
EPPING SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Epping School Parents:

This school year the Epping School District was encouraged, based on its leadership in competency education, to participate in a New Hampshire Department of Education pilot program for the development of a new student assessment and accountability system. The Performance Assessment for Competency Education (PACE) Program was developed by the New Hampshire Department of Education in partnership with the Epping, Rochester, Sanborn Regional, and Souhegan School Districts. All year teachers and administrators throughout these districts have been working on the development of high quality performance assessments to measure student learning.

Recently, the New Hampshire Department of Education made the following announcement. *A first-in-the nation accountability strategy, the PACE pilot will allow districts to reduce the level of standardized testing in favor of more locally managed assessments that will be more integrated into a student's day-to-day work. The four PACE-implementing districts have worked closely with the New Hampshire Department of Education over the past five years to develop this strategy, and as a result the United States Department of Education has agreed to allow them to be the **only districts in the country to pilot a new locally managed assessment process for accountability purposes.***

Our decision to participate in PACE was based on the belief that high quality performance assessments are the best way to assess student learning for the following reasons.

1. High quality performance assessments build and measure student mastery of content and skills at upper levels of cognitive rigor using real world problems and applications.
2. Epping and other NH teachers develop the high quality performance assessments.
3. Assessments integrate naturally with the teacher's regular unit of instruction, are given throughout the school year in the teacher's classroom, produce timely results to inform the learning process, and count toward the student's grade.
4. High quality performance assessments assess content knowledge, but also skills such as technology, project management, and collaboration which are important for college, career, and life readiness.

It is important to note that the PACE model uses high quality performance assessments as the primary assessment method for student learning and school success. It still continues to use standardized testing, but limited to just one grade level per school.

What does this mean for your child? Some students are already participating in English language arts, mathematics, and science PACE assessments as part of the natural classroom instruction and assessment process. Students will see no change from the normal school and classroom routine. This April and May the state standardized test Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) will be replacing the NECAP state assessment. This will be a separate assessment event, but unlike previous years it will be limited to only one grade level per school. Grade 3 students will be taking the English language arts state test and grade 4 students the mathematics state test. Grade 8 and 11 students will be taking both the English language arts and mathematics state test.

This is a new day for public education with the acknowledgement that we don't need more testing; we need the right testing. Epping School District is proud to be playing a major role in this important educational change. Please also find attached a copy of a recent publication from the New Hampshire Department of Education. Additional information may also be referenced on the district website at <http://www.sau14.org> under PACE & Accountability.

Sincerely,

Barbara D. Munsey

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The mission of the Epping School District is to focus on the potential of every student and engage them to be passionate, confident learners who demonstrate competence and have strength of character to reach their highest aspirations and thoughtfully contribute to a diverse and changing world.
