



## The What Works Panel: Scottsdale Unified School District ATI K-3 Assessment Symposium

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These challenges we are addressing are not specific to K-3, even though there are a few additional complications that are endemic to K-1 implementation. Our district has been focusing our efforts on two main research based initiatives to address these challenges: balanced assessments & PLCs. The SUSD Balanced Assessments System focuses on data driven decision making that utilizes classroom, district and state level assessments by all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers and administrators). Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) require teachers to work collaboratively to identify student learning goals; implement standards based assessments and respond to these data with modifications to their instruction, including intervention/enrichment.

### **Challenges:**

1. Our standards are too broad and unclear to classroom teachers, example 1/3 of the reading standards address reading process while the other 2/3 address reading in the content areas (functional, expository, informational text).
2. Teachers are in conflict between teaching “reading” and teaching content standards. Unfortunately, we can’t just focus on reading without instruction and alignment to the content standards – fluency without comprehension doesn’t support learning.
3. The range of developmental expectations seems to be in conflict with standards, K-1 teachers often don’t agree with the developmental appropriateness of standards and aligned assessments.
4. There is an overall lack of assessment literacy – knowing how to test and using the data effectively. Teachers don’t receive sufficient instruction during their preparation programs in this area.
5. Teachers who are isolated in their practice fail to effectively support learning for all students- teachers can’t effectively provide the instruction, intervention and enrichment to meet the needs of all of their students alone; this is a collaborative effort among a team of teachers working to achieve a common goal: student achievement.
6. “Local control” mentality slows down innovation and culture change when people within the organization don’t see compelling reasons to change their practice or implement change that they see as a “one size fits all approach”.
7. Discrepancy in state funding for full day kindergarten can result in very different student outcomes. How will the variability in program offerings and instructional time be factored into the overall evaluation of students’ mastery of standards and ultimately whether they can demonstrate them on AIMS in grade 3?

**SUSD's response:**

1. Professional development, coaching and modeling data discussions with teachers and administrators.
2. Implementing a balanced assessment system that includes the use of Galileo in grades K-3 with diagnostic, benchmark and progress monitoring (formative) assessments.
3. Aligning data from assessments to instructional materials and resources for K-3.
4. Articulating grade level expectations along with state and federal initiatives

**Help we could use:**

1. Standards and assessment documents that clearly articulate expectations and student outcomes along with real samples of assessment items – specifics regarding the depth of knowledge needed at each grade level.
2. Support in the development of assessment literacy – University/teacher colleges need to focus on this during prep courses. Legislative action to create a structure for these course requirements may be needed.
3. The ADE needs to align their assessments pre-k-12 grade. Currently there is a single vendor (beginning in 2011-12) for pre-K (these data must be reported to the ADE), there are no assessments or reporting requirements for kindergarten – 1, and then we begin State testing again in grade 2-HS. The ADE needs to implement model assessments that can be utilized in a consistent fashion statewide, similar to other grade levels.