

## Memorandum

**To: Henderson County Board of Education**

**From: Jo Swanson, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning**

**Date: November 17, 2011**

**Re: There is a need to create an intentional focus of school wide assessment on ACT-like tests at Henderson County High School (HCHS) in order to better prepare students for taking college entrance tests or End of Course tests.**

**Rationale:** At the current time and as a result of SB 1 assessment changes, Kentucky has redesigned the focus of assessment in Kentucky high schools from the former Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) to the Kentucky Performance Rating for Education Progress (K-PREP). In high schools the K-PREP consists of End of Course Tests and PLAN tests, both constructed by ACT, and the K-PREP on demand writing test, constructed by Pearson. In addition, when students do not meet ACT benchmarks, they may retake the ACT or take the Compass test, which is another ACT-like test. Consequently, all Kentucky high school testing is modeled after ACT-like tests. Therefore, it is essential that Henderson County High School students are given frequent and intentional practice with taking ACT-like tests.

In Henderson County, we have used the norm referenced test, Measures of Academic Progress, to assess students in reading and math. MAP is administered three times per year to universally screen and benchmark students in those two areas. However, MAP tests have not been a good predictor of success on ACT-like tests. (See additional chart for comparisons.) This is likely due to the fact that ACT tests measure reasoning, analysis, problem solving with questions that have strong research based evidence of predicting college success. While MAP tests measure skills, understanding, and concepts. NWEA,

the parent company of the MAP test, does not have research to claim that MAP is correlated to or predictive of ACT-like test success. An additional variable is that MAP testing does not require timed testing, nor lengthy passage reading while ACT-like testing does. It is critical that students experience timed testing with lengthy passages of complex text to be successful on high stakes tests such as the End of Course and other ACT tests.

**Solution:** ACT tests are available for purchase for practice. However, with the time needed to administer and the costs of purchasing MAP tests, it would be prohibitive to continue MAP testing and add ACT practice testing together due to cost and time for administration of both. It would be more advantageous to students to create a viable, aggressive focus on assessment measures with all assessment being aligned to ACT. Students currently spend an average of five (5) class periods per MAP administration which is three (3) times annually or fifteen (15) class periods per year. ACT testing, usually requires, two (2) forty-five minute sessions per administration or six (6) class periods per year if given the same number of times as we currently give MAP. To add ACT testing to the current MAP testing would be ill advised since this would eliminate substantial time from instruction.

In addition to any purchased ACT administrations, this proposal includes adding district made ACT, PLAN and EXPLORE-like tests at regular intervals to progress monitor students in their progression of achievement.

Therefore, the request is being made to discontinue MAP testing at grades nine and ten to be replaced by ACT-like testing at the same grades in the same content with the same frequency as MAP.