



CAASPP in Action

Sharing Practices
in Implementing
the CAASPP System
to Improve Teaching
and Learning



California Assessment of
Student Performance and Progress

**Building Assessment Balance Through
Formative Assessment Practices
San Diego County Office of Education**



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SAN DIEGO COUNTY
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

“The mission is to improve understanding of what formative assessment is and is not, deepen learning about how intentional planning and deconstructing standards are key to formative assessment, and create implementation and sustainability plans to shift classroom practice.”

Information provided by San Diego County Office of Education.

DISTRICT PROFILE

The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) serves the county’s most vulnerable students and supports school leaders, teachers, and students across the county. SDCOE supports nearly 780 schools and more than 500,000 students, including nearly 10,000 children served through the Momentum Learning portfolio of schools (formerly known as Juvenile Court and Community Schools). SDCOE provides a variety of services for the 42 school districts, 124 charter schools, and 5 community college districts in the county.

Within SDCOE, the Assessment, Accountability and Evaluation Department (AAED) helps districts and schools:

- Evaluate the current state of local assessment systems.
- Provide professional development in all aspects of assessment and monitoring.
- Promote the use of the formative assessment process to facilitate student learning and self-regulation.
- Analyze assessment results to leverage informed decision making.

GOALS

SDCOE’s AAED established the following goals:

- Assist the county’s districts and schools in getting the right “assessment balance” by shifting the focus from interim and summative assessments to the minute-by-minute and day-by-day gathering of the evidence of learning while the learning is taking place. Utilize the system of support within California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), such as the Digital Library and CAASPP Institute resources.
- Continue to grow the Formative Assessment Network of San Diego (FANSDiego), the goals of which are to support deeper learning associated

with the formative assessment process and help teachers revise and refine their current practices within the classroom.

The formative assessment process is well supported by research literature and the new California curriculum frameworks, each of which contains a chapter focusing on assessment that calls out the role a comprehensive, balanced assessment system plays in supporting the delivery of high-quality instruction and ensures success for all learners. It is a primary focus of SDCOE's work because it has the most potential to transform educator practice and change outcomes for students. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium's four attributes of formative assessment have been a cornerstone in this work (see Figure 1 for the four attributes of formative assessment).

MISSION OF THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT NETWORK OF SAN DIEGO

The purposes of FANSDiego are to support deeper learning about the formative assessment process and help teachers revise and refine their current practices within their own classroom and school. The FANSDiego system encourages both student and teacher reflection on and dialogue about content and assessment in order to improve assessment literacy to create lasting change in schools and districts. The mission is to improve understanding of what formative assessment is and is not, deepen learning about how intentional planning and deconstructing standards are key to formative assessment, and create implementation and sustainability plans to shift classroom practice.

FANSDiego, developed on the basis of research and expert support, officially launched its first cohort in June 2017. FANSDiego is a catch-all name for the formative assessment effort in San Diego County, referring to the network, yearlong site-based work, introductory courses for teachers and school leaders, assessment literacy work with districts, and other potential work. Research shows that formative assessment practices, when implemented consistently and with fidelity, have the power to double the rate of student learning. SDCOE has seen the transformative power of formative assessment and how students become active agents in their own learning.

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

FANSDiego is led by Melissa Spadin, Coordinator of Assessment Resources, and Steven Green, Senior Director of the AAED, and is supported by staff in the Learning and Leadership Services Division of SDCOE.

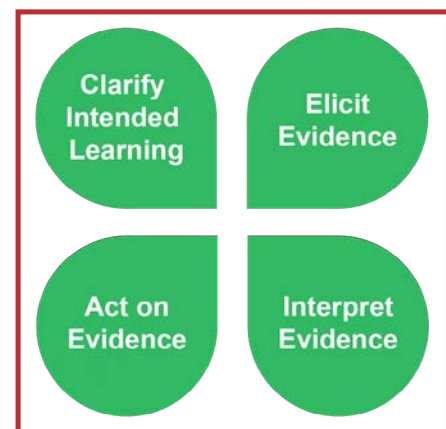


Figure 1. Formative assessment attributes

RESOURCES

The key resources tapped in launching FANSDiego have been primarily personnel related. The AAED has dedicated two key leaders to supporting this initiative. In addition, members of the SDCOE Learning and Leadership Services Division, such as content coordinators and executive leadership coaches, are providing support based on participants' needs. SDCOE has put to use a variety of resources from the California Department of Education's CAASPP Institute to inform its work with FANSDiego, in particular:

