



Endorsements and Recommendations of **TESTS FOR HIGHER STANDARDS**

District-Level Recommendations

Individual Recommendations

Newspaper Articles

Dr. S. Stuart Flanagan, Professor Emeritus
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A. DISTRICT LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

November 27, 2002

To Whom It May Concern:

Dr. Stuart Flanagan's Tests for Higher Standards (TfHS) was one of the primary tools used by Lee-Jackson Elementary School Principal, Donna Power during the 2001-2002 school year to gather data. The school had been accredited provisionally for that year based on 2001 test results.

During the 2001-2002 school year students were assessed at the beginning of the school and at the end of each quarter—using Tests for Higher Standards. Test results were analyzed by the principal and teachers, and adjustments were made to instruction.

Third grade SOL English scores increased from a pass rate of 58% to 80% and Lee-Jackson Elementary School has been awarded Full Accreditation Status by the Virginia Department of Education.

In my role as a member of the **Board of Directors for the National Beta Club**, I have been in contact with several superintendents in Virginia and South Carolina, who have used Dr. Flanagan's testing materials. They have all been very happy with the benefits and results of their students' scores.

I highly recommend all of Dr. Flanagan's materials due the test results in Mathews County Public Schools and from the comments I receive from my peers.

Sincerely,

Harry M. Ward
Division Superintendent

Monday, March 31, 2003

Our elementary school staff began using Dr. Stuart Flanagan's *Tests for Higher Standards (TfHS)* in October, 2002. We adopted this program as a result of our search for an instrument to provide grade level assessments that were aligned to the South Carolina State Standards. Dr. Flanagan's program provided us with uniform assessments across all grade levels.

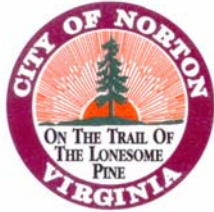
The multi-formatted assessments are provided for all critical subject areas – Mathematics, English and Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. Teachers can create individualized assessments that meet classroom needs using either multiple choice or open-ended items. The items are easy to score. Individual and classroom matrices are provided for accountability and mastery management.

This data driven instrument provides our staff with clear direction for yearlong standards mastery planning. The assessment results provide information for individual students as well as whole classroom instructional needs. The level of the assessments provides a tool for achieving above basic mastery as well as for targeting at risk students.

Dr. Flanagan's program is highly recommended by our entire school as a tool for efficient planning and to assess standards instruction and mastery. We recommend this program for uniformly managing school wide standards instruction and mastery. We can't wait to see our 2003 test results!

Sincerely,

Martin Schmid,
Principal, Briggs Elementary School
Florence School District 1



NORTON CITY SCHOOLS

P. O. Box 498
NORTON, VIRGINIA 24273-0498

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

To Whom It May Concern:

March 27, 2003

Norton City Schools is a small school system located in far southwest Virginia. J. I. Burton High School, grades 8 - 12, and Norton Elementary School, grades K - 7, make up the system. Four years ago, Norton City Schools started using Dr. Stuart Flanagan's *Tests for Higher Standards* at both schools.

The State's accountability testing had just been implemented and student performance was in need of improvement. Over the past several years, many changes have been made to help achieve this improvement. The curriculum has been modified to include state standards, proven instructional programs have been added, schedules have been adjusted to protect instructional time, and training has been provided to teachers. Throughout this period, *Tests for Higher Standards* has provided teachers a valid, reliable and timely method for assessing student performance. Without a doubt, this material has played an important part in improving student performance.

The individual test items provided are of high quality and similar enough to the State's test questions to give the student ample practice in the mechanics of answering such questions. The quantity of questions provided insure that a teacher can thoroughly test a student's knowledge as instruction proceeds during the school year. As Dr. Flanagan would advise, these set of assessments provide the basis of a diagnostic/remediation approach to standards based instruction.

Over the past several years, both schools have slowly and methodically made improvement on the State's tests. For the 2002 - 2003 school year, both J. I. Burton and Norton Elementary School are *Fully Accredited*. No doubt exists in my mind that using *Tests for Higher Standards* helped us achieve this noteworthy accomplishment.

I highly recommend these materials. Feel free to call me if you need more information.

