

LOCAL ASSESSMENTS: PROGRAM REFINEMENT EVALUATION

VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment
2512 George Mason Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

September 2008

©2008 All Rights Reserved

LOCAL ASSESSMENTS: PROGRAM REFINEMENT EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUTHOR: Douglas G. Wren, Ed.D., Assessment Specialist
Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment

OTHER CONTACT PERSON: Jared A. Cotton, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent
Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment

The purpose of this program refinement evaluation is to comply with School Board Policy 6-26, adopted by the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach on September 5, 2007. According to the policy, “Existing programs will be evaluated based on an annual Program Evaluation Schedule which will be developed by the Program Evaluation Committee and approved by the School Board annually.” On January 22, 2008 the School Board approved the 2007-2008 Program Evaluation Schedule, in which the Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) Local Assessment Program was recommended for a Program Refinement Evaluation. Based on School Board Policy 6-26, for programs scheduled for a Program Refinement Evaluation, the Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment will “assist program staff in defining measurable goals and objectives, as well as linkages with activities and outcomes.” According to the policy, a Program Refinement Evaluation report focusing on the outcomes of this process and recommendations regarding continued evaluation of the programs will be presented to the superintendent and School Board.

RESULTS OF PROGRAM REFINEMENT EVALUATION PROCESS

- The Local Assessment Program was initiated in 1997 by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction with scoring and reporting services developed by the Department of Technology.
- During the 2007-2008 school year, the Local Assessment Program was comprised of writing samples and 118 multiple-choice tests for students in grades 1 through 12; the number of tests in the four core subject areas for each grade level varied.
- There were no formal goals or objectives for the Local Assessment Program; however, the purposes of the assessments are documented in testing packets distributed to all VBCPS principals at the beginning of each school year.
- As part of the program refinement evaluation process, the purposes and other aspects of the various local assessments were reviewed, best practices of local assessment systems were defined, and the local assessment systems of similar school divisions were examined.
- Meetings with staff from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction facilitated the development of a vision statement, goals, and measurable objectives for the Local Assessment Program.

- As a result of the program refinement evaluation process, a Local Assessment Program evaluation plan to be implemented over the next four years was proposed; additional recommendations are described as follows.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a Local Assessment Program Committee in fall 2008 to develop procedures and recommendations for a local assessment system that is aligned with the new strategic plan, *Compass to 2015: A Strategic Plan for Student Success*, upon its approval by the School Board. It is recommended that the committee be comprised of staff from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction; the Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; the Department of School Administration; and the Department of Technology, as well as teachers and administrators from schools at all levels. (Department of Curriculum and Instruction; Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment)
2. Continue the Local Assessment Program Refinement Evaluation through the 2008-2009 school year in order to collect baseline data to establish targets for each of the measurable objectives. (Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment)
3. Obtain input from teachers, school-level administrators, and core curriculum coordinators and specialists in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction concerning specific local assessment needs and the pragmatic use of data from the Local Assessment Program. (Department of Curriculum and Instruction; Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment)
4. Utilizing the recommendations of the Local Assessment Program Committee and input from teachers, school-level administrators, and core curriculum coordinators and specialists, implement an enhanced system of local assessments on a staggered schedule over a period of four years. (Department of Curriculum and Instruction; Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment)
5. Conduct Program Implementation Evaluations of the Local Assessment Program during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. (Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment)
6. Perform a Comprehensive Evaluation of the Local Assessment Program during the 2011-2012 school year. (Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment)