

*EXTENDING THE COURSE*  
2006 – 2012

ASSESSMENT PLAN  
Revised 2009



Staying the Course  
2000-2006



Charting the Course  
1992-2000



*STRATEGIC PLANNING*  
*Central Bucks School District*  
Doylestown, Pennsylvania

# CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT ASSESSMENT PLAN

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# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The assessment of student academic progress is essential in maintaining excellence in the Central Bucks School District. Stakeholders of the district – students and their parents, teachers and administrators, and the School Board and community at large – rely on assessment data to provide information about the quality of education provided to students. The overall purpose of this Central Bucks Assessment Plan is to provide a framework for **the systematic collection, analysis, reporting, and use of student achievement information** that will provide information about the quality of the school system.

## Section 1.1 Beliefs About Assessment

Our assessment system is based on the following beliefs:

- Assessment should contribute to helping all students improve their performance, not just serve a labeling and sorting function.
- Assessment should be directly connected to the standards and curriculum of the district so that students are assessed on what they have been taught.
- Assessment practices should include a variety of methods (from standardized national tests to everyday teacher observation and judgment) that depend upon the learning target and the intended use of the data. These multiple indicators will provide a more complete picture of what students know and can do.
- Assessments should be of high quality and meet appropriate technical standards of reliability, validity, generalizability, and developmental appropriateness.
- Assessment data should be shared in a format that is understandable and meaningful to students, parents, teachers, and the public.
- Assessment data should be used by school personnel to develop action plans for improving student learning and achievement
- Assessment should focus on student growth and gain over time, not just on immediate absolute performance. This “value added” perspective allows for varying individual or school starting points.
- Sound assessment practice calls for gathering information from multiple sources, creating a ‘photo album’ of performance rather than a ‘single snapshot.’
- Assessment and evaluation are processes that evolve and change over time. Therefore, we will continually seek to improve the ways in which we assess students and the means by which we communicate and use assessment results.

## **Section 1.2 Assessment Purposes**

All assessment decisions in Central Bucks are made in accord with our three basic purposes of assessment, each aligned to one or more of the groups of stakeholders in district performance.

### **I. Improvement of Student Learning**

Stakeholders: students and parents

One purpose of our assessment plan is to provide students and parents with information about how individual students are progressing through the K-12 system – giving a comprehensive picture of what a student knows and is able to do. Individual proficiency data as well as comparative data to other students in Central Bucks, the state, and the nation is shared. This lets families know to what extent students are meeting expectations for learning and informs them if additional effort or assistance is needed. The plan provides assessment information to teachers who can use it to create instructional focus and individualized goals for students and then monitor their improvement over time.

### **II. Improvement of Instructional Programs**

Stakeholders: teachers and administrators

A second purpose of our assessment plan is to provide group achievement data to teachers and administrators, who can make comparisons to state and national populations and to proficiency standards and then take any necessary steps to improve curriculum or instruction. School staff use their building's achievement profile, derived from assessment data, to develop action plans for school improvement. District staff use comparative data to address program needs, revising curriculum or designing staff development programs so that student learning will improve.

### **III. Public Accountability**

Stakeholders: School Board and community

Finally, the plan provides accountability information to the public. The Board of School Directors, school communities, and the general public are provided comparative information about how their programs compare to others in the state or nation. In order to gain public confidence and support, schools need to document student learning and demonstrate plans to address performance issues when they arise.

## Section 1.3 Assessment Goals

The Central Bucks School District Assessment Plan has five specific goals, aligned with section 4.13 (c) Strategic Planning (specifically subsections 5 and 6) and section 4.52 Local School Assessment of the Pennsylvania Chapter 4 Requirements

1. Develop a system of assessment to determine the degree to which students are achieving the district's academic standards
2. Develop a plan for improving student achievement
3. Develop a method of storing and tracking assessment results so that individual and aggregate data is available for planning
4. Develop a plan for making assessment information available to the public
5. Develop a plan to assist students who have not demonstrated attainment of the academic standards at a proficient level or higher.

## Section 1.4 Assessment Methods

Many academic standards are already being assessed in Central Bucks School District, using the variety of assessment strategies explained below. By 2013-2014, each department has been charged with increasing the number of common assessments used to verify the attainment of academic standards, so that a complete picture of each student's strengths and weaknesses in relation to each academic standard can be obtained.

- A. External Assessments.** As the accompanying assessment triangle illustrates, academic standards will be verified using **external assessments**, like the state PSSA assessments and standardized tests like the SAT or AP Exams. These normed or criterion referenced tests provide one method to verify whether Central Bucks students have achieved specific standards.
- B. District Level Verifications.** A second measure of student achievement of the standards is student performance on a small number of **district level verifications** that are not included within any specific course. These tasks are district developed, and they are treated like standardized assessments, using a common rubric and anchored performances. Inter-rater reliability is very important so that the Board and public can value these assessment results as much as they value external standardized tests. Therefore, scores on these tasks must be consistent between multiple scorers. These tasks are

scored by district level scoring teams and all scorers are trained to the standard. Scores do not impact any regular course grades. The four district level “transition tasks” are:

- *The grade 3 performance assessment: Simple Machine Unit*
- *The grade 6 performance assessment: Research a Question*
- *The grade 9 performance assessment: Take a Stand*
- *The grade 12 Graduation Project*

**C. Common Course Level Verifications.** The third tier on the assessment triangle illustrates how standards will be assessed through **common tests, tasks, and assignments** administered to all students in the same elementary grade or in the same secondary level course.

At the elementary level, common end-of-year tests are administered in reading (K-2), language arts, and mathematics. Standardized writing prompts are also administered each fall and spring. Standardized unit tests are used in the reading, math, and science programs.

At the secondary level, common mid-terms and final exams are administered in core subject areas. Even more significantly, since 2004 all secondary core subject areas have administered “common core assessments” in grades 9-12. Each student participates in two to three core assessments per subject per year, resulting in a portfolio of core assessments consisting of about 32 common assessments, which are typically performance-based, open-ended tasks. Each year, a booklet describing close to two hundred “core assessments” is published. Samples from the 2008-09 booklet appear below. During the major 2006-2014 Curriculum Renewal project, each department is reviewing/revising its core assessments to ensure that they pertain to essential questions and enduring understandings as well as to the state academic standards within each course.

**English: Core 1: Literary Analysis**

Students write a literary analysis paper that shows how an author uses literary elements (characterization, setting, plot, point of view, tone, and/or style) to develop a theme. Assignments will vary based upon literature being analyzed. Specific criteria are listed on page 9 of the scope and sequence document.

Standards Tested: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7

**Math: Core 1 - Assessment C - Treasure Hunt**

Students simulate an archeological dig and use concepts of congruency to locate treasure.

Standards Tested: 2.4, 2.5, 2.9

**Math: Core 1 - Assessment D (#8) - Refinish Basketball Court Assessment**

Students plan a refinishing of a basketball court by calculating areas to be painted, including circular areas for jump balls and foul shots, as well as areas requiring refinishing.

Standards Tested: 2.4, 2.5, 2.9

**Science Gr 7: Core 2: Predator-Prey Performance Assessment**

Students study a table containing population data covering a 28-year period for snowshoe hare and lynx in a certain area of Canada. The students are asked to create a graph of the data to facilitate accurate analysis, then to use the research data to write a brief response to a proposal to reduce the lynx population.

*Standards Tested: 3.1, 3.3, 4.3, 4.5*

**Social Studies World History: Core 2: Imperialism**

Students will create a political cartoon and written response on Third World independence movements in China and India.

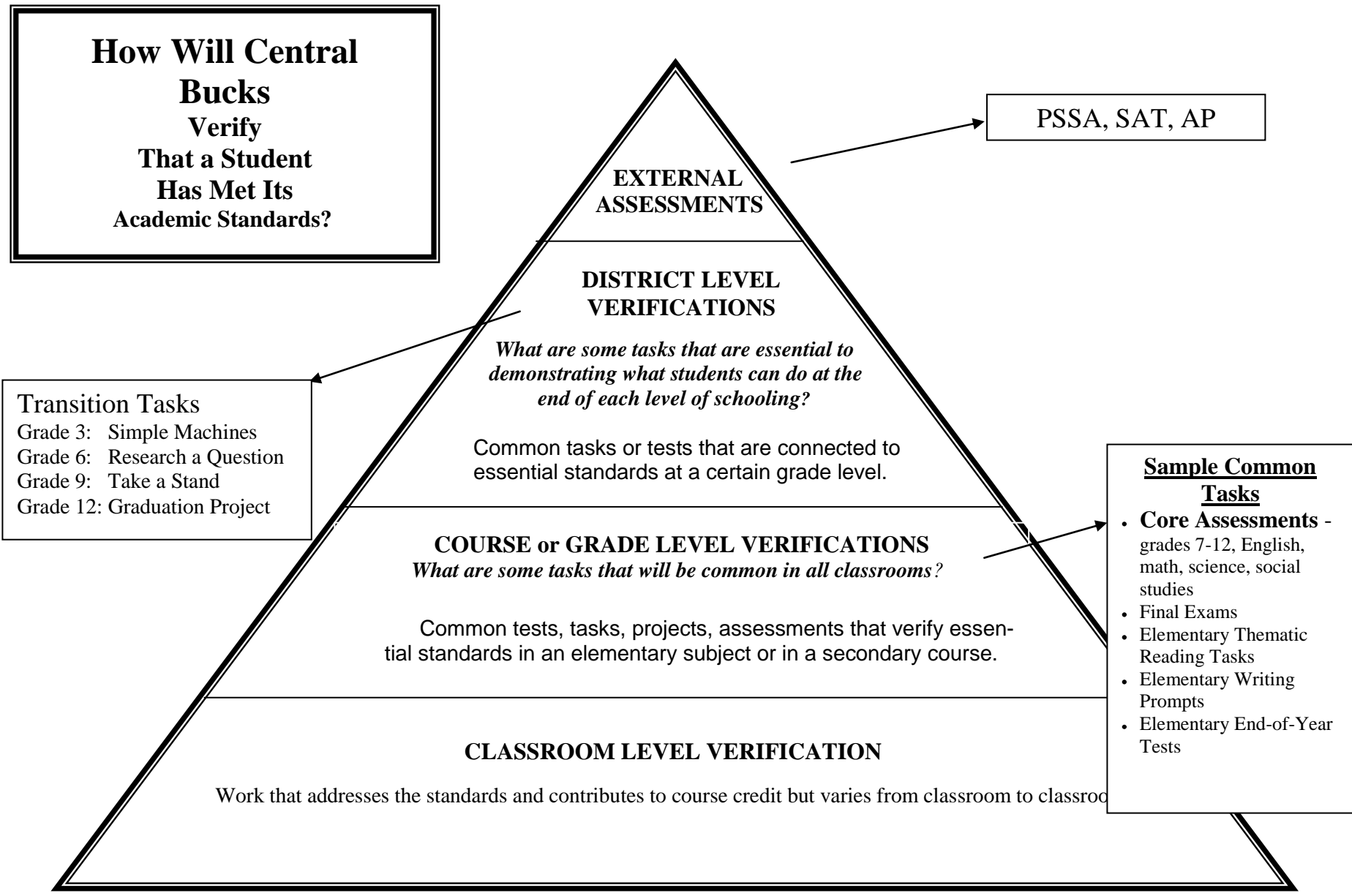
Standards Tested: 1.4,1.5,6.2,8.1, 8.4

**D. Classroom Level Assessments.** Finally, all standards in a subject area will be assessed using individual, **teacher-developed assessments at the classroom level.**

Both formative and summative assessment strategies will be used, including, but not limited to:

- Writing samples and responses to literature
- Other demonstrations, performances, products or projects by students related to specific academic standards
- Tests and quizzes developed by teachers to assess specific academic standards
- Open-ended questions and problem solving in math classes
- Diagnostic assessments such as story retellings
- Evaluations of portfolios of student work related to achievement of academic standards
- Scientific experiments conducted by students
- Oral reports, debates, interviews
- Classroom logs and journals
- Computer demonstrations
- Informal observations and dialogue, journal entries, and anecdotal information
- Informal checks for understanding

This daily classroom work and ongoing assessment varies from classroom to classroom but is constantly focused on student attainment of academic standards



## **SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT GOALS for 2006-2014**

### **Section 2.1 General Assessment Goals**

This section of the Assessment Plan includes the four general goals that the Curriculum and Assessment Council has identified for 2006-2014, a time of curriculum renewal for all Central Bucks subjects, using the planning backwards model of “Understanding by Design” and the principles of Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships.

#### **I. Continue use of PSSA , SAT, and AP Tests**

- Explore the correlation between specific programs like Study Island Benchmarks and READ 180 and the PSSA scores to determine their efficacy as PSSA Predictors.

#### **II. Continue work on district level “transition task” assessments**

- All four district “transition tasks” are now operational, with the revision of the Graduation Project being completed for 2008-09.
- Continue work of guaranteeing inter-rater reliability for all district level assessments by selecting anchor performances and by using scoring methods that will increase the likelihood of scorers assigning the same score.
- Build banks of sample performance tapes at all levels.

#### **III. Extend use of common assessments in all courses and subjects.**

- By the end of the 2006-2014 Curriculum Renewal, both elementary and secondary core courses will include common assessments. The plan calls for two core assessments in each secondary level core course, resulting in an electronic “standards proficiency” portfolio of 32 pieces of common work assessing the standards.
- Additionally, all other subjects are charged with developing common assessments that assess the PA standards related to their courses.

#### **IV. Continue work toward increasing classroom activities that are directly related to academic standards and reducing those that are not.**

- During curriculum renewal, committees ensure that activities are aligned to academic standards and meet our criteria for rigor and relevance.

## SECTION 3: USING AND REPORTING ASSESSMENT DATA

### Section 3.1 Assessment Calendar and Reports.

Each year an annual assessment calendar is supplied, listing all external and district level assessments. As the results of each assessment are returned, they are analyzed by the Supervisor of Assessment, building administrators, curriculum coordinators, and, as appropriate, by classroom teachers. District wide interpretation meetings are conducted so that district personnel know how to use the information effectively. Teachers use the information to set goals in their own classrooms. Building administrators use the information to develop building-wide assessment action plans. District level administrators use the information to review district program and to prepare reports to the Board of School Directors. The district public relations coordinator summarizes assessment results for the public.

The following district-level reports are produced and distributed annually:

Assessment Instrument	Reports Created	Approximate Report Dates
<b>PSSA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> <li>• Science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building/District Summaries</li> <li>• Special Education Analysis</li> <li>• Lists of Students Eligible for Remediation for Scheduling</li> <li>• Longitudinal Reports</li>   <li>• Class Lists Reconfigured by Current Year Teacher</li>   <li>• State Level Comparisons by Building /District</li>   <li>• Report to the School Board</li> <li>• Included in community publications</li> </ul>	<p>Approximately two weeks following receipt of PSSA scores</p> <p>From Infinite Campus (SMS) September</p> <p>September, following release of state data</p> <p>October/November</p>
<b>PSSA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eMetrics</li> <li>• PVAAS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data available summer following testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directions for accessing data provided to administrators and teachers</li> <li>• Key reports printed and distributed</li> </ul>

<b>PSSA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports related to Remediation Program, Skills for Success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Planning (students eligible for following year's classes)</li> <li>• Skills Eligible (students eligible following June PSSA Reports)</li> <li>• Skills Effectiveness (results of Skills students on most recent PSSA)</li> <li>• Skills Serviced (number of eligible students scheduled for remediation)</li> <li>• Cohort Study (effect of Skills for Success program, grades 9-11)</li> <li>• Grade 12 Retest Report</li> <li>• Graduation Certification Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• January</li> <li>• June</li> <li>• August</li> <li>• October</li> <li>• January</li> <li>• February</li> <li>• February</li> </ul>
<b>PSAT, SAT, AP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Reports by School, District, and Class (AP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September</li> </ul>
<b>Final Exams, Final Course Grades, and Core Assessments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longitudinal Reports by Teacher, Class, Building, and District for all secondary level courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available from Infinite Campus (SMS) Report Center July 1</li> </ul>

## Section 3.2 Using Assessment Data

. Assessment results from external tests and district assessments are used in a variety of ways to provide various types of information to each set of district stakeholders

### A. Monitoring of Individual Student Achievement. Stakeholders = student and parent

- 1. To provide information to students and parents about academic achievement and improvement and progress.** Score reports for all external tests (PSSA, Terra Nova) are sent home to parents with explanatory letters helping them to interpret their child's achievement. Score reports are also provided for district level assessments. Additional assessment information is shared at parent-teacher conferences.
- 2. To alert students and parents to the need for extra assistance.** When students score below the levels identified as proficient on any of the external or district level tests, their parents are notified about low scores and informed of any extra assistance programs available (before or after school tutoring, resource meetings, voluntary summer sessions, etc.)

