



Capital School District

Board of Education Policy

Section: Instruction
Title: Accountability – Assessment
Policy #: 600-08
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Purpose:

The most critical mission of a school district is to raise student achievement. Appropriate assessment is central to effective instruction and student success. Student and School Accountability in the State of Delaware and the Capital School District has now entered a “high stakes” phase in which school ratings are based on the achievement of students on the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS).

The Board, in response to accountability legislation, shall support a system-wide testing program.

The purposes of the testing/assessment program shall be to:

1. Assist in promoting accountability to all stakeholders including students, teachers, administrators and parents.
2. Determine the progress of students.
3. Assess the effectiveness of the instructional program and student learning.
4. Aid in counseling and guiding students in planning future education and other endeavors.
5. Analyze the improvements needed in a given instructional area.
6. Assist in the screening of students with learning difficulties.
7. Aid in placing students in remedial, gifted, or other programs.
8. Provide data for educational research.

When test results are analyzed over extended periods of time, they can give useful information about the strengths and instructional needs of an educational program. It is not possible for norm-referenced tests to measure all aspects of the curriculum for a district, school, grade or classroom. They can measure only a generic set of desired learning outcomes. The Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) is meant to be supplemented with locally selected curriculum-based assessments such as unit tests, or exams, formative and summative assessments, and samples of student work that provide a more comprehensive evaluation of what students have learned.

The State of Delaware Testing Committee has concluded that the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System is a measure of student performance relative to the state content standards but should not be the sole indicator of student performance.

Preparation for important assessments such as the DCAS, SAT’s, NAEP, etc., involves essential life skills such as the ability to effectively communicate in writing, to understand and analyze text materials, to demonstrate computational and problem-solving skills, and to make significant connections between oneself and the real world.

Given the accountability program in the state of Delaware, it is imperative that all staff and constituents work together to ensure the success of every child. To this end, the District recognizes the administrative, teacher, student and parent/guardian role involved in helping every student achieve success.

District administrators are responsible for working with school leaders to:

- emphasize the importance and benefits of supporting the testing program;
- provide or schedule training regarding:
 - test legislation currently in effect;
 - test security issues;
 - procedures for administration of the assessments;
 - disaggregation and interpretation of test scores to monitor performance and determine disparities in achievement based on gender, race, economic level, special education, Title I, etc.;
 - disseminate testing schedules;
 - assist schools in obtaining testing materials or equipment;
 - share resources targeted for parents;
 - ensure that each school is providing students with opportunities to learn both during and beyond school hours;
 - ensure that schools and teachers are aware of appropriate accommodations available for students such as those with special needs or those who do not speak English fluently.

The District will also ensure that a process of aligning curriculum with standards is taking place in order to give students the maximum opportunity to be successful.

The District will provide a system of rewards to recognize student achievement within the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System and other assessments as appropriate. Rewards may consist of recognition by means of certificates, ribbons, or medals, etc.

School administrators, working in cooperation with associate principals, guidance counselors, department chairs, lead teachers and other designated staff, are responsible for:

- ensuring that teachers are instructing to the standards and/or to the curriculum as adopted by Capital School District;
- setting a positive tone relative to the Comprehensive Assessment System and other necessary assessments;
- motivating teachers and students to work toward optimal performance on these assessments;
- ensuring that student and school data is entered, reviewed and corrected in state and local data bases as needed in an accurate and timely fashion;
- verifying assessment data from the Department of Education;
- providing secure storage areas and ample test materials and supplies such as calculators, paper, and pencils as required for various assessments;
- developing and implementing a plan for a test environment conducive to student success and in compliance with all test regulations;
- rewarding students for attendance and effort relating to the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System;
- ensuring that individual testing results are made available to parents;
- distributing test data to appropriate staff and analyzing school data regularly with staff in order to create proactive interventions for students;
- establishing DCAS target scores and development strategies to meet the targets;
- analyzing school data regularly in order to create proactive interventions for students;
- informing teachers and students early in the year regarding the scheduling of testing at the school;
- ensuring that schools are providing students with opportunities to learn both during and outside school hours;
- ensuring that teachers implement appropriate accommodations available for students such as those with special needs or those who do not speak English fluently.

Instructional staff members are responsible for:

- preparing students for the assessments by teaching appropriate curriculum;
- integrating test strategies and mini-lessons into content throughout the school year;
- giving students practice on assessments that mirror the types of test items they will encounter on the DCAS utilizing DCAS practice assessments;
- informing students of awards, incentives, scholarships and security regulations; avoiding assignment of other major assessments or projects during the testing periods;
- avoiding the scheduling of field trips, evening events or other disruptions during the testing periods to the greatest extent possible;
- preparing the classroom for testing in compliance with state regulations (e.g., removal of bulletin board or curriculum materials on display, providing necessary equipment such as calculators or dictionaries, ensuring a secure and appropriate test environment);
- upholding the confidentiality of individual test scores;
- providing students whose parents opt out of the standardized testing alternative assignments that are within the scope of established curriculum for the tested subject and grade level. These assignments should be assigned by the teacher and given to the student at the same time as state testing. They will not be punitive in nature, rather be used to enhance the curriculum already in place in Capital School District.

Students are responsible for:

- attending all appropriate testing sessions and actively participating in the assessment process;
- abiding by test security legislation as stated in the test security law;
- understanding the consequences (invalidation of test) that may result from failure to comply with state security regulations;
- responding to the test items and using test time effectively;
- making a good faith effort to respond to all sections of the test;
- taking advantage of after school or other tutorial sessions provided when feasible;
- completing any alternative assignments assigned by the teacher as a result of parents/guardians opting out of state standardized testing. These assignments should be assigned within the scope of established district curriculum for the tested subject and grade level. Furthermore, these assignments shall not be punitive in nature.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- promoting school attendance throughout the school year but especially on those days when testing is scheduled;
- providing a home environment supportive of learning;
- requesting help from the schools on learning issues and acting on professional suggestions, when feasible;
- supporting children with homework, assignments, projects and test preparation;
- nurturing the whole child through adequate nutrition, rest, exercise and other appropriate activities;
- communicating any testing concerns to the school administrator;
- notifying the building principal by email or in writing should ~~a parent~~ they choose to opt their child out of prescribed standardized testing (i.e. Smarter Balanced and DCAS) by the State of Delaware.

Legal References:

Title 14, Delaware Administrative Code
101 State Assessment System
103 Accountability for Schools, Districts and the State