

## Florence City, Alabama, Empowers Students and Teachers with Data

### Using Scantron® Assessment Solutions

Alabama's Plan 2020 challenges schools to improve student achievement and growth, close gaps, increase graduation rates, and enhance college and career readiness. Florence City Schools accepted that challenge with the help of Scantron assessment solutions.



Florence City Schools supports more than 4,400 students in K-12. They are a 1:1 technology district. Florence City characteristics include:

- **59% of students in poverty**
- **59% Caucasian, 34% African-American, 9% Hispanic, and 6% other ethnicities**
- **Improved graduation rate from 68% in 2008 to 95% in 2015**
- **Ranked in the top 10 of 137 school districts in Alabama (niche.com ranking)**

Florence City used Scantron's assessment solution to measure progress as an innovative approach to evidence-based instruction for Alabama's Plan 2020 goals and experienced exceptional performance.

### Yesterday...

An accreditation review in 2012 spotlighted an issue they had already been considering: They lacked a systematic solution for formative and interim assessment that would let educators within a school and across the district speak the same language about student growth and achievement.

"We needed a system to periodically measure the success of students and to keep a pulse on how our instruction was leading us to results," says Dr. Janet Womack, District Superintendent.

They wanted to teach to the standards, not to the test, but still wanted interim and formative measurement to ensure students were receiving the instruction they needed to meet goals and that teachers had the data they needed to adjust instruction accordingly.

"Certain grade levels used one tool; other grade levels used another tool," reflects Dr. Jimmy Shaw, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. "We were all using different languages."

The method needed to reflect their pacing and help them align with Alabama's Plan 2020, a statewide accountability system that sets ambitious goals for all Alabama schools to meet.

**Enter Scantron Assessment Solutions.**

### Today...

The State of Alabama provides access for all its school districts to Scantron's assessment solutions. Florence City applies both solutions:


- **The computer-adaptive measure identifies student growth and performance against standards independent of grade level.**
- **The fixed-form measure identifies student on-grade achievement against standards.**

Both solutions are tightly aligned to Alabama's state college and career ready standards, helping Florence City educators teach to the standards, not to the test.

***"Scantron provides a direct connection between test results and state standards—it gives the teachers feedback in the language of Alabama's state standards. That allows our teachers to be able to make adjustments and drive instruction immediately based on those results."***

*Dr. Jimmy Shaw  
Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Florence City Schools*





***“Everyone is rising together. We can see that everyone is going in the right direction with growth.”***

***- Dr. Janet Womack,  
District Superintendent***

“Scantron solutions provide a direct connection between test results and state standards,” says Shaw. “They give the teachers feedback in the language of Alabama’s state standards. That allows our teachers to be able to make adjustments and drive instruction immediately based on those results.”

Florence City uses this connection to drive their Falcon Learning Conversation Network (FLCN), a regularly scheduled series of data analysis and professional development days where educators get together and talk about their results. Educators also work together to identify best practices and new ideas that help adjust instruction to support all their students.

Beyond this peer support, the district provides instructional partners and identifies in-school subject and grade-level academic leaders. Their approach builds accountability in leaders from the district down to the student level.

“These benchmarks provide a collective pulse for students that categorize where they are and where they should be in the Spring to show they’re having growth and success in the school year,” says Womack. “This builds in accountability to ourselves all the way down to the students, and engages them in this process, as well.”

“Our students get a chance to sit down with teachers and talk about their scores,” adds Shaw. “They can

talk about not just the scores, but also the individual standards they did and didn’t attain.”

This strategy has paid off. Florence City is seeing increases in every subject area and grade level. For example, Reading achievement in 10th grade has jumped almost 50% since 2014, and graduation rates have risen from 68% to 95%.

Dr. Shaw notes, “The biggest return on investment we have seen is the conversations in the halls. Due to common language around pacing, scope, sequence and common assessments, teachers are easily and readily conversing about instruction and about the data and about achievement. There’s no more post-mortem at end-of-year—these conversations are happening now. That was when I really knew we were going to be okay.”

## **Tomorrow...**

Their next steps involve expanding engagement to the parents and adding Career and Technical Education (CTE) assessments.

Dr. Womack states, “We’ve gone from ‘beat it to fit and paint it to match’ to truly and meticulously customizing learning for our students. Teachers have a plethora of data at their fingertips all the time.”

Scantron is pleased and proud to be able to assist these innovative and successful educators.



**INFORM INSTRUCTION  
TO IMPACT STUDENT  
ACHIEVEMENT TODAY!**

For a free consultation to meet your academic goals, call **800.722.6876** or visit us at **[www.scantron.com/k12](http://www.scantron.com/k12)** to learn more.

## **About Us**

Scantron® provides a comprehensive set of solutions that help improve student outcomes in K-12 education. We offer software and services to meet the needs of customers’ assessment programs regardless of where they are on the technology spectrum—pure paper, pure online or anywhere in between.

