

Title: Readiness Factors for District Formative Assessment Implementation – March 2010

Created by: New York Comprehensive Center Assessment Team

Audience: Teachers, **instructional coaches, principals, district leaders, state education employees, professional development providers,** local/state board members; higher education faculty; and **comprehensive centers staff.**

Description: *Readiness Factors Related to District Formative Assessment Implementation* builds from an earlier project document created in March 2007. [Click here for a link to the project’s initial Readiness Factors document.](#) This 2010 version outlines readiness factors that were observed by the project team during pilot implementation. This information is presented within three primary domain areas: Knowledge and use of educational data, knowledge and use of principles of standards-based education, and structures that support leaders and teachers to implement change. This one page document provides a quick synopsis of foundational elements that contribute to successful formative assessment implementation.

How it was used: This document was designed to be used as a planning tool with the State Department of Education to share lessons learned in the New York Formative Assessment Project about district readiness to adopt formative assessment practices. In addition, this document can be used as a district pre-assessment tool to determine the relative readiness levels and potential pre-training needs along the three knowledge domains.

Key lessons: Classroom formative assessment practices need to be situated within a broader set of district, school, and classroom-level data use practices. Formative assessment implementation is made easier for teachers and leaders when there is an existing base of assessment literacy, easy access to instructional data, and procedures to align data with content standards. During the first five months of the New York Formative Assessment Project, training with math coaches took place on assessment literacy, data use protocols, and standards alignment to ensure that these foundational elements were established prior to beginning classroom formative assessment training. In addition, the NYCC assessment team observed a positive correlation between effective site-based teacher dialogue practices (including protected team meeting times and use of team protocols) and the relative pace of formative assessment adoption.

Readiness Factors related to District Formative Assessment Implementation
Prepared by the New York Comprehensive Center Assessment Team for New York State Education Department

Knowledge and use of educational data	Knowledge and use of principles of standards-based education	Structures and practices that support leaders and teachers to implement change
<p><i>Access to data in longitudinal data systems</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management of longitudinal student data • Capacity to analyze student-level performance data. • System supportive of managing mid-cycle assessment data (i.e., common formative, quarterly benchmarks, unit assessments) by standard. 	<p><i>Content and performance standards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content and performance standards are known and used by teachers to guide instructional planning. • District documents use standards to describe the progression of learning, showing what students should know and be able to do as they progress towards mastery of the standard. • Content standards have been analyzed to determine a guaranteed and viable curriculum by the end of the grade level for all students. • Content and performance standards have been analyzed to develop learning goals and success criteria. 	<p><i>Agreement on need for formative assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly stated purpose for adoption of formative assessment including an understanding of how formative assessment provides evidence about student learning in relation to short-term learning goals (daily/weekly) so that teachers can adjust instruction to meet individual learning needs. • Evidence of understanding of the integration of assessment and teaching. • District policies in place that support formative assessment implementation. • Willingness to “let go of old practices” that limit successful formative assessment implementation.
<p><i>Teacher and building level data use practices</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of data use and a suite of tools that support data use at multiple levels. • Use of building level data teams to guide understanding of overall areas of strengths and weakness related to student learning. • Use of teacher grade-level or content-focused data teams to analyze short and mid-cycle (formative, benchmark, quarterly, unit) data to determine student progress towards learning goals. • Collaborative structures, practices and tools in place to guide data analysis practices. 	<p><i>Standards-Based Instruction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom teaching and learning is reflective of the knowledge and skills embodied in the state standards. • Classroom instructional materials are aligned to standards. • Students develop individual learning goals and compare their work to the success criteria. • Students receive timely feedback about their performance and have opportunities to explore ways to make additional progress toward their learning goals. • Instructional practices reflect teacher knowledge of learning theory and differentiation. 	<p><i>Collaborative teacher processes and supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly scheduled (and protected) opportunities for teachers to meet in grade-level or content-focused teams. • Evidence of teacher team structures and protocols that focus on interpreting evidence of student learning and the use of evidence to move learning forward. • Availability of classroom content coaches to assist teachers to take next steps in new data use, instructional and collaborative practices. • Scheduled opportunities for teachers to review samples of student work to determine high quality.
<p><i>Assessment literacy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the specific purposes and uses of various assessment types, from state-level annual assessment to classroom assessments. • Evidence that teachers understand the role of comprehensive assessment and where formative assessment fits into the continuum of assessments. • Teacher and administrator knowledge about how to use data to inform educational decisions. 	<p><i>Standards-Based Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive district assessment model that clarifies assessment types and expectations for use for a range of decision making. • Use of standards-aligned benchmark and/or quarterly unit assessments. • Evidence of teachers using instructional data to guide student interventions. • Knowledge of technical quality required for various assessment types. 	<p><i>District and building commitment and leadership</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ability to communicate a clear vision and theory of action for school improvement. • Evidence of productive change management strategies in use to support new teacher practices. • Analysis of district improvement initiatives completed to ensure close alignment of formative assessment to other district improvement efforts. • School-level leaders who have a history of willingness to commit focused time, energy and resources to leading instructional change efforts.