- Information contained in the formative assessment presentations:
 - Digital Library formative assessment attributes
 - Teacher and student roles in the formative assessment process
- Assessment literacy information included in the presentation “implementing a Balanced Assessment System”
 - Balanced and comprehensive assessment system
 - Cycles of assessment graphic (Heritage and Herman)
 - Purpose of the various levels of assessment (summative, interim, formative and diagnostic)
 - Roles and uses of the various levels of assessment

SDCOE also has utilized professional learning resources in the Digital Library, such as Professional Learning Modules, which are videos that display segments of the formative assessment process in action, including:

- Clarifying the Intended Learning
- Eliciting Evidence
- Interpreting Evidence
- Acting on Evidence
- The Components of Effective Feedback



The Digital Library provides professional learning resources that focus on educator professional development, mentoring, and coaching and have utility in professional learning communities.

TOOLS

Communication played a critical role in the launching of FANSDiego, with communication to stakeholders starting nearly a year before the first cohort was launched. Beginning in fall 2016, the AAED shared the FANSDiego concept at educator professional network meetings hosted by SDCOE and at local conferences related to balanced assessment systems and assessment best practices. Social media outlets also were used to broadcast to a larger audience. Getting the word out early and generating interest were critical to the launching of this initiative.

APPROACH

The AAED had been actively promoting formative assessment for many years. However, with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the shift to the more rigorous assessments of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress System, the sense of urgency to support balanced assessment systems was heightened.

Beginning in spring 2015, the AAED looked to initiatives under way across the country and found several models that were grounded in current research and showed signs of promise. One example is the Formative Assessment for Maryland Educators (FAME) program, which launched in 2014. In addition, members of the AAED reached out to such experts in the field as Margaret Heritage, Robert Linnquanti, and Nancy Gerson to enlist their support in providing professional learning and technical support and to keynote/present at SDCOE assessment-related conferences.

SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

The first FANSDiego cohort, in one district and two charter schools, began with a two-day professional learning session for instructional leaders. The purpose was to enhance their understanding of the formative assessment process and its role within a comprehensive, balanced assessment system. SDCOE built the instructional leaders' capacity to serve as the lead learner for their schools in carrying out this work. This was a critical step; if the leaders were not clear about the work and how to lead it, FANSDiego likely would not succeed at the classroom level. Following the leadership training, the implementation team began to meet with the teachers in the cohort to provide professional learning and develop site-based communities of practice.

Because FANSDiego is a new initiative, few challenges have been encountered to date. However, schools and LEAs throughout the county do have a variety of initiatives they currently are implementing, and initial FANSDiego participation rates are lower than hoped. To address this concern, the leaders of FANSDiego are working closely with school and district leaders on recognizing the connection between the formative assessment process and the implementation of local initiatives.

SDCOE's support is more than the use of some specific tools, strategies, or quick fixes. SDCOE is supporting education by changing behaviors and practices in service to students. This message can be challenging to communicate when it comes up against publishers and products that claim to have quick, easy, game-changing "formative assessments."

LESSONS LEARNED

So far, SDCOE staff have learned that assessment literacy and the implementation of balanced assessment systems constitute an area in which many schools and LEAs need support. The implementation team has learned that the formative assessment process often is misunderstood and not embedded in daily practice. While the research is clear that the formative assessment process can have a tremendous impact on teaching and learning if it is implemented effectively, it cannot be regarded as yet another task on teachers' plates.

At this point, there is nothing that the implementation team can point to that should be done differently. However, it is necessary to continually communicate the definition of formative assessment and get the assessment chapters of the curriculum frameworks into the hands of teachers and other leaders throughout the county in an initial step to building assessment literacy.



Teachers and administrators are working together in the hope of building the foundation for a successful countywide formative assessment support network.

NEXT STEPS

As the second FANSDiego cohort is implemented this year, SDCOE will be gathering feedback from participants—teachers and administrators—regarding what is working for them and what can be done to provide better support. Staff will use this information to update and modify the FANSDiego model.

SDCOE will continue to communicate the message of FANSDiego in an effort to generate further interest among schools and LEAs in the county. The goal is to scale up over time to develop a successful countywide network.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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