- 3. To recommend students for placement into special programs.** A below-proficiency score on any significant assessment will initiate a series of actions designed to evaluate student progress and make program adjustments as needed. Low scores can result in a recommendation for a program such as the elementary “Reading Recovery” program, middle school “Skills for Success” course, or senior high “Skills Lab” courses

## **B. Instructional Planning and Staff Development.**

### **Stakeholders = teachers**

- 1. To provide diagnostic information to teachers** Test information from the PSSA, and is all reconfigured and made available electronically to teachers in the next grade level for planning purposes.
- 2. To provide feedback to teachers about effectiveness of classroom instruction** Teachers can use test information to compare the performance of their students to those in other classrooms and modify instructional techniques to aim for improved results..
- 3. To serve as a basis for staff development** Teachers can elect to attend staff development sessions on specific topics if they determine their students are not performing up to standard.

## **C. Program Effectiveness and Improvement.**

### **Stakeholders = administrators**

- 1. To provide feedback to building administrators about student performance.** Building administrators analyze their students’ performance annually and set building action plans to be included in each building’s “Achievement Portfolio,” submitted to the superintendent annually. For example, the PSSA is analyzed by proficiency level, with results disaggregated for IEP students. Each student below proficient is to be provided additional support. National tests like AP, SAT, PSAT provide building and district comparison rates so that principals have the opportunity to develop action plans if the scores indicate need.
- 2. To provide feedback to building administrators about teacher effectiveness** Some assessments enable principals to determine teacher effectiveness on teaching to a certain standard. Teachers can then set goals to improve in those areas and receive coaching from the principal or staff development facilitators.

3. **To provide information to district level curriculum specialists and administrators.** Information from district and external assessments can be used to gauge program effectiveness and make necessary curricular or instructional changes to address problem areas.
4. **To align curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.** Assessment information can be used during program review to insure that curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned. The tighter the match between an assessment and the curriculum, the more helpful the assessment information.
5. **To support program change or need for specialized programs.** Assessment data can provide the impetus for changing existing programs or adding remedial programs.

**D. Public accountability**  
**Stakeholders = public**

1. **To communicate student achievement and progress to the community.** Assessment results can provide a comparative basis to other similar school systems and to externally established proficiency standards in order to give the public the confidence that local schools are performing satisfactorily or that they are responding to areas of weakness
2. **To gain support and public confidence from the community.** Assessment data can increase public confidence in and support for the school district's educational program.

## **SECTION 4: STORING DATA AND TRACKING STUDENT PROGRESS**

A system to verify to what extent each student has achieved each academic standard during twelve years of schooling is inherently a very complicated system, with the potential for tracking hundreds of pieces of information for each student.

Since 2006, Central Bucks has been using Infinite Campus, our student management system, to provide feedback to teachers and parents about any individual student's scores as well as to produce various reports described above. Teachers can access individual student information from any district computer. Parents have access to their child's data using the Parent Portal.

Infinite Campus provides an "assessment tab" for each student. This contains scores for all PSSA tests since 2002, for district transition tasks, for SAT, PSAT, AP, and ACT. Additionally, by going to an individual student's file for grades, teachers can see final exam scores, final course grades, and core assessment scores for each year since 2006. Scores from elementary assessments could be added to the assessment tab in the future.

In addition, specific reports for groups of students are automatically created within the Campus Report Center (eg PSSA scores reconfigured by current year teacher) or can be created by district programmers upon request (eg special ed analysis for school in AYP Warning showing a history of PSSA scores, subjects taken, grades received, and teachers)

Sample Standards Proficiency Report for a Central Bucks Student

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade 12

Graduation Date: 2014

Assessment Instrument	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
PSSA Reading		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
PSSA Math		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
PSSA Writing				X			X			X	
PSSA Science			X				X			X	
PSAT									X	X	
SAT / ACT										X	X
AP									X	X	X
Transition Tasks		X			X			X			X
Portfolio Elem. Conferences	X	X	X	X	X						
Portfolio Sec. Core Assessment								X	X	X	X
Elementary End of Year Tests: Lang Arts, Reading, Writing Prompts, Math	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Secondary Final Exams / Final Course Grades								X	X	X	X