

West Hartford Public School District

Agenda Item: Assessment Audit Introduction

Meeting Date: November 18, 2014

From: Nancy DePalma, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Through: Thomas Moore, Superintendent

Background:

As in most districts, educators at all levels in the West Hartford Public Schools are concerned about the amount of instructional time that can be lost to excessive testing of students. It remains our goal to maximize that time to the greatest degree possible. In our efforts to do so, it was determined that an assessment audit was in order. While an overview of our assessment process was undertaken three years ago, it was done prior to full implementation of Connecticut Core Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium state testing. As conflicting mandates diminish and constraints begin to ease, the 2014-2015 school year presents as an optimum time to engage in a review of this nature.

Last spring, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) invited West Hartford Central Office administrators to a conference detailing the work of **Achieve**, an independent non-profit education reform organization dedicated to working with states to raise academic standards and graduation requirements, to improving assessments, and to strengthening accountability. One of their most recent efforts focuses on providing school districts nationwide with a user friendly instrument for undertaking an assessment audit that involves all stakeholders. The *Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts* is designed to “enable districts leaders to take stock of how many assessments are administered throughout a school year and for what purposes assessments are given.” The Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts enables district leaders to take stock of how many assessments are administered throughout a school year and for what purposes they give assessments. It assists in analyzing and evaluating the current district assessments to ensure all students are taking the minimum number of tests necessary to serve essential instructional, diagnostic, and accountability purposes. Our interest in undertaking an audit using the Achieve tool was derived from the following:

- Its apparent ease of use, its stepped out process and the flexibility allowed in its implementation. It is an open-source document that can be modified as warranted to meet respective district needs.
- The stakeholders it seeks to involve
- Its focus on student perspectives. Students will be invited to be part of the review process
- Its capacity to engage committee members in productive dialogue about assessment at all levels and particularly as it impacts college and career readiness

Agenda Item:
VI. B. 2

- The means it provides to address concerns regarding assessment reviews (Indicators of Growth and Development-IAGDs) tied to the teacher evaluation process
- Its ability to create a forum that grounds participants in an understanding of and common language for discussing assessment.

The assessment inventory tool covers a four-stage process: Reflect and Plan, Conduct the Inventory, Analyze the Inventory, Make Recommendations. Each stage is directed by guiding questions that serve to structure each phase to inform the one to follow. It is hoped that the entire process can be completed by spring of 2015. Recommendations for committee membership have been made by district leadership and include representatives from teaching staff from all levels, upperclassmen from both high schools, parents and, hopefully, 2 recent graduates.

Dr. Nancy DePalma, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Ms. Kerry Jones, Director of Elementary Education, and Mr. Paul Vicinus, Director of Secondary Education, will be available to answer questions.