



CAASPP in Action

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



California Assessment of
Student Performance and Progress

**Integrating Interim Assessment Blocks—Building and
Maintaining a Comprehensive Assessment System**
Hawthorne School District



Hawthorne School District



MISSION STATEMENT

It is Hawthorne School District's mission to maximize each student's potential to achieve educational excellence.

“ . . . the goal of using the Interim Assessment Blocks as an assessment tool [is] to facilitate a deeper understanding on the part of educators and students . . . ”

Information provided by Hawthorne School District.

DISTRICT PROFILE

Hawthorne School District (HSD) began with a single one-room school in 1907. Over the years, it has grown to comprise 10 traditional schools plus one charter school. Collectively, the district serves transitional kindergarten through grade twelve, through its seven elementary schools, three middle schools, and a charter high school. HSD serves more than 8,570 students.

GOALS

Through a districtwide effort to build a culture that values a comprehensive assessment system, the goals for the use of the Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) were as follows:

- Increase teacher awareness and familiarity with the IABs as a part of that system.
- Through increased awareness and familiarity, strengthen alignment of classroom instruction and assessment experiences with the rigor of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

GRADES SERVED **TK–12**

TEACHERS **419**

AVERAGE YEARS OF SERVICE **12**

ENROLLMENT **8,570**

CLASSIFIED STAFF **192**

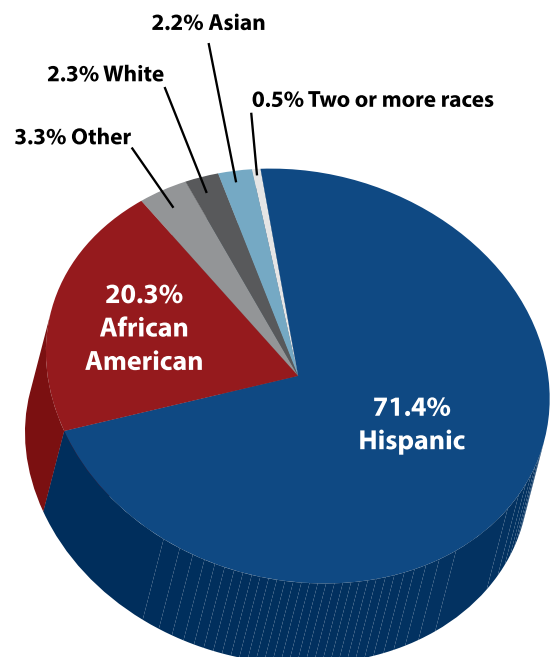
ENGLISH LEARNERS **33.4%**

LOW ECONOMIC STATUS **85%**

SPECIAL EDUCATION **8%**

FOSTER YOUTHS & HOMELESS **1.2%**

ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF STUDENTS



IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The HSD Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) served as the implementation team and included representation from the district and site levels, consisting of administrators, teachers, and curricular support personnel with subject-matter expertise. Approximately 60 ILT members participated: 30 English language arts (ELA) staff and 30 mathematics staff. These individuals developed and led the implantation plan at all school sites in the district.

APPROACH

What would I need as a teacher to be successful at this?

This was the question that guided the work of the ILT members as they began their work to implement the use of the IABs districtwide.

During the 2014–15 school year, time was initially spent educating the ILT members on all aspects of the IABs. Once team members were well informed, the team developed a step-by-step implementation plan for introducing the IABs to teachers and students and for gradually integrating the IABs into the district’s comprehensive assessment system. The plan included components for communication/messaging, professional development (resources and training time), and data management. Leadership team members’ roles and responsibilities were determined, and a multiyear implementation timeline was developed. The rollout of the plan was gradual and systematic over the course of three years, with a focus on integrating the IABs into a districtwide comprehensive assessment system that informs instructional practice. Throughout the process, the goal of using the IABs as an assessment tool to facilitate a deeper understanding on the part of educators and students of the rigor required for mastery of the CCSS was stressed.

BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENT

Initial Implementation: 2014–15

The purpose of the initial implementation of IABs was to help prepare teachers and students for the summative assessments by increasing their awareness and experience with the structure, format, and rigor of the CAASPP ELA and mathematics assessments. HSD took the following steps:

- Some previously required assessments were removed from the assessment calendar to free up testing time to use selected IABs and to avoid crowding out additional instructional time.
- Teachers on the ILT volunteered to pilot the selected IABs for both ELA and mathematics.
- The district Associate Superintendent of Educational Services communicated an overview of the planned use of the IABs through a “Getting to the Core” memo. In this memo, the Associate Superintendent addressed the importance of a comprehensive district assessment system for guiding instruction, the value the IABs would contribute to the district system, and the requirement that all teachers in grades three through eight administer one IAB in the spring of 2015 during a set window of time, before the statewide summative assessments.