Sincerely

John C. Sessoms
Division Superintendent

4/1/2003

To Whom it May Concern:

Woodruff High School in Spartanburg (SC) School District Four has used *Tests for Higher Standards (TfHS)* for the past two years. Our students have traditionally performed extremely well on the South Carolina Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) Exit Exam in reading, writing, and mathematics. First administration percentage passing rates are typically in the high 80's for all three sections, with 99-100% of students passing all three sections by the twelfth grade. Much of this success is the result of a system of continuous assessment and targeted instruction that concentrates on each student's academic needs. The assessments used in this system were aligned to BSAP standards and developed by teachers at Woodruff High School.

South Carolina has recently developed a new Exit Exam that is based on curriculum standards that are considered by most educators to be much more rigorous than BSAP. While the system in place for supporting students to succeed at Woodruff High School continues to be used, the content of the on-going assessments must be changed to reflect the new standards. Based on our examination of test items, *Tests for Higher Standards* appears to closely align with the new Exit Exam. Teachers are utilizing these assessments now in preparation for the initial administration of the new Exit Exam this spring. Our expectation is that TfHS will be effective in both simulating the new exam and targeting areas for supplemental instruction so that our students continue to succeed.

Sincerely,

Dr. W. Rallie Liston, Superintendent
Spartanburg School District Four

SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

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COURTLAND, VIRGINIA 23837
PHONE 757/653-2692
FAX # 757/653-9422

CHARLES E. TURNER, Division Superintendent
DR. DAVID J. HOLLERAN Assistant Superintendent

RUSSELL C. SCHOOLS, Chairman
ROBERTA T. NARANJO, Vice-Chairman

April 2, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

Southampton County Schools consists of four elementary, one middle, and one high school. We have been using Dr. Stuart Flanagan's *Tests for Higher Standards* going on three years. It is one of our primary assessment tools.

The state's accountability testing had just been implemented and the performance of our students was in need of improvement when we decided to modify our curriculum to include state standards, instructional program changes, adjustment to instructional time and provide teacher training. *Tests for Higher Standards* was first implemented following this process. Dr. Flanagan's program was the first on the market to address instructional issues centered around State Standards.

I strongly believe that *Tests for Higher Standards* has played a vital role in the improvement of our student's performance. Our tests scores have shown continuous, positive improvement since that time. I know a number of schools systems throughout the state that successfully used Dr. Flanagan's materials.

I highly recommend all of Dr. Stuart Flanagan's materials because I have seen first hand the benefits and improvements that can be achieved through his program.

Sincerely,



Dr. M. Timothy Kelly
Director of Instruction

MTK/11

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Galax City Public Schools
223 Long Street
Galax, Virginia 24333

To Whom It May Concern:

Galax City Public Schools started using Tests for Higher Standards in Virginia as a remediation and test preparation tool over three years ago. We have been very pleased with this product. All of our schools are either fully accredited or meeting state standards.

Of the Grade Level Tests, the Student Achievement Booklets, and the Simulation Tests, we use the Student Achievement Booklets and the Simulation Tests the most. The Student Achievement Booklets evaluate student achievement by SOL objective and give instantaneous feedback on the teaching-learning process. The Simulation Tests are given close to the end of the year as a dress rehearsal for SOL testing.

Galax City Public Schools see Tests for Higher Standards in Virginia as a valuable tool for SOL remediation and for SOL test preparation. I would recommend this product to other school divisions.

Sincerely,

Douglas E. Arnold, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent

November 12, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

Lancaster High School began utilizing *Tests for Higher Standards* by Stuart Flanagan in the fall of 2001. We were searching for methods to help our students increase their passing rates and the Exit Exam and help them succeed. We incorporated components of these tests into practice tests for all of our students taking the South Carolina Exit Exam in the spring of 2002. The school posted its highest passing rate ever for tenth grade students taking the Exit for the first time. Part of this success led to our school receiving a South Carolina Palmetto Gold Award for the 2002-2003 school year.

We believe Dr. Flanagan's instruments are researched based and data driven and plan to continue using them for practice and preparation for the new HSAP test our students will be required to complete. Even beyond the testing instruments provided, Dr. Flanagan is a tremendous resource. I have found him to be especially accessible and always willing to assist us in any way possible. He demonstrates a sincere interest in students and learning, more so than the many others providing educational materials.

Please feel free to contact us if I can answer any questions. I hope you and your staff have an enjoyable and successful school year.

