The Many Faces of Assessment: Is it about achievement, checking for understanding, monitoring growth, justifying grades, or all of the above?

Focus Area
- District Priorities
- Formative Feedback
- Assessment Literacy
- Collaboration

Presenters: Shirley Gilfether
District(s): Easthampton Public Schools

Best Practice Description:
We spent time discussing the many types of assessment and the purposes of each. Since DDMs require assessments that measure growth, we focused on how growth is determined and the need for baseline data. We began the process of designing DDMs by first identifying core learning objectives, then designing baseline assessments for those objectives and finally constructing a summative measure tied to the same objectives. Growth would be measured by comparing baseline to summative.

Strategies:
We tried to walk teachers through the process beginning with core objectives; building an assessment to establish a baseline regarding those objectives; building an assessment to check future performance on the same set of objectives; identifying ways to score the assessments; deciding how to use the scores to measure growth from baseline to summative; and establishing a growth table identifying low, moderate and high growth for the course population. When possible teachers worked in teams for support. Also, the district held “open hours” for DDM support.

Who is involved?
The Director of Curriculum lead district workshops and held open hours for teachers to clarify the components of DDMs and assist in their development. Teachers worked in department teams, and for small or single subject areas across grade level if possible to build their DDMs. Administrators also worked with staff in their area providing more coaching support.

How is the work structured?
Powerpoint presentations were offered at faculty and PD events. All ppts were posted with other key documents, like DESE Briefs, on the district website. A series of questions guided teachers as they described their DDMs and prepared them for submission. Copies of the DDMs along with any scoring rubrics were submitted to the principal for review.

Next steps?
Teachers will be trying out their DDMs in the 2014-15 school year and will likely make adjustments as they try the assessments and utilize their growth scales. In some areas, like mathematics, teachers will explore more performance-based activities as possible DDMs, an area that they are not really familiar with, but are interested in exploring. Rubric development will also be part of this training in the future.

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Four Key Messages about Student Impact Ratings
Use Multiple Measures
Focus on Students
Build Capacity
Engage Families
- TIMs and DDMs are part of the comprehensive evaluation system
- The focus of improving student learning includes assessing and understanding student learning
- Developing TIMs that clearly define expectations and assess student learning
- Educators have a role in developing and evaluating assessments