Goals: Systems and structures to support educator collaboration

- Foxborough Regional Charter School has developed a culture for benchmarking where every teacher analyzes student work to answer the question: *How am I helping a student to grow?*

**Description**

- Grade level and department teachers use combination of home grown and commercial benchmarking assessments. Assessment needs are identified through leadership strategic planning process and developed or vetted with curriculum teams of teachers and administrators.
- Benchmark assessments focus on Common Core Skills and Essential Question content. They are reviewed for efficacy by Instructional Leaders prior to each benchmarking administration.
- Teachers and students developed a spreadsheet to look at student progress. The pre-programmed tool functions as a data log and drives data-based conversations about student progress.
- Students take a pre-assessment. Goals are set and then progress is calculated. Growth is focused on closing the gap between where a student starts and grade level mastery. Teachers and administrators collaborated to develop the growth scale.
- For Special Education students the IEP is broken down into benchmarks and the focus for both regular and Special Education staff is helping the student meet those benchmarks.

**Challenges**

- Our first challenge was SGP. The state releases SGP in the summer but it must be used annually to determine teacher impact on student learning. The challenge is that we only have one data point for SGP and including it in any calculation means we are comparing apples to oranges (local assessment to SGP).
- Our other major challenge is with the pretest itself. The intent of the pretest is to identify prior knowledge and set a skills baseline. However, because it is administered in the first week of school and is focused on skills and content that students will learn that year, some students feel disappointed that they don’t “do well” on their first assessment. While there is no grade for the pretest, the feeling is very real and we’re still working on how best to balance that.

**Successes**

- The process has really driven some great data driven discussion and focused our entire staff to have a more critical eye on how we assess. The focus on growth versus absolute scores has been very well received by teaching staff and it’s helped identify at-risk students earlier than in past years and served as a concrete point to support staff coaching.

**Next steps**

- This is still a very new initiative and we plan to evaluate the entire model this summer to identify strengths and weaknesses and make adjustments. We won’t know what those adjustments will need to be yet until we have our end of year benchmarks completed in June.