Respectfully yours,

Joseph C. Keenan, Ed.D.
Principal

April 29, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

Richmond City Schools has used *Tests for Higher Standards'* Virginia Standards of Learning assessment materials in our elementary, middle, and high schools since the 1999-2000 school year.

In my dealings with *Tests for Higher Standards* I have found Stuart Flanagan and David Mott to be experienced educators who offer a service to school divisions in a very professional manner. Their materials have been a work in progress. They annually update, revise, and restructure their materials in an attempt to maintain consistency with the state Standards of Learning curriculum and to provide the most valid and reliable product possible.

Several Richmond schools have recorded significant improvements on state Standards of Learning assessments while employing the use of *Tests for Higher Standards* materials and services. We are expecting continued improvements in the future.

The test items provided by the company are similar enough in quality to questions used on the State's curriculum tests and of sufficient quantity to give students valid practice in responding to various item formats and provide teachers with feedback on students' skill mastery.

I recommend these materials to any educational establishment interested in strong assessment materials related to the Virginia Standards of Learning.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Williams, Jr.
Manager, Testing & Data Systems

CARROLL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

605-9 Pine Street
HILLSVILLE, VIRGINIA 24343

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(276) 236-8145



April 4, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

Carroll County Public Schools is a school system located in southwest Virginia. Four years ago, our division started using Dr. Stuart Flanagan's *Tests for Higher Standards* at all of our ten schools K-12.

The State's accountability testing had just been implemented and student performance was in need of improvement. Over the past several years, many changes have been made to help achieve this improvement. The curriculum has been modified to include state standards, proven instructional programs have been added, schedules have been adjusted to protect instructional time, and training has been provided to teachers. Throughout this period, *Tests for Higher Standards* has all provided teachers a another resource to use to improve student achievement.

The individual test items provided are of high quality and similar enough to the State's test questions to give the student ample practice in the mechanics of answering such questions. The quantity of questions provided insure that a teacher can test a student's knowledge as instruction proceeds during the school year. As Dr. Flanagan would advise, these set of assessments provide the basis of a diagnostic/remediation approach to standards based instruction.

Over the past several years, all schools have made improvement on the State's tests. For the 2002 - 2003 school year, Carroll County High School is fully accredited.

I recommend these materials. Feel free to call me if you need more information.

Sincerely,

Patricia S. Golding, Ed. D.
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Carroll County Public Schools

April 1, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

During the summer of 1999, a committee of teachers, principals, and Central Administration personnel recommended that Roanoke City Public Schools purchase *Tests for Higher Standards* to provide a division-wide student assessment tool for Standards of Learning performance. While our teachers experienced some early growing pains in learning the best ways to utilize the materials, I think that we have developed a legitimate and appropriate approach that has played a significant role in our march toward full accreditation for all of our schools.

As the SOLs have been revised and the stakes have become even higher for student performance, our teachers, under the direction and with the support of the Department of Instruction and particularly the instructional coordinators for the core areas, have incorporated the "Grade Level" tests as an integral component of curriculum maps (or pacing guides). For example, at the end of second nine weeks in US History I, students in these classes all take the test items #29-45 and record their answers on an "Individual Student Response" sheet. During the fourth nine weeks, they answer #62-75. This method helps teachers in classes across the division keep pace with the curriculum so that all SOL are covered in a timely matter and alerts them to areas that need remediation.

In my opinion, there is not a "one size fits all" method of using the *TfHS*, but they are an important piece in solving the accountability/assessment puzzle. I have maintained that "Flanagan" is not the definitive test to enable students to be successful on the real thing, but it is certainly a test that has proven to be another valuable resource in the drive for student success.

Sincerely,

W. Richard Clemmer, Jr.
Director of Secondary Programs
Roanoke City Public Schools



August 4, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to highly recommend the use of Dr. Flanagan's *Tests for Higher Standards* to take some guesswork out of instruction.

My colleagues and I use these tests on a regular basis in a variety of ways. First, we assess students at the beginning of instructional units to determine what students *already* know and can do. This way, we do not waste students' time teaching what they already have mastered. Second, we are able to determine what misconceptions students have and design instruction to alleviate those misconceptions. From the pre-assessment results, we are able to determine *what* needs to be taught, but most importantly, *who* needs extra time and help on what content and skills. Third, through their analysis of the detailed results of post-test results, teachers are able to regroup students and differentiate instruction based on students' particular needs.

