

# Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: J

Date: November 19, 2015

<b>Title</b>	Report on Formative Assessment Training Pilot		
<b>Presenters</b>	Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent for Student Assessment and School Improvement Holli Cook, Assessment Specialist, Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement Ann Abbett, Assessment Specialist, Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement Julie Schwarz, Teacher, Hugh Mercer Elementary School, Fredericksburg City Public Schools Melanie Nuckols, Teacher, Hugh Mercer Elementary School, Fredericksburg City Public Schools Hadley Christi, Teacher, Hugh Mercer Elementary School, Fredericksburg City Public Schools Theresa Pritchard, Principal, Grandin Court Elementary School, Roanoke City Public Schools Amanda Mattox, Teacher, Grandin Court Elementary School, Roanoke City Public Schools		
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**Purpose of Presentation:**

For information only. No action required.

**Previous Review or Action:**

No previous review or action.

**Action Requested:**

No action requested.

**Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:**

	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
X	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

**Background Information and Statutory Authority:**

Goal 3: Training in the use of classroom assessment will provide teachers with additional strategies to use in adjusting instruction to expand student learning.

**Summary of Important Issues:**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), in collaboration with the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, conducted a pilot of formative assessment professional development materials beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. In 2014-2015 selected elementary school teams participated in structured activities correlated to online modules developed by the Center of Standards and Assessment Implementation and used formative assessment strategies embedded in classroom instruction to enhance student learning. The modules were developed from the work of Dr. Margaret Heritage, noted expert on formative assessment. These modules represented evidence-based practices for promoting formative assessment strategies in the classroom drawn from years of work with teachers; they have been used by educators across the country to support teachers in this process. In 2015-2106 the pilot has been expanded to include middle schools and high schools. The results of this pilot will be used to inform the further expansion of formative assessment professional development opportunities available from the VDOE for school divisions in the Commonwealth.

Using a panel discussion format, Department staff will provide background information about the pilot and educators from two school divisions will share their experiences as participants.

**Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

Training materials were provided by the Center of Standards and Assessment Implementation at no charge. Travel expenses for Department staff were covered by existing agency resources.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

None

**Superintendent's Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends the Board of Education receive the report on the Formative Assessment Training Pilot.

# Formative Assessment Pilot

Board of Education Meeting

November 19, 2015

# What is formative assessment?

# Formative assessment ...

- Is a *process*, not any particular test;
- Is used by *both teachers and students*;
- Takes place *during instruction*;
- Provides *assessment-based feedback* to teachers and students;
- Helps teachers and students make *adjustments* that will improve learning outcomes.

Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers, 2006  
(Council of Chief State School Officers consortium focused specifically on formative assessment)

# Formative Assessment

“Formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students’ status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their learning tactics.”

Popham, W. James. (2006). *Defining and Enhancing Formative Assessment*. (p.6).

# Formative Assessment Pilot

# Background

- In 2012, VDOE set a goal to develop materials that would increase the use of formative assessment in Virginia classrooms.
- This initiative became a project supported by the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC).
- VDOE staff collaborating with the ARCC on the project included representatives from:
  - Instruction
  - Student Assessment
  - School Improvement

# Background

- The ARCC identified modules supported by the Center of Standards and Assessment Implementation that could meet VDOE's needs.
- Dr. Margaret Heritage presented an overview of the modules in fall 2013 to VDOE staff from Instruction, Student Assessment, and School Improvement.

# Background

- The Department moved forward with piloting the use of the modules with support from the ARCC.
- Student Assessment staff took the lead for the pilot with input and support from Instruction and School Improvement staff.
- The opportunity to participate in the pilot was first announced to school divisions through [Superintendent's Memo 195-14](#).

# Formative Assessment Pilot

The purpose of the pilot is:

- to promote the use of formative assessment strategies within the classroom;
- to implement formative assessment professional development materials in a sustainable manner; and
- to determine how VDOE can best support the use of these materials.

# Online Modules

Each online module:

- represents evidence-based practices for promoting formative assessment strategies in the classroom;
- was developed under the guidance of Margaret Heritage, drawn from years of work with real teachers;
- includes a guide for facilitators, a research summary, and PowerPoint presentations with embedded videos, accompanying handouts and suggested activities.

# Professional Development Delivery

To deliver the professional development, VDOE and the ARCC:

- Established a private Google+ community for the participants to join
- Made all materials accessible through the community, including:
  - Links to CSAI modules and materials
  - Shared Google+ documents
- Posted all assignments within the community

# Face-to-Face Meetings

- Face-to-face meetings were held in locations across the state to minimize travel and associated expenses for divisions.
- All Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were expected to attend the one-day meeting closest to their school division.

