

**Adoption of ACT's
Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS)
(Grades 8-11)**

Monona Grove School District

(Adopted April 11, 2007)

Background

The Monona Grove School District has established a strong commitment over several years to a process of using high quality assessment data to guide instruction and continuous improvement plans. To that end, the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) were implemented at grades 2-9 in the fall of 2002. Through careful study it was determined that the MAP assessments provided more timely and useful data for teachers, parents and students as well as administrators and other interested stakeholders. This measure has proved invaluable in guiding goal setting and accountability measures.

Also, in the spring of 2003 the district implemented a reading assessment titled the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) at grades K-3. This assessment allowed monitoring of important reading outcomes as early as Kindergarten and was selected to extend the use of data for guiding instruction and goal setting to the earliest grades.

Since implementing these assessment initiatives, outcomes indicate that considerable improvement in student achievement has resulted.

At present, all grades K-8 have access to a variety of data sources regarding student achievement as outlined above. However, at the high school level administrators, staff, and parents have identified a need to have additional assessment data related to student outcomes for high school students. Currently, the only data available regarding student achievement of all high school students is from MAP testing at ninth grade, and WKCE testing at the beginning of 10th grade. In addition, some students also take the ACT, and we are able to access some of this information. Each of these data sources has limitations that impact the use of this data for improving outcomes. The MAP data is limited in that many of our students reach a "ceiling" score, and it becomes impossible to measure growth outcomes for these students. The WKCE test is taken in the fall of 10th grade (and 8th grade), but the data is not available for use until the spring or summer. This makes this fall of 8th and 10th grade WKCE data not available for improving instruction during the current school year. Finally, only a portion of our students take the ACT test, and we are not privy to the specific student scores from this measure.

Because of the limitations of the assessment strategies currently in place at the high school, several individuals have been investigating other options that might address this issue. This group has discovered a set of assessment tools developed by ACT, Inc. that has been effectively used for tracking and improving student achievement at the eighth grade of middle school and throughout high school grades by an increasing number of school districts throughout the country. This set of assessments is ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS). We are recommending EPAS to address the district need for more useful and complete student assessment data at grades 8-11.

The EPAS Test

ACT's EPAS[®] (Educational Planning and Assessment System) helps meet the need for all students to acquire strong core subject area skills by the end of middle school and the development of college readiness skills throughout high school in preparation for all postsecondary options. EPAS focuses on college readiness skills in reading, English, mathematics, science and writing.

The EPAS system provides a longitudinal, systematic approach to educational and career planning, assessment, instructional support, and evaluation. The system focuses on the integrated, higher-order thinking skills and college readiness skills students need to develop K-12 that are important for success both during and after high school, no matter what postsecondary options students pursue.

EPAS focuses on a number of key transition points that young people face:

- **8th/9th grade**—Preparing for high school studies
- **10th grade**—Planning and preparing for college and the workplace
- **11th/12th grade**—Being ready for life after high school

Rationale/Expected Outcomes

The EPAS system is being recommended for implementation at grades 8 through 11. At grades 8 and 9, EPAS would replace MAP testing. The implementation of EPAS would provide credible and timely information to students, parents, and teachers regarding individual student achievement progress and group progress. We believe that having this data will help both middle school and high school teachers to better guide their instruction and will provide information to enlighten and motivate students and parents. The EPAS system is a strong predictor of performance on the actual ACT test that most universities in the Midwest require for admission. In addition, we believe that some middle school and high school students who presently may not be considering college would begin to recognize this as a possibility and pursue more rigorous secondary courses and, in turn, a college education.

Proposal Details

September, 2007

8th Grade - Explore (with 8th grade norms; same test booklets used for 4 years)

9th Grade - Explore (different version of Explore with 9th grade norms; same test booklets used for 4 years)

10th Grade - Plan (with 10th grade norms; new annual version of Plan test)

11th Grade - Plan (with 11th grade norms; new annual version of Plan test)

April, 2008

11th Grade – ACT (includes the ACT writing test)

Proposal Details (Continued)

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

Proposed changes:

Would no longer administer MAP to all 8th grade students

Would no longer administer MAP to all 9th grade students

Could use MAP, if needed, with small, target groups. For example, could do mid-year reading assessment (maximum of 1-hour MAP assessment) with selected 9th grade students who are reading significantly below grade level. This would enable us to be able to verify if progress is being made with special additional reading instruction being provided in 9th grade - as a mid-year check on effects of reading instruction/interventions and progress in closing the reading achievement gap.

Cost

The initial cost for implementing this EPAS proposal is \$19,000, which will be part of the Curriculum and Instruction budget for 2007-08. The cost will be reduced the following year because the Explore test booklets for eighth and ninth grade students can be reused starting in 2008-09.

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