Several of our schools have made 25 to 50 point gains in passing rates and advanced passing rates. One of the most remarkable stories comes from Scottsville Elementary School. Their Grade 3 math passing rate in 1998, the first year of Standards of Learning testing, was 35.7 percent. In 2002, after using the *Tests for Higher Standards* for three years and acting on their detailed analyses, their passing rate was 84.6. More remarkably, their advanced passing rate in 2002 was 62.9 percent! In 2003, after using the Tests for Higher Standards all year for the first time, an all-time high of 71 percent of Meriwether Lewis Elementary students scored at the advanced level. Walton Middle School has improved their mathematics passing rate from 48.9 to 80.0 percent, as a result of using Tests for Higher Standards as a primary tool to inform instruction and guide teacher dialogue about curriculum, instruction, and student success.

I highly recommend these materials and encourage you to contact me if you would like more detail about our use of these quality assessments.

Sincerely,

Kevin R. Hughes
Executive Director
Division and School Improvement

GILES COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

151 School Road
Pearisburg, Virginia 24134

Dr. Robert C. McCracken
(540) 921-1421 X 12

Division Superintendent
E-mail: rmccrack@gilesk12.org

April 10, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

Giles County Schools is located in southwest Virginia and is comprised of two high schools and three elementary/middle schools with a total enrollment of approximately 2530 students. Four years ago, our school system purchased *Tests for Higher Standards* for use within all our schools.

Since that time, *Tests for Higher Standards* have provided teachers an extra tool to assess and remediate student performance. Without a doubt, these materials have played an important part of our teachers' work in improving student performance.

The material is very similar to the State's test questions and gives students an opportunity to practice the mechanics of test taking as well as reinforcement of lessons taught. By practicing with *Tests For Higher Standards* throughout the year, students are constantly refreshing their memory of material presented earlier in the year. Teachers can readily determine which standards need more emphasis and thus adjust their lessons to target specific areas of instruction.

Over the past several years, all schools within Giles County have improved dramatically on the State's Standards of Learning tests. For the 2002 - 2003 school year, all three elementary/middle schools are *Fully Accredited* and both high schools are *Provisionally Accredited* and made great accomplishments. No doubt exists in my mind that using *Tests for Higher Standards* has been a vital part of our teachers' work in achieving these goals.

I would highly recommend these materials. Feel free to call me if you need more information.

Sincerely,



Robert C. McCracken
Division Superintendent

RCM/py
April 15, 2003

TO Whom It May Concern:

As Assistant Superintendent for Instruction for the King and Queen County School Division, I have known and worked with Dr. Stuart Flanagan for over fifteen (15) years. He was a consultant for the school division when he was Professor of Mathematics at The College of William and Mary. He still continues to provide valuable assistance to King and Queen.

King and Queen County is very rural. Sixty-five percent (65) of our students receive free or reduced lunches. King and Queen has three schools, two elementary and one high school. Three years ago, only one elementary school was provisionally accredited by the Virginia Department of Education, the other elementary school and high school was accredited with warning.

During the 2001-2002 school year, teachers used Dr. Flanagan's Tests for Higher Standards. Students were pre-tested in the fall, provided instructional assistance, including Dr. Flanagan's Achievement Booklets and posted prior to administering the Spring Standards of Learning Tests. (SOL).

Both elementary schools are fully accredited and the high school is provisionally accredited, meeting state standards.

I highly recommend Dr. Flanagan's testing and instructional assessment materials.

Sincerely,

Alpheus Arrington, Jr. Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction



Dr. Sharon Dodson
Division Superintendent

Henry County Public Schools

3300 Kings Mountain Road
P.O. Box 8958
Collinsville, VA 24078-8958
(276) 634-4700
Fax (276) 638-2925

April, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

The Tests for Higher Standards (TfHS) that were developed by Dr. Stuart Flanagan are the primary assessments utilized by Henry County Public Schools.

Since Henry County began using these materials during the 2000-2001 school year, sixteen (16) of out twenty (20) schools have been awarded "Full Accreditation" status by the Virginia Department of Education. Hopefully, with the help of the Tests for Higher Standards, the remaining four (4) schools will become fully accredited by the end of the 2002-2003 school year.

Due to the success rate that Henry County has experienced, and from the positive comments that I have received from teachers, I highly recommend the Tests for Higher Standards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "DeWitt House".