# Face-to-Face Meetings

- Goals for the face-to-face meeting included:
  - Establishing a shared meaning of “formative assessment”;
  - Familiarizing participants with the Google community;
  - Drafting PLC plans;
  - Completing lessons from the first module, including the structured online tasks created by the ARCC; and
  - Sharing resources developed by VDOE.

# Face-to-Face Meetings

- Meetings ended with next steps, including the first assignment and the structure for the remainder of the year.
  - All activities and interactions would occur “virtually”.
    - Online postings
    - Webinars and special events
  - Shared calendar within community

# Online Posting Schedule

- Two-week cycle
- Typically, one lesson every two weeks
- Each lesson includes an activity to do with students or with other teachers and an accompanying reflection.
- Participants post a response to the activity and reflection (individually or as a group).
- Participants interact with one another by providing feedback to at least one other post (individually or as a group).

# Year One: 2014-2015

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- Six elementary schools participated, representing six different school divisions:
  - Accomack County Public Schools
  - Floyd County Public Schools
  - Frederick County Public Schools
  - Fredericksburg City Public Schools
  - Prince William County Public Schools
  - Roanoke City Public Schools

# Year One: 2014-2015

- The Professional Learning Community at each school completed five of the seven modules.
- The remaining modules will be completed during 2015-2016.
- The ARCC administered a brief survey last spring to gather feedback from participants. (57% responded)
- Examples of the work completed will be used to support future use of the modules in Virginia.

# Virginia-Specific Resources

- VDOE instruction staff and assessment staff developed and shared resources aligned with the Standards of Learning to supplement materials provided by the modules.
- These resources were shared within the online community as models for teachers to use.

# Virginia-Specific Resources: Examples

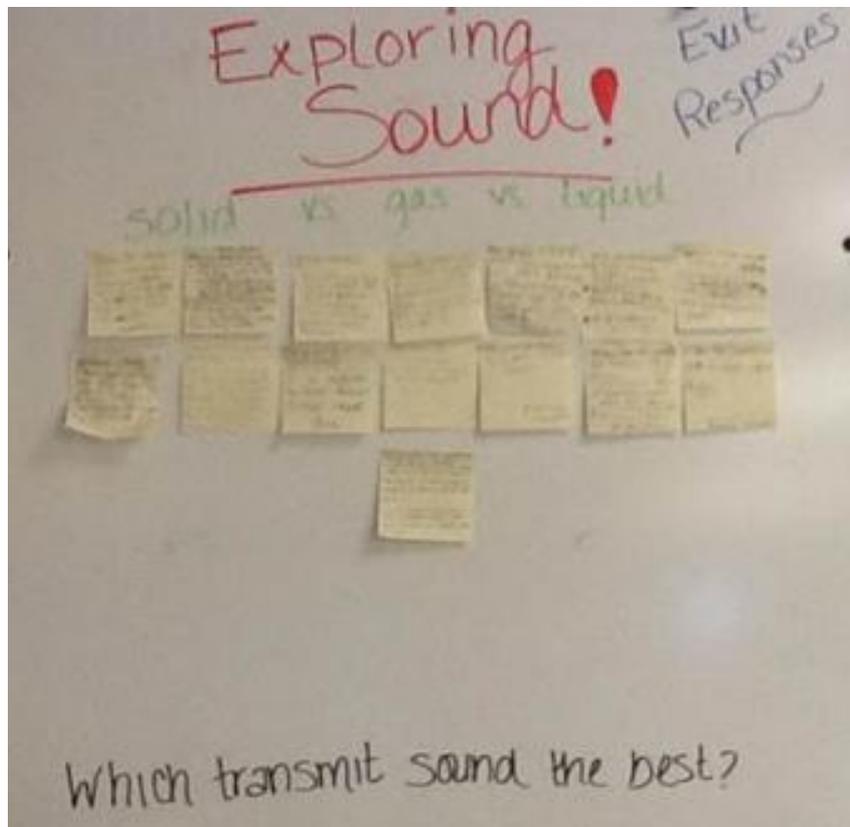
- Learning progressions
  - English
    - Research, Grade 4
    - Making Inferences
  - Mathematics
    - Geometry Constructions
    - Fraction and Decimal Learning Progression for Grades 4-8
    - K-5 Fraction Learning Progression: Representing, Comparing, and Operating with Fractions
    - Early Number Sense Learning Progression for Grades K-2
  - Science: Practices for Science Investigation, Kindergarten-Physics Progression

