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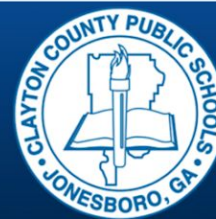
NEWS RELEASE

CLAYTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1058 Fifth Avenue | Jonesboro, GA 30236

770-473-2700

www.clayton.k12.ga.us



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Department of Communications, Public Relations & Marketing

Jada K. Dawkins
Chief of Communications
Telephone: (770) 472-7257

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CCPS Participates in Innovative Assessment Pilot Project

JONESBORO - Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) has placed itself squarely in the forefront of finding an assessment system that will continue and enhance all efforts to solidly embed a culture of high performance throughout the school district and the community that it serves.

CCPS is one of seven school systems across the state, representing more than 165,000 students, collaborating in a State Board of Education approved pilot project, the Georgia MAP Assessment Partnership, or GMAP. The State Board approved the pilot proposal on Thursday, September 27, 2018. It should be noted that the number of school systems participating in the pilot is expected to expand to create a wider footprint across Georgia.

The GMAP pilot will partner with NWEA[®], a research-based, not-for-profit organization, to thoughtfully create a unified assessment system that 1) reduces testing time, 2) provides educators with instructional guidance, and 3) challenges students to develop the higher-order thinking skills they need to succeed in college and careers. The system created and implemented during this pilot project would eventually replace the Georgia Milestones Assessment Program (GMAS).

Why participate in this pilot project?

“During the 2018 session of the General Assembly, Senate Bill 362 was approved, it became part of the Official Code with Governor Nathan Deal’s signature and went into effect on July 1, 2018,” said Dr. Morcease J. Beasley, CCPS Superintendent/CEO. “It basically states that beginning with this current school year that one or more innovative assessment pilot program(s) shall be established by the State Board of Education to examine one or more alternate assessment and accountability systems aligned with state academic content standards.”

“In addition to this being part of the state’s Official Code, our involvement is based on a very real need to reach beyond the present assessment system,” Dr. Beasley said. “Our data shows that there is a group of about 24 percent of our students proficient and/or distinguished as measured by the current Georgia Milestones. We are innovating our instructional and assessment practices to ensure that all students are accelerating towards meeting grade-level expectations.”

“We are excited about the potential benefits for our students that the implementation of the GMAP process provides,” he said. “GMAP could offer a game-changing, culture-evolving tool that would enhance our efforts to graduate highly motivated men and women that are truly college and career ready, who can be successful in a global society.”

What will happen in CCPS?

The five-year pilot will begin with three schools: Smith Elementary, Morrow Middle and Stilwell School of the Arts form a feeder pattern of students. Each year thereafter, the number of schools and feeder patterns will increase. In the early stages, the schools participating will be using MAP Growth assessments from NWEA in addition to GMAS. By the fifth year of the pilot, all CCPS schools will be using a new, customized NWEA interim assessment in grades 3 through 12. The new assessment solution will yield timely insights on students' command of grade-level standards and their individual academic growth and learning level, while also culminating in end-of-year summative proficiency scores.

An important element of the GMAP pilot project is that it allows the district's assessment process to meet a child where he/she is in terms of academic ability. Once implemented fully, the new assessment solution is designed to carry a student from grade-to-grade, offering a learner profile that will allow for more effective teaching and learning as the child grows physically and mentally.

"This is an innovative approach to student assessment," said Dr. Michael Tappler, Psychometrician in the Research, Evaluation, Assessment, and Accountability Department. "At the center of this approach is a series of three annual tests administered at the beginning of the year, at mid-year, and at the end of the year in the spring."

Each test is diagnostic in nature; each test provides a profile for each student that will accurately display a student's ability to learn. "Data from the assessment will also recommend action steps that can be used to develop an individual learning plan that will allow each student an opportunity to reach and exceed their full academic potential," he added.

Another key aspect of this assessment program is that it is adaptive to fit the ability level of the student. "The test can adapt to a student's ability to learn," Dr. Tappler said. "For example, if a third grade student demonstrates an ability to do fifth grade work, that student would be tested at that level."

What are the next steps?

With the State Board's approval the district will move forward, launching an intensive training for teachers and administrators of Smith Elementary, Morrow Middle and Stilwell School of the Arts during the months of October through December. The training will include administering the assessment and how the data should be evaluated and used going forward.

"The implementation of this new assessment program will require a substantial shift in thinking for our staff," Tappler said. In addition to the internal training initiative, a robust education/awareness campaign for students of the initial pilot sites and their parents/guardians will take place.

In January 2019, the initial assessment under MAP Growth, considered a mid-year diagnostic, will be administered at Smith, Morrow and Stilwell in the following manner:

- English Language Arts (ELA) and Math in grades 3 through 8
- ELA, Math, and Science in grades 9 through 12

Existing GMAS testing tools will be used as the summative assessment for the students at the first year pilot schools. Later in 2019, the district will engage in training for teachers, administrators and support staff as it expands MAP Growth to 30 elementary, middle and high school campuses for year two of the pilot.

The new solution, which will assess all subject areas in grades three through eight and all content areas in grades 9-12, will provide longitudinal growth data, instructionally relevant insights, and summative proficiency scores.

About Clayton County Public Schools

Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) is fully accredited by AdvancED – Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement. The district offers a focused world-class program based on a challenging curriculum which is taught from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Serving over 55,000 students, Clayton County Public Schools is ranked among the 100 largest school districts in the U.S. and is the fifth largest school system in Georgia.

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