- The district Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Coordinator and the district Literacy Coach conducted a “Train the Trainers” professional development session with the ILT (site coaches and teacher leaders). Kindergarten through grade two teachers were included in the professional development to ensure that they would become aware of the expectations for their students as they progress through the grade levels.
- Teachers in grades three through five administered one mathematics IAB during the district-established March-through-April window. Teachers in grades six through eight administered one ELA IAB during the same window. IABs were incorporated into selected administrations in a strategic way, with a focus on a single, hand-scored IAB for ELA in the first year and the addition of a hand-scored math IAB in the second year.
- The Associate Superintendent communicated the goals and expectations for the second year of IAB implementation in a new “Getting to the Core” memo, which included an increase in the number of IABs administered and in the number of hand-scored selected IABs.
- Members of the ILT focused on preparing for the implementation of hand-scoring selected IABs by:
 - Developing district-specific professional development materials and hand-scoring guides
 - Aligning district scoring rubrics with Smarter Balanced rubrics
 - Conducting common professional development sessions at all sites in the district on how to use the IAB hand-scoring system and which data would be generated from the hand-scored IABs
 - Integrating IAB performance data into the district’s data management system

Year Two Implementation: 2015–16

The stated goals for the IAB implementation plan for the 2015–16 school year were to further expose students to the rigor and demands of the summative assessment, continue to develop teacher familiarity with the mechanics and content of the IABs, and provide teachers with an opportunity to examine writing samples aligned with the CCSS and the CAASPP summative assessments through the use of the hand-scoring training materials. HSD took the following steps:

- Time blocks were provided for teachers to use the hand-scoring training materials (prep sets and check sets) for common scoring and calibration.
- Required IABs were built into the ELA and mathematics pacing guides for grades three through eight.
- In the first trimester, teachers in grades three through five administered one common mathematics IAB that did not require hand-scoring; teachers in grades six through eight administered one common mathematics and one common ELA IAB that did not require hand-scoring.
- In the second trimester, teachers in grades

three through five administered an ELA IAB performance task and teachers in grades six through eight administered one common mathematics IAB and one common ELA IAB performance task. The IAB performance tasks replaced the previously required HSD performance task assessments.

- Teachers were provided time blocks to hand score the IAB performance tasks.



Teachers used hand-scoring training materials for common scoring and calibration. Time blocks were provided for performance task scoring.

Year Three Implementation: 2016–17

The stated goals for the IAB implementation plan for the 2016–17 school year were to continue to: increase student familiarity with the interface and rigor of the state assessments, including the use of embedded tools; support teachers in better understanding the content expectations of the CCSS through the use of the IABs and in the navigation of the assessment portal and use of designated supports; and,

overall, to provide one more critical measure in the district comprehensive assessment system of student understanding/mastery of the CCSS and existing instructional needs. HSD took the following steps:

- The schedule for administering the required IABs was established and disseminated. The IABs also were built into the district pacing guides for participating grade levels.
- Teachers in grades three through five administered a common ELA IAB performance task during the first trimester and a common mathematics IAB that did not require hand scoring. This took place in the second trimester.
- Teachers in grades six through eight administered a common mathematics IAB that did not require hand scoring in the first trimester and common IABs for both ELA and mathematics that required hand scoring in the second trimester.
- Teachers in grade eight administered a common hand-scored mathematics performance task in the first trimester. In the second trimester, they administered a mathematics IAB that did not require hand scoring and an ELA performance task IAB.

BENEFITS AND IMPACT OF EFFORTS TO DATE

Through a districtwide effort to build a culture that values a comprehensive

assessment system, the impact and benefits are:

- The systematic, common use of selected IABs in the HSD has increased educator and student awareness of the demands of the CCSS and the CAASPP ELA and mathematics assessments.
- On the basis of their increased awareness, teachers have adjusted classroom instructional practices to better meet those demands and expectations.

The goal of strengthening the alignment of classroom instruction and assessment, with the rigor of CCSS, has been improved through the use of the IABs.

- HSD has been evaluating instructional materials based on the deeper understanding of the standards. This has been evident as teachers reflect on the level of the rigor needed in the additional materials to be purchased.
- As stated by the Associate Superintendent, this new culture has “impacted the lens with which we view everything.”
- Focusing on the value assessment can bring to the teaching and learning process resulted in the “joyous discovery” by district educators that it is truly possible to have a comprehensive assessment system that informs instructional practice. Assessment can bring value to instruction without being burdensome.