# Virginia-Specific Resources: Examples

- Planning model: History (USII.4a)
- Performance task resources
  - Performance Task Development Cycle
  - Using Formative Assessment Resources to Drive Instructional Decisions (2012 Mathematics SOL Institutes)
- Webinars
  - The Role of the Mathematics Process Skills in Formative Assessment
  - Giving the PALS Mid-Year Assessment
  - Examining PALS Mid-Year Data

# Examples of the Work

“Working with the Formative Assessment program has given me various ways to assess my students without always using a written test.”



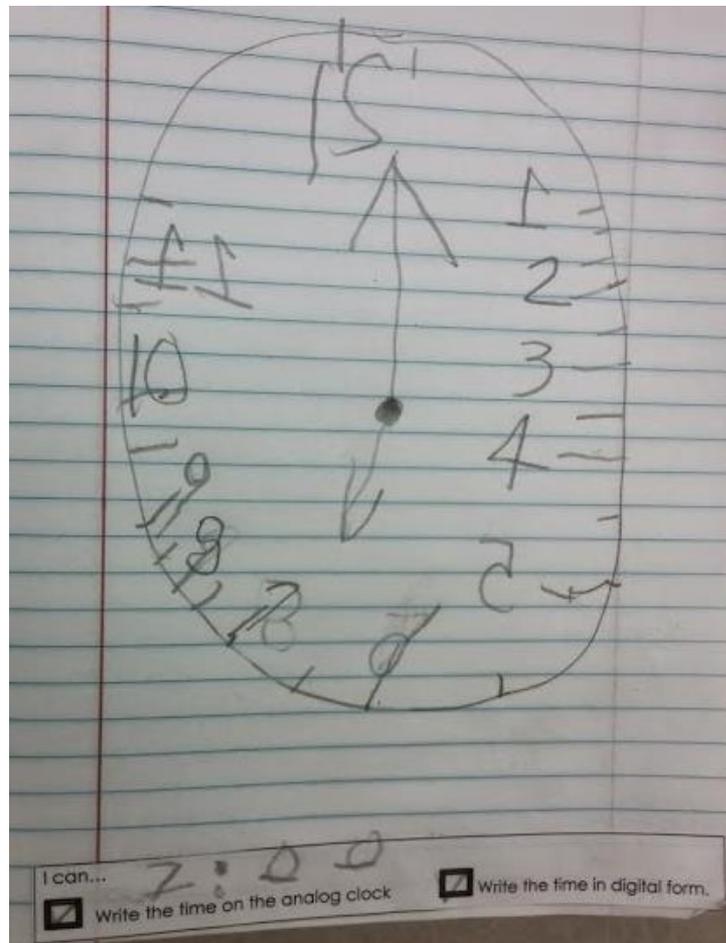
Fifth grade students used sticky notes to compare the ability of different solids, liquids, and gases to transmit sound. The teacher collected and analyzed the information to determine next steps for instruction.

(Science SOL 5.2C)

# Examples of the Work

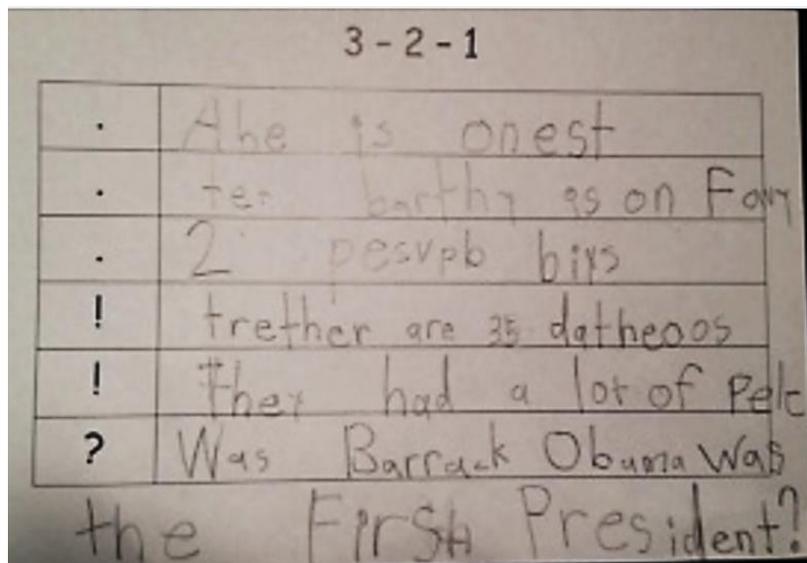
“I have found that by providing the students with the learning goals and success criteria, it gave them a better idea of how to perform at a task and what the expectations are, and has been very beneficial. The students take more ownership of their learning, and I have seen a lot of growth.”

