

Frederick County, Maryland, Focuses Education Vision

Using Scantron Assessment Solutions

Teachers and administrators now view standards-based scores immediately so they can adjust instructional strategy and tactics. Scores provide an effective catalyst to professional development and collaboration.

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) is the seventh-largest school district in Maryland, serving 41,000 students in 64 elementary, middle, high, and charter schools.

- **91.5% graduation rate**
- **Students earned a mean combined SAT score of 1544—higher than both Maryland’s state average *and* the national average**
- **71% of students who took Advanced Placement exams in 2012 earned scores of 3 or higher, qualifying for college credit**
- **Ranked first out of 24 counties on Maryland’s School Progress Index**
- **Since 2003, has narrowed the composite achievement gap for historically underperforming student subgroups by 47% in Reading and 41% in Mathematics, despite a 300% increase in English Language Learners**

They achieved these results through focused planning and instruction based on **standards**, rather than scores.

Yesterday...

FCPS were data-rich, but information-poor. They collected scores from several district assessments, but found it difficult to extract targets for specific strategic actions from scores alone.

Assessment items were not automatically associated with educational standards, requiring a lengthy

and manual process to provide meaningful recommendations to principals and teachers. Further, disaggregating results by student groups and subgroups was difficult and time-consuming.

Ultimately, their data analysis process left little time between when assessment results were distributed and when students were promoted to the next grade to adjust instruction so that it served these groups more effectively.

Worse still, the scores and analysis associated with each student’s record often did not transfer as part of the student’s promotion to middle school. Middle school teachers had very little detailed data to design appropriate instructional support for newly promoted students.

The district wanted a contemporary assessment that was normed and criterion-based—and the norming needed to reflect progress **across** grade levels. They needed a common assessment that could be used in **all** elementary and middle school grades to support a broader educational strategy.

In addition, it was imperative to put results directly and immediately into the hands of the educators who could act on those results to improve student achievement.

Enter Scantron Assessment Solutions.

“It helps teachers dramatically focus their efforts...the instruction the next day can be based on [reports from yesterday’s test]...”

Jason Anderson,
Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Innovation





Today...

In the 2012–2013 academic school year, Frederick County implemented Scantron’s fixed-form and computer-adaptive testing solutions for grades 2–8. In 2013–2014, they added computer-adaptive testing for high school subjects. This balanced assessment used in all grade levels provided much-needed commonality within each grade and across the promotion bridge.

Scantron assessments provide a mix of new items built to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and existing items aligned to CCSS. In AS, teachers can use items from banks created specifically for CCSS or associate their own custom test items with these standards. CCSS alignments appear in easy-to-use reports available immediately after students complete the test, so teachers can rapidly adjust instruction based on assessment outcomes.

“The teachers love it because it...reassures them about the decisions they’re making,” says Bobbie Nash, principal of Waverly Elementary School.

Through a variety of district-led analysis projects, FCPS determined that scores on Scantron’s adaptive assessment with national norms are highly predictive of student readiness for Maryland’s School Assessment, the state’s high-stakes test. They stopped using their previous readiness assessment, the SAT10, in favor of Scantron, saving approximately \$100,000 to date.

Scantron assessment results have elevated the level of discussion and collaboration, as well. “It takes far less time analyzing and allows more time for planning,” states Kevin Cuppett, principal of Carroll Manor Elementary School. Teachers can look at subgroups and have real conversations within and across schools. They can even evaluate

how instructional interventions are working with different segments of the student population.

This collaboration and instructional improvement has led to dramatic improvement. “Our 5th graders ranked #1 in the state for Reading and #2 in the state for Math going into 6th grade—and Scantron was a big part of that.” says Jason Anderson, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Innovation.

Tomorrow...

FCPS has big plans for their assessment solution.

- **In the future, they are looking to explore the foundational skills assessment in the primary grades.**
- **They plan to increase and improve their use of Matemáticas en Español.**
- **Accountability to standards has already had the effect of increasing the level of dialog and improving prescriptive collaboration based on timely, intuitive data—and FCPS sees this expanding and deepening in the future.**
- **FCPS encourages their schools to create class, school, and group scoreboards so everyone can see progress and compare methods.**
- **Departments are looking beyond the standard subjects to explore new and innovative ways to use fixed-form testing for their curriculum.**
- **They plan continued effort to build self-sufficiency with accessing and interpreting reports.**

“We’ve had a lot of success with Scantron,” says Eric Rhodes, Coordinator for Assessment and Intervention. “We’re making an investment in really accentuating our teachers’ understanding and learning so they can help their students succeed.”



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TO IMPACT STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT TODAY!**

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