-12 analyze writing prompt information and make instructional decisions	Instruction is modified to meet student needs	April 15 <sup>th</sup>	Middle School Language Arts Implementation Specialists and High School English BLICS/ Language Arts Teachers
May	Analyze NWEA data	Identify areas for remediation before NECAP, guide instruction and course placement	May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Individual classroom teachers
June	Language Arts teachers grades 1-12 analyze writing prompt/sample information and make instructional decisions	Instruction is modified to better meet student needs for the following year	June 15 <sup>th</sup>	Reading Supervisors, Middle School Language Arts Implementation Specialists and High School English BLICS/ Language Arts Teachers

Month	Action	Outcome	Deadline	Who's Responsible/Who's Involved
May/June	Identify strengths and weaknesses of student achievement in each subject area at each school	Create a holistic picture of the academic progress of the school during that school year and evaluate the progress toward identified school goals	Last day of school	Principal and Data Teams/ Teaching Staff

## **Goal 4: To develop a professional development program for the effective implementation of the district assessment program**

### NWEA Training Needs:

Year 1: (2007-08)

#### A. Step 1 NWEA Training

- Group 1: 60 grade 4 teachers, 24 grade 7 teachers (2 per team), administrators, tech teams, SPED and ELL teachers, and Assessment Coordinator
- Cost: Two Step 1 trainings @ \$3999.00/ training= \$7998.00

Year 2: (2008-09)

#### B. Train the Trainer Model for a group of district trainers.

- Group 1 teachers will train Grade 5,8 and 9 implementers and new 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers on Step 1
- Cost: \$0

#### C. Step 2 NWEA Training

- Group 1 will be trained in August
- Group 2: Grade 5 teachers, Grade 8 teachers (2 per team), Grade 9 teachers conducted by in-house trainers from Group 1
- Cost: Two Step 2 trainings for Group 1 @\$3999.00/training= \$7998.00

#### D. In-house trainers

- Assessment Coordinator will identify and coordinate key in-house trainers from groups 1 and possibly 2 within the district that will train additional groups of teachers
- Cost: \$0

Year 3: (2009-10)

- Group 3: Grade 3 teachers, Grade 6 teachers (2 per team), Grade 10 teachers and any new teachers to grades 4,5,7,8 and 9 will be trained in Step 1 and 2 in Fall and Spring conducted by in-house trainers.
- Cost: \$0

Year 4+:

- In-house trainers continue to train new teachers on Steps 1 and 2.
- Cost: \$0

See appendix A for descriptions on NWEA Step 1 and 2 trainings.

Professional Development Opportunities:  
Required for 07-08:

What	Who's Involved	Who's Responsible	When
NWEA Training Step 1	Grade 4 and 7 teachers, administrator at each school, NWEA contact person, tech teams, SPED and ELL teachers	Assessment Coordinator and Building Principals	Fall of 2007
Train Data Teams	Data Teams at each school	Assessment Coordinator and Building Principals	Before October 2007
Rubric Scoring of Writing Prompts and Samples	All teachers grade PK-12	Assessment Coordinator and Language Arts Implementation Specialists	Throughout 2007-08 school year
Assessment Tool Training	New employees	Assessment Coordinator and Implementation Specialists	August 2007
Data Collection System Training	All employees	Director of Technology and Assessment Coordinator	Contingent on SIS or State system acquisition

Suggested:

**A. Using Assessment Data to Inform Instruction**

Purpose: To train teachers to utilize data in order to drive instruction to improve student achievement.

Rationale:

- NECAP results from the testing year will provide direction to this year's teacher to address individual student needs
- NECAP results from the teaching year will provide feedback on individual teacher instructional practices
- NECAP results can help in identifying curriculum, professional development, infrastructure and program needs/issues

**B. Assessment 101**

Purpose: To educate the teachers on the role of assessment in student learning.

Rationale:

- Assessments can provide valuable data to drive instruction, identify student instructional needs and document growth
- Formative assessments are effective in engaging students in their own learning
- To provide information to teachers about scientifically based practices in assessment

### **C. Rubrics**

Purpose: To ensure teachers have an understanding of rubrics and how to use and create them to assess student learning.

Rationale:

- NECAP utilizes rubrics to assess students learning on all three sections
- Both Language Arts curriculum committees are recommending the use of rubrics for district-wide writing prompts
- Rubrics help plan and set the direction of instruction
- Rubrics clarify expectations and provide effective feedback for students
- Rubrics minimize the subjectivity of assessment

### **D. Effective Questioning**

Purpose: To train teachers in the use of effective questioning strategies to improve student learning.

Rationale:

- Creative questioning improves communication between teachers and students
- Effective questioning facilitates students to develop a level of conceptual understanding of information
- Effective questioning is an effective formative assessment tool that results in longer student answers, a decrease in failure to respond by students, student responses that are more confident and students that challenge and/or improve other student answers.

## **CONCLUSION**

The District Improvement Assessment Team has appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to develop this program to support and promote the achievement of Manchester students. The team, as noted in the introduction, has conducted research, participated in a book study and investigated a variety of assessment tools to formulate its recommendations.

As a result of this work, the Assessment Team has identified the reporting of student progress in the areas of progress reports, report cards and assessment data as its next initiative. The team will continue to work on a plan to create an assessment communication plan for the Manchester School District.