This kindergarten student used “I can” statements provided by the teacher to check his work. (Mathematics SOL K.9)



# Examples of the Work

“Not only did it help me understand what knowledge my students gained from the lesson, it helped me evaluate my own teaching to see areas that I may not have stressed enough or explained clearly.”



“Abe is honest.”

“Their birthday is in February.”

“2 president’s birthday.”

“There are 35 bathrooms!”

“They had a lot of people!”

“Was Barack Obama the first president?”

First graders wrote 3 things they learned, 2 interesting facts, and 1 question they still had after a lesson about President’s Day.

(History & Social Science SOL 1.3)

# Examples of the Work

Teachers shared ways to keep track of data collected during instruction. This teacher wrote, “My focus points for data ... change based on the group level and needs.” Reading data for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students is documented on this template.

<b>Date:</b>	<b>General Comments: any items not addressed in checklist</b>	<b>Focus Skill</b>	<b>Comprehend or Retell</b>	<b>Go back and Reread</b>	<b>Monitor Meaning</b>	<b>Decoding Strategy</b>
<b>Name:</b>						
<b>Name:</b>						
<b>Name:</b>						

# Examples of the Work

Using their knowledge of how learning progresses and common misunderstandings, second grade teachers considered if anticipated student responses would reflect emerging, maturing, or consolidated understanding.

(Mathematics SOL 2.12)

Level of Evidence		
Emerging	Maturing	Consolidated
Students confuse the hour and minutes hands on the clock.  Students cannot determine what number the hour hand is pointing to unless it is ___ o'clock.	Students get the time correct based on where the hands are located, but confuse the hour and minutes (for example: 8:20 may be read as 4:50).	Student can accurately tell time.

# Positive Survey Feedback

- My use of formative assessment with my students has increased. (83%)
- The objectives of the learning community were met. (79%)
- I gained a better understanding of how to use effective formative assessment instructional practices in my classroom. (69%)
- The use of the formative assessment process in my classroom has improved student results. (69%)

# Hugh Mercer Elementary School

## Fredericksburg City Schools

Julia Schwarz

First Grade Teacher

Hadley Christi

Second Grade Teacher

Melanie Nuckols

Reading Specialist

# Hugh Mercer Elementary School

- Hugh Mercer is a Title 1 School, with a student enrollment of 860.
- We have 65 teachers.
- We are located in historic Fredericksburg, Virginia, where 53 percent of our students are eligible for free/reduced lunch.
- We have an LEP population of 21 percent, and a special education population of eight percent.
- We have been fully accredited since the 2005-2006 school year.

# Reasons for Participating

- In the past we:
  - Relied heavily on summative assessments,
  - Did not purposefully design, and include, formative assessments for units,
  - Did not always provide specific criteria and expectations to students with an assignment, and
  - Assumed children knew our learning expectations.
- Teachers were looking for more immediate feedback, with which to inform instruction.

# Hugh Mercer PLC Team

- The members of our team include:

Grade level	Name	Years Experience
Kindergarten	Kathy Weller	21
	Allyson Schumacher	4
First	Julie Schwarz	16
Second	Lindsey Chase	13
	Hadley Christi	6
Reading Specialist	Melanie Nuckols	6

# The Impact at Hugh Mercer

- At the end of Year One we have:
  - Established Learning Goals in mathematics,
  - Established Success Criteria in mathematics,
  - Communicated these goals and criteria to our students,
  - Experienced greater student success,
  - Discovered students take more ownership of their learning, and
  - Led Professional Development on quick ways to implement formative assessment strategies in your classroom.

# Goals for 2015-2016 and Beyond

- Expand what we have learned, about formative assessment, into our language arts, science, and social studies programs,
- PLC members will provide additional Professional Development opportunities for the Hugh Mercer staff,
- Expand the use of rubrics, in a greater effort to provide students with clear criteria and expectations for assignments,
- Utilize more project based formative assessments, and
- Include suggestions for formative assessments in grade-level shared plans.



# **Grandin Court Elementary Roanoke City Public Schools**

**Theresa Pritchard &  
Amanda Mattox**

# Grandin Court Elementary

- 334 students
- 25 teachers
- Mrs. Pritchard has been the principal at Grandin Court for 12 years.