DeWitt House
Assistant Superintendent- Instruction

DH/djs

Office of Superintendent
23296 Courthouse Avenue
PO Box 330
Accomac, Virginia 23301



Achieving Today ... Succeeding Tomorrow

Donna Carr
Assistant Superintendent
for Instruction

757.787.5754
757.824.5601
fax 757.787.2951

April 11, 2003

Dr. Stuart Flanagan
P.O. Box 276
North, VA 23128

Dear Dr. Flanagan:

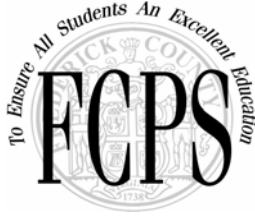
As it is time to begin looking at our renewal of Tests for Higher Standards, I wanted to take a minute to let you know that Accomack County Public Schools continues to benefit from having access to this test bank. In any standards based system, it is important to have an accurate gauge of student performance throughout the year. We use the information to plan both in-school and after-school remediation and enrichment. Access to these resources have helped us experience considerable gains in our test scores.

Please send us information on the costs of the simulation and student achievement booklets, so that we can make sure we have everything ready for our teachers at the beginning of the school year. Our pre and post tests will not need to be renewed until the 2005 school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Carr".

Donna Carr
Assistant Superintendent



Director of
Elementary Instruction

Frederick County Public Schools

Visit us at www.frederick.k12.va.us

e-mail:
morrisoe@frederick.k12.va.us

April 22, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

We have been using the Dr. Stuart Flanagan's *Tests for Higher Standards* for mathematics and social studies in our elementary schools for several years. We have used the pre/post tests, the achievement booklets, and the simulation tests for grades three and five.

Our schools have used the tests in several ways. The pre/post test was available for schools and/or teachers to administer as they felt it was needed. For some teachers, this meant it was given at the beginning of the year as a pre-assessment and again at the end of the year for a post-assessment. Others used it simply as a post-assessment. However, they supplemented the test with the achievement booklets. The booklets were probably the items they used the most and found especially beneficial. Since these give a short test by objective, they were able to assess these objectives as they were taught giving them immediate feedback on how well students had learned the objective and if they needed to reteach. They were also used as a pre-assessment to determine whether an objective needed instruction or if students had already mastered it.

The simulation tests were used initially as division-wide tests given at a specified time about six weeks before the actual Standards of Learning tests in May. This gave teachers a six-week window to address areas that might cause students difficulty on the SOL test. Last year, we changed this and made the test available to schools to use as they felt it met their particular needs. Many of them gave the test (or portions of the test such as a strand) multiple times to ensure that students were retaining the skills.

We have found the Flanagan tests, particularly in mathematics, to be challenging and in alignment with the Virginia standards. Giving of these tests provides diagnostic information to our teachers who can determine remediation needs and mastery of objectives. These tests serve as one of the means that we have used to determine instructional needs which, combined with good diagnostic teaching, has helped our students be successful on the Virginia Standards of Learning.

Esther Morrison
Director of Elementary Instruction
Frederick County Schools
Winchester, Virginia

B. UNSOLICITED REMARKS FROM CLIENTS

Dear Dr. Flanagan:

Having taught mathematics in South Carolina for 28 years and having studied the South Carolina Mathematics Standards carefully, I am very excited about the Testing for Higher Standards program. I believe that both the Exit Test program and the Algebra I program will prepare students for those respective tests, and I have not seen any other materials that fill that void even though I have spent a good deal of time looking. I applaud you for your excellence and foresight in providing these minitests and practice exams. I am certain that students who use them will reap a large benefit.

Yours very truly,
A South Carolina Teacher

Dear Dr. Flanagan,

As an English teacher in South Carolina, I have been studying your Tests for Higher Standards for several months. Because the format of your tests matches the blueprint for the new exit exam that will be administered in the spring of 2004, I believe students and teachers can benefit from the use of Tests for Higher Standards as they prepare for the new exit exam.

In reading your exams for grades eight through ten, I have noticed that the questions are coded to the new South Carolina standards in English, to the point of having the standard written out beside the question. I think this will enable a teacher to give the mini-test, assess her students' deficiencies, and retest areas in which the students require reinforcement. In doing this, a teacher is preparing her students for the format and for the types of information needed in order to pass the exit exam next year.