Having a small group of educators who are familiar with all aspects of the IABs is vital to its successful implementation.

LESSONS LEARNED

Planning and preparation improve the outcome.

The time the ILT members invested in the development of a multiyear plan and preparation for the implementation of that plan definitely paid off. By identifying and addressing potential challenges and barriers, such as limited time for broader training to effective implementation as a part of the planning and preparation process, the team helped to ensure that all stakeholders had what they needed to be successful in using the IABs.

HSD cannot stress enough the importance of having a small group explore all elements of the IABs, experiencing the IABs themselves, and becoming familiar with the resources available, including the prep sets, check sets, rubrics, and so forth. Having “resident experts” at each school helped alleviate concerns and made the process much more manageable. HSD created guide sheets that directed teachers to particular anchor papers in the prep sets to make the resources more accessible to them during limited training time.

Collaborative effort provides opportunities.

Using a collaborative team approach for this district initiative provided opportunities for varied perspectives to be considered in the planning and implementation process. That approach also made it possible to share the workload so no individual was overburdened with responsibilities for successful implementation.

CHALLENGES

The challenge faced by HSD was the implementation of the overall, districtwide effort to build a culture that values a comprehensive assessment system. Changing the culture of a large organization and incorporating the IABs into a regular cycle of teaching and learning was a large

undertaking. This required a deep understanding of the purpose, promise, and limitations of the IABs. Teachers had to familiarize themselves with the content and the interface of the IABs, gaining collective buy-in through an understanding of the value of engaging in large-scale IAB administration.

The challenges and barriers for the ILT were:

- Limited time for broader training and lack of familiarity with the hand scoring systems
- Inability to print student responses and developing comfort with the digital scoring
- Demands of administering both ELA and mathematics IABs placed on the elementary teachers
- Lack of adequate time to facilitate hand scoring collaboration and calibration sessions for all teachers

WHAT TEACHERS AND ILT MEMBERS DISCOVERED

“What I discovered with my initial experience with the IAB was carving out time for the implementation while still effectively addressing my lesson plans. My initial thoughts were that the IAB was going to take up valuable time, time that could be spent teaching or providing interventions. After implementing and hand scoring the first IAB, I discovered its value as a teaching tool and intervention piece. While hand scoring, I identified strengths and weaknesses. I was able to pinpoint, for each student, specific areas that needed attention. Using the IAB as an intervention tool, I was able to focus my intervention and streamline my instruction. I also discovered that, because this tool is so effective, the frequency and timing of the implementation is paramount.”

—Kacy Fields-Horlocher, grade three teacher

“Teachers realized the importance of academic vocabulary and using it consistently in the classroom as part of their daily instruction. In addition, it was noted that students needed to develop their technology skills. The test requires a lot of stamina and when students spend too much time trying to navigate through the test, they have less stamina to apply to their essays.”

—Donna Tautges, kindergarten through grade five literacy coach

Teachers' Opinions on Challenges for the HSD ILT

“Being part of the ILT has been a positive experience. We are a team whose goal is to work together in order to effectively enrich the lives of our community by providing effective curriculum and instruction. Over the years, I have grown as an educator and am honored to be a resource to my school site and colleagues. Working with this team is exciting work.”

—Kacy Fields-Horlocher, grade three teacher

“I am always looking to growing as a leader and enjoy being on ILT to plan professional development that is meaningful for teachers as well as providing critical information to teachers that will support student achievement/success.”

—Alma Contreras, grades six through eight mathematics coach



The ILT acts as a positive support network for educators interested in improving the lives of students and teachers in their community.

NEXT STEPS

The ILT’s goal has always been to use the IABs to inform teaching and learning that is taking place in the classrooms and to identify the strengths and needs of students. The ILT aims to gain insight into precise ways in which the hand scored Performance Task IABs assess the content standards in alignment with various claims.

In the upcoming year, the ILT will focus on finding the best way to use the score report data generated by the IABs to guide the teaching and learning process. Integration of those data into the existing district data management system will continue. This includes using the new Interim Assessment Reporting system.

HSD plans to expand the use of the IABs as a component of the district’s comprehensive assessment plan as the Smarter Balanced interim assessment system continues to evolve and develop.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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CDE CAASPP Web page
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca>

CAASPP Portal
<http://www.caaspp.org>



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