# Reasons for Participating

As a school, our goals are to

- implement formative assessments targeting areas of weakness/strength to allow for immediate remediation/enrichment;
- teach in a way that provides to students a plethora of methods/strategies to select from when solving contextual mathematical problems with justification of answers;
- better identify gaps in learning and know how to fill these gaps precisely;
- draw from the VDOE best mathematical practices;
- learn additional ways to assess in a formative manner; and
- encourage thoughtful conversations among staff about student learning.



# Grandin Court PLC Team

Our team reflects at least one teacher for each grade K-5. We also have on our team a representative from our special education department. The average number of years teaching is approximately 18 years. Our principal has 32 years in education.

Each teacher was hand selected due to their desire to learn more about formative assessment and its impact on student learning.

# The Impact at Grandin Court ES

As a team, we are noticing that

- teachers are writing in their lesson plans rigorous questions of a formative nature to ask students during instruction;
- teachers are more cognizant of how we ask questions to groups of students to ensure that every student is part of the conversation;
- teachers assess more informally and seek alternative ways to address weak skills through centers, spiral reviews, and exit slips to name a few;
- due to the pilot training, teachers have a process to follow for implementing questioning strategies and tools to monitor student understanding; and
- a variety of assessments are being used in the classroom.

# The Impact at Grandin Court ES

As a team, we are noticing that

- there is a higher-level of teacher awareness of individual student progress and misconceptions;
- students are using the appropriate mathematics vocabulary and oral language in mathematical situations;
- students receive earlier and more valuable feedback from their teachers;
- data from formative assessments are used more frequently to plan instruction;
- teachers use data to determine whether reteaching is needed for whole group, small group, or an individual student; and
- teachers are correcting errors and misconceptions faster.

# Goals for 2015-2016 and Beyond

During Year 2, we plan to

- use data from formative assessments to determine the type of activities and questions students will be working on during spiral review times and daily remediation/enrichment time (team time);
- quickly use the data from formative assessments to remediate students before they fall behind in an area;
- increase student ownership by ensuring that every student is able to describe the concepts, ideas, and methods used in their daily learning;
- help each student reach their learning goals by identifying their strengths and weaknesses through formative assessments so we can then apply strategies and skills to maximize their potential;
- expand formative assessment to areas beyond mathematics and include all staff participation in the pilot; and
- align formative assessment strategies with intended outcomes.

# Year Two: 2015-2016

# Year Two: 2015-2016

## VDOE Goals:

- Add a second group of schools that includes secondary teachers.
- Determine what additional resources should be developed to support schools using the modules.
- Gather examples of formative assessment strategies and practices to supplement the modules.
- Increase opportunities for interaction and collaboration among participants.

# Year Two: 2015-2016

## VDOE Goals:

- Videotape the use of formative assessment practices in Virginia classrooms and debrief with the teacher(s).
- Videotape a Formative Assessment PLC meeting and debrief with the facilitator and/or team members.
- Continue planning for full implementation.

# Year Two: 2015-2016

Group from 2014-2015 continues. PLCs will:

- revisit key concepts from year one;
- complete Modules 6 and 7;
- extend the use of formative assessment into new content areas;
- share examples of strategies and practices;
- develop a plan for expanding the use of formative assessment within their schools and/or school divisions.

# Year Two: 2015-2016

- Thirteen new schools have joined the pilot:
  - 7 elementary school PLCs
  - 3 middle school PLCs
  - 3 high school PLCs
- VDOE has established a new private Google community for this group.
- New PLCs will complete Modules 1-4 this school year and Modules 5-6 in 2016-2017.

# Year Two: 2015-2016

## New Group of Participating School Divisions

- Buena Vista City Public Schools
- Chesapeake City Public Schools
- Clarke County Public Schools
- Colonial Heights Public Schools
- Franklin County Public Schools
- Portsmouth Public Schools
- Roanoke City Public Schools
- Staunton Public Schools
- Washington County Public Schools
- Wythe County Public Schools

# Next Steps

- VDOE and the ARCC will maintain the Google communities and provide feedback to PLCs as modules and structured assignments are completed.
- VDOE will continue to develop resources to supplement the materials available through the modules, including Virginia-specific examples and videos from Virginia classrooms.
- VDOE, in consultation with the ARCC, will determine best methods for making these materials available to any interested school in Virginia and for supporting those schools as they use the materials.