



October 8, 2018

Dear Teachers and Administrators,

What a great start to the school year it has been. Thank you for all of the ways that you have welcomed your students and their families back into your classrooms and our schools. As we open school this year, there is more to be proud of than ever. We continue to make exceptional progress on SBAC. For the first time ever, LBUSD outperformed the State in both ELA and Mathematics. Additionally, our African-American, Filipino, Hispanic, Multiple, Pacific Islander and White subgroups also outperformed the State in both subjects. We are also happy to report that many of you are innovating in the ways that you interact with students. Last year, over 24,000 students participated in the Synergy ELA assessment pilot and almost 500 teachers have opted to try scaled grading in our secondary schools this year. Lastly, we appreciated the number of you that participated in your own summer Data Day, Instructional Leadership Team planning days and other very intentional means of preparing to meet the needs of your students and continue your efforts to close the achievement gap.

As with all of our continuous improvement efforts, we have asked ourselves “why” we assess students and how we can increase the impact of assessment on our students’ learning, knowing that if we expect different results, we must adjust our practice to garner those results.

The following district assessment system is built upon some key assumptions:

- We administer assessments in order to act upon them.
- We administer assessments to identify students’ strengths and needs and to adjust our classroom/school practices to provide interventions and accelerate learning.
- We collaborate with each other to identify best practices and learn from one another.
- We set goals and use our periodic assessment to monitor progress toward goal attainment.

The district’s ELA and Math Synergy assessments are designed to be rigorous. By using the SBAC stems and question types, we are able to assess students at higher DOK levels and achieve very high correlations to the final SBAC results. In fact, **96%** of the students that Met or Exceeded on each of the three piloted ELA assessments also Met or Exceed on SBAC! With our analysis and key assumptions in mind, the following summary is intended to provide clarity around district assessments for 2018-19.

<b>Synergy District English Language Arts Assessments</b>		
<b>Grade Span</b>	<b>Required for Schools Under 50% M/E</b>	<b>Recommended for Schools Over 50% M/E</b>
3-5	Units 1-3	Units 1-3*, Unit 4
6-8	Units 1-3	Units 1-3*, Unit 4
Grade 9	Units 1-4	Units 1-4*

\*Progress monitoring is essential to meeting school goals. Schools that have developed a coherent, alternative plan for progress monitoring should follow up with the leveled offices for approval.

Rather than assessing isolated skills, the Synergy ELA Unit Assessments target higher-level thinking within the SBAC Reading Claim, which is the strongest predictor of the final results. As much as possible, the assessments are being revised to better align to the Wonders and Pearson units while still mirroring the rigor and complexity of SBAC. Additionally, since the district assessments are designed to focus solely on the reading claim, additional assessments should be used to periodically assess the other components of English Language Arts. Effective ELA assessment practices include:

- Using the Team Practices in Understanding 5 and the High-Leverage Team Actions to support collaborative planning and collective analysis of the results
- Maintaining a writing portfolio with process and on-demand writing tasks to assess the three essential writing genres (narrative, expository and argumentative)
- Administering SBAC ELA Interim Assessment Blocks in grades 3-8 and 11 in order to assess the writing, listening and research claims and to familiarize students with the format of the exam
- Using the weekly assessments and daily tasks to provide students with formative feedback throughout each ELA unit
- Reading and writing in science, history and health, which directly supports students on both the SBAC, PSAT/SAT and college-career readiness

<b>Synergy District Mathematics Assessments</b>		
<b>Grade Span</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
K-1	Unit Exams 1-4 Paper/Pencil or online	Unit Exams 5 and above Paper/Pencil or online
2-5	Unit Exams 1-4	Unit Exams 5 and above
6-8	Unit Exams 1-4	Unit Exams 5 and above
9-12	All Units: Algebra, Algebra AB/CD, Geometry, Geometry Acc, Algebra II	

In order to strengthen the correlation between the Synergy District Mathematics Assessments and the final SBAC Math results, Units 2 and above will now include several items from prior units as a form of spiral review. The units continue to focus on the largest claim of Concepts and Procedures while also including higher-level DOK items from the Problem-Solving and Communicating Reasoning claims. In addition to the District Math Unit Assessments, teachers should consider:

- Using the Team Practices in Understanding 5 and the High-Leverage Team Actions to support collaborative planning and collective analysis of the results
- Administering SBAC Math Interim Assessment Blocks in grades 3-8 and 11 in order to familiarize students with the rigor and format of the exam
- Using the eight Mathematical Teaching Practices to guide planning and instruction throughout each unit

Finally, there are some new features available with our district assessments. First, a Synergy secure browser option is now available on the Chromebooks. Through the Synergy Assessment Kiosk, students will not be able to access any other applications during the assessment which can help simulate an authentic testing environment. Second, students will receive feedback on all items missed upon completion of the test. In order to promote reflection, students can review each of the items missed. For

security reasons, the correct answers will not be provided during the review, and students will only receive this formative feedback immediately upon submission. Lastly, the overall results from the assessments will now appear as a scaled percent rather than the raw percent. Since the scaled percent determines the overall performance level (ie., Standards Met), students will now see their final results as a scaled percent (ie., 75%) with the raw score noted below (ie., 7 out of 12).

In order to support teacher with assessments, we have created numerous resources to help with both the district and SBAC Interim assessments. The following links connect to our LROIX/Synergy Help sites:

[Synergy Assessment Resources](#)

[SBAC Interim Assessment Resources](#)

As we continue on our journey of building assessment practices that we know will positively impact our work with students, we want to revisit some best practices that you may use to guide your thinking and decision making relative to your classroom and school assessment practices.

<b>Assessment Best Practices</b>	
<b>Do...</b>	<b>Don't...</b>
Preview the assessment yourself.	Don't share the items with students to practice prior to the assessment.
Teach the standards and the SBAC targets.	Don't create multiple versions of exams.
Create tasks that approximate the rigor of the SBAC.	Don't teach to test items by re-creating the same test items with different numbers.
Administer the test online in a testing environment that prepares students for the rigor of SBAC.	Don't administer the test on paper and then have students re-take the test online.
Approximate the testing experience by providing appropriate tools (i.e. note taking sheets, white boards, accommodations) for student use.	Don't help students with the content of the assessment in order to maintain an authentic test experience.

It is our hope that this year is filled with opportunities to use all available data to diagnose student needs and to activate in response to those needs. For teachers, that activation may occur moment to moment in your classroom or through the analysis of your formative and interim assessments. For administrators, that activation may occur through classroom visits, and periodic data analysis (e.g. PDSA cycles).

We highly encourage you to continue the practice of data analysis that you engaged in on your site Data Day or opening meeting. It is collaborative work like this that has the potential to increase the efficacy of individual teachers, your team and our collective district. As we begin a new year, we look to you as teachers and leaders to inspire classroom instruction that results in all students growing and accelerates the growth of our lowest performing sub-groups.

Sincerely,  
 Dr. Jill Baker and Dr. Chris Lund (on behalf of the entire LBUSD Executive Staff)