



September 8, 2017

Dear Teachers and Administrators,

Welcome back to school. There is so much to celebrate as we begin this school year. More of our students than ever are meeting and exceeding standards, taking AP exams and performing well on college and career readiness exams. It is due to the thoughtful and intentional work of individual teachers, leaders and school teams that we have so much to celebrate.

We also face the continued challenge of closing the achievement gap. As you have likely experienced in your own data or heard about through your site Data Day, even though our efforts to meet all students' needs have increased, the gap between African American students and Caucasian students has actually increased, causing us to pause and think strategically about what else we can do.

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.

Additionally, the short, targeted assessments piloted last year in math showed strong correlations, .7 to .8, to the final SBAC results. In fact, 81% of the students that Met or Exceeded on Units 2 through 4 also Met or Exceeded on SBAC. With our analysis and key assumptions in mind, the following summary is intended to provide clarity about the 2017-2018 district assessment system.

District English Language Arts Assessments (Synergy)		
Grade Span	Required	Optional
3-5	Pilot Schools – Unit Assessments 1, 2 and 3	All other schools - Unit Assessments 1, 2 and 3
6-8	Pilot Schools - Assessments 1, 2 and 3	All other schools - Assessments 1, 2 and 3
Grade 9	Pilot Schools - Assessments 1, 2 and 3	All other schools - Assessments 1, 2 and 3

*In Grades 3-8 and 11, it is recommended that prior to SBAC administration, students take one or more SBAC Interim Assessment Blocks to familiarize themselves with the format and rigor of the exam.

District Mathematics Assessments (Synergy)		
Grade Span	Required	Optional
TK-1	Paper/Pencil Assessment	Online Unit Exams (K-1 only)
2-5	Unit Exams 1-4	Unit Exams 5 and above
6-8	Unit Exams 1-4	Unit Exams 5 and above
9-12	Algebra	Geometry, Algebra II

*In Grades 3-8 and 11, it is recommended that prior to SBAC administration, students take one or more SBAC Interim Assessment Blocks to familiarize themselves with the format and rigor of the exam.

Over the course of the past couple of years, we have heard from teachers and administrators that even with the best intentions in mind, it would be helpful to have guidelines for the administration of our assessment. We also know that authentic results allow teachers the insight that they need to help students. With that in mind, the following practices are intended to ensure the accuracy and utility of our assessment results.

Assessment Best Practices	
Do...	Don't...
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 order to simulate 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 weekly or cyclical 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. 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 to our African American students making more than one year's growth, resulting in a narrowing of the achievement gap.

Sincerely,

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