

**SJR 2 – Assessment Inventory Committee  
Meeting #2  
December 16, 2015, 4:30 pm**

**Meeting Notes**

**Member Attendees:**

Rep. Tim Dukes  
Sec. Godowsky  
Sen. Ernesto Lopez  
Sen. Nicole Poore  
Rep. Earl Jaques  
Equetta Jones  
Vicki Gehrt  
Susan Bunting  
Louann Hudson  
Tanner Polce for Senator David Sokola

**Members Absent:**

Rep. Sean Matthews  
Raina Allen

**Members of the Public In Attendance:**

Ms. Bebe Coker for Raina Allen  
Deb Stevens for Frederika Jenner  
Liz Hoyt

**DOE, Governor’s Office and Support Staff In Attendance:**

Susan Haberstroh  
Tina Shockley  
Liz Farley-Ripple  
Lindsay O’Mara  
Carolyn Lazar

The meeting convened at 4:32 p.m. Introductions were made. The minutes of the November 16, 2015 (meeting #1) were approved via a motion from Rep. Dukes and Rep. Jaques and the motion carried.

Liz Farley Ripple from the University of Delaware facilitated the meeting and used the attached Powerpoint deck as a guide through the meeting.

She reviewed the last meeting where a comprehensive assessment system was discussed. She identified what we are assessing – learned standards and content. She indicated that assessment data varied from being very broad to being detailed. An overview of who, what, when, how and why of current comprehensive assessments was discussed at the last meeting. The discussion was framed in light of working towards a comprehensive framework.

For this current meeting, the group would do a review of the inventory framework. This was based on the state using an assessment inventory tool. See [achieve.org](http://achieve.org) for template table. A process for analysis was discussed, specifically considering:

- the perspective of the student regarding assessments
- which assessments to keep and which to discontinue
- implementation recommendations

Susan Bunting and Louann Hudson of Indian River School District gave a presentation on District Assessment, which they have undertaken to date. Susan indicated that the assessment inventory was a requirement that was completed during a very busy time for them, that there was funding available and that they worked with Hanover Research, an outside organization.

Louann indicated that: (1) they first tried to ensure that teachers understood the definitions and terminology used; (2) their data was limited as they were not able to reach all teachers; (3) that assessment is a hot issue, (4) skill level assessments and (5) parents aren't always aware when or what students take as regular assessments and (6) there was a preliminary final report.

It was noted that while parents feel there is too much testing, district and school administrators believe assessments are valuable. IRSD wanted to know if testing is working, but the general belief is that testing is bad, but "not at my school".

The preliminary final report has valuable information, specifically in terms of surveys and analyses. It showed multiple views of graphed information (i.e., early literacy). The main disappointment is the lack of involvement of schools. Some schools are not interested in participating in surveys.

They found that schools with high poverty student populations had a low response rates to the survey. In contrast, schools with more affluent student populations had a high participation rate.

They found that mostly teacher-created testing (quizzes, interims) and some unit summative tests and/or teacher-created district assessments were done. There was no recommendation to discontinue any assessments.

Ms. Coker encouraged the group to redefine what testing is used for and that we need to explain the benefits of testing to parents, teachers, communities, etc. She noted that tests are used to evaluate student growth and comprehension and this is fair if students are tested on what they have been taught and not tested in a standardized manner, at a grade level they have not been taught.

Preliminary and followup surveys and focus groups were used.

Sen. Poore inquired about the number of tests students in various school levels are taking. It is important to know when you are testing students and if you are teaching to the test. IRSD staff noted that in there district there are approximately 22 tests for elementary students, 34 for middle school students and 32 for high school students. Assessments at the district Level for elementary students consists of approximately five ELA summative tests in one year, six math tests, a unit

and STAR test. In middle and high school, there is one ELA test per marking period, and four in math. Additionally in high school student, there is a mid-term and final ELA summative assessment and seven unit tests, as well as a mid-term and final exam in math. There is also an RTI assessment every six weeks. RTI, or Response to Intervention, is a federal requirement that involves ongoing assessment for all elementary students and secondary at-risk students and individualized instruction to meet the needs identified through those assessments and other information. This involves students being paired with teachers based on areas in which the student needs help.

It was asked, “What is the best way to evaluate teachers?” It was noted that not all evaluation is done through student assessments. Many times administrators gather information by walk-throughs. While there must be evidence, the evaluation is somewhat intuitive. There are different mechanisms used to assess teachers. One example is that teachers are collaborating with each other, and that this is key in establishing collective teacher responsibility.

Communication is needed, from both a public view and an education view. Additionally a personal touch, explanation to the student of the value of the assessment, which might also save instructional time. A balance needs to be found so that we can make good use of assessment data. We should also look at intended vs. actual outcome of assessments.

In early literacy, there is a belief that there is too much assessment and IRSD is looking into this. Data from a needs assessment which they received from the Office of Early Learning indicates that teachers are doing a lot of assessment at an early age (daycare, preschool).

Additionally, districts need to follow up with those who didn’t respond well to the survey needs to occur.

Next, Carolyn Lazar provided an overview of the State Assessment Inventory, what it looks like and means. She applauded the efforts of school districts, and noted the more they put into their assessment and follow-up efforts, the more benefit they get out of the assessment process. Her office had been reviewing Office of Assessment (OoA) assessments informally, but transitioned to a more formalized process with achieve.org. The formal assessment inventory process used by the OoA is similar to the process used at the district level.

She noted they used Achieve.org’s Inventory Table (attached) in the state’s Office of Assessments inventory process. It provides information such as (1) the names of assessments (2) if they align to standards (3) the content and grade levels involved (4) intended purposes and so on. Additional considerations included are assessments redundant. The OoA also looked at assessments recently eliminated in order to ensure relevant, valuable assessments are being given. She notes the State Assessment Inventory is online.

She further noted that their office will use this work to help drive the direction of their Five Year Plan, and asks for input on the state side.

Districts are completing local assessment inventories and looking for redundancy and ways to save time, and so on. Districts and the OoA are identifying ways to identify what changes are

needed to help streamline assessments. Once district information is received, the OoA will summarize the statewide inventory results for publishing.

She explained that:

- DOE offered grants to districts (as support)
- DOE provided resources, webinars, and trainings
- Achieve.org did some face to face meetings and webinars with districts
- DOE provided inventory models
- DOE presented to a variety of groups

Ultimately, 10 districts and one charter applied for and received grant funds.

Additional resources included an ongoing open line of communication with DOE staff, an online tool box (including DOE documents, trainings, and achieve.org materials), and a presentation to chiefs.

All of this for the goal of having an organized summary of the assessment inventory for districts by Dec 21, 2015. The summary will also include the number of statewide assessments that are mandated (handout).

The group questioned how long is each assessment? This varies and is based on the school's discretion, difference in student's taking assessments, typically with DCAS it was about 1 hour per subject (science, social studies and end of course assessment). Students taking alternative assessment would not be receiving the same assessments as other students. SAT is 3 hours during a school day. It was noted that SBAC can be used in lieu of SAT for 11<sup>th</sup> grade. It was noted that testing surveyed for Measure B takes a lot of time as there are multi pre and post tests for teacher evaluation. This was a good question for this committee.

The state assessment calendar was shared. No students takes every assessment listed on the page. All OoA-managed assessments are listed for all grades on the one-pager.

Sen. Poore asked if DOE could provide to the group a list of assessments broken down by grade, perhaps a spreadsheet of all assessments, including testing times.

The group inquired about Measure Bs – what's mandated, what assessments are included for this.

DOE is to provide a list of assessments by grade level with times. Also, DOE is to provide information regarding federally required assessments, etc.

It was asked, "How effective are we at taking assessments and put it back into the curriculum?" That depends on how far you dig down into the assessment and what you do with it. Again, what you put into it is what you get out. This varies by content area. Sec. Godowsky notes that with SBAC, we did not get the results back soon enough, but we will improve on that for this year.

A superintendent noted that state assessments don't help us to help the student, but they do help us determine curriculum and the gaps to focus on for the next group of students.

The question was asked, "Why are we testing?" Some of the members don't believe that summative assessments are helping students. While others indicated that it does help to determine where one student is in comparison with where the average student should be performing. Assessments have different purposes.

One committee member states that standardized testing is not right, that students are not all standard. Likewise, the committee member also stated that individualized instruction occurs and maybe we need individualized assessments.

Secretary Godowsky noted the overall value of assessments and that the challenge is that we should only use as much assessment as we need and that we need to find the right balance.

Additionally, "What are we testing, and what do we do with assessment data?" We need to teach children about assessments and show more growth because they are taking the impact of it.

Next there was discussion of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which indicates states are more responsible for testing. We must consider this as we move forward, what does this mean for us? DOE to prepare a one page summary of ESSA (federal \$).

Sen. Poore noted that it's just not student's testing, that teachers are spending lots of time testing. It was also noted that if we decreased time taking test it may free up technology and computer labs for other instruction.

As the meeting came to an end, Liz indicated that the questions for the task force are: How do we convey all of this assessment data? We need to answer questions about state assessment inventory and the district assessment inventory.

There was some follow up work for DOE for the next meeting. They need to provide the group with:

- Total hours by student by grade level spent on assessments, including optional assessments and those associated with federal dollars
- When do Measures Bs take place?
- Summarize changes found in ESSA
- What assessments are required by law or regulation?
- A schedule of district assessments by district if available.
- How are students performing on state assessments?
- Why are we testing and what are we doing with assessment data?

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Approved with attachments 01.19.16