I am writing to say that I believe Tests for Higher Standards is a tool many schools should be using as we face the more rigorous PACT next spring. A teacher who incorporates your program into her classroom instruction will be giving her students an advantage over students who do not get exposure to the program. Because the standards are written beside each question, a teacher could look over your grade level test or the mini-test and use questions she needs to assist in her instruction for a particular lesson. I see many uses for Tests for Higher Standards.

Because I have a daughter who is a freshman in high school, I can only hope that her district decides to use your program. Much depends on the scores students make next year on that test - school report card grades, remediation classes, South Carolina's national rating in educational improvement, and more.

Good luck with your program and your desire to share it with South Carolina. I believe every school that purchases your materials will benefit from them.

Sincerely,
A South Carolina Teacher

Thanks Dr. Flanagan we're all straight. I am working with the principals on what they are wanting to order. By the way, I attended the SOL Expos sponsored by VASS (*VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS*). They featured schools which had done well on the SOL and were from demographically mixed areas. All of them mentioned the use of your materials!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Thanks for your efforts in providing this help in an era of HIGH accountability.

Hi Dr. Flanagan,

I have been on the go since the first of June and have not come up for air. According to our preliminary results, we scored above 90% in every area! When I arrived here at [...], the 5th grade math scores were 56% and history 66%. This year's preliminary scores are 95.6% in 5th grade math and 97% in history. Our other scores are as follows:

	3rd grade	5th grade
Computers	97.1%	-----
English	93.5%	93.3%
History	90.6%	97.0%
Math	91.1%	95.6%
Science	90.0%	94.7%

Thanks so much for you help.

Dr. Flanagan:

Just a note to say thanks again.

[...] Elem/Middle came from a low performance on SOL a year ago to a fully accredited school this year.

Hurray for Flanagan and Mott

Thanks Again

Dr. Flanagan,

Just wanted you to know that at the VASCD Conference last Wednesday on Test Taking Test Making conducted by Deborah Dyer Wahlstrom, she mentioned the Flanagan materials several times. Thought you would like to know.

Dr. Flanagan,

We would love to hear a quote for [.....] High School. Our English and Social Studies were up to 96% and 91% respectively using the product.

Stuart - Let me know what else I can do...you now have another success story up here in [.....] who used your materials at [.....] in a Chapter I school and passed the SOLs last year. Take care, eat some crabs, and I'll see you at the conference if not before.

Dear Dr. Flanagan,

We are very excited about using your TfHS materials for this school year. It played an integral part in our students high achievements for the 2000-2001 school year. We are most proud of our third grade math scores that soared to become the highest in the city (91.8 %).

During this period of limited financial resources we recognize that this small payment in no way covers the cost of your materials. We hope that you will accept it as a way of showing our appreciation for all that you are doing to enrich the education of our future citizens.

Good afternoon, Dr. Flanagan,

I write to you after a very successful school year. I am principal at [.....] Elementary in Alexandria. The accountability rating for the 2001-02 school year was "needs improvement".

I had wanted to use some sort of aligned interval testing and came across yours. I created quarterly tests based on our pacing guides, matrices that matched, and met with teachers at the end of each quarter to analyze and plan. Mid year, I even met with students in 3rd and 5th grades. I gave the simulation test and here I wait.

During end of the year conferences with staff, they reliably reported that one thing that helped them teach smarter was the use of TfHS! The preliminary data look great! According to my hand calculations our improvement is dramatic.

I attached it for you in a MSWord document. I thank you for your assistance and your product. I have already asked [.....] here if he'll be willing to support this again for the upcoming year. Our evaluation department will do a study looking at the simulation test and the actual SOL scores.

Rating Calculation	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
English	57%	63%	83%
Mathematics	52%	57%	72%
Science	51%	58%	73%
History	38%	49%	70%

Dr. Flanagan:

I will not be able to attend, however we are very pleased with our scores. Confidentially we believe we will have between 14 and 17 of our 20 schools fully accredited after the retakes. Most people in our division believe that your material is greatly responsible.

Dear Dr. Flanagan,

I am a teacher in Bedford County and Mr. Don Toms keeps telling me that I must get in touch with you!! The reason being to tell you how much my students and I appreciate your tests. During the normal school year I teach fourth grade and am a self-contained class. I used your tests for all areas and am now using them in my summer school classes of English 9,10 and 12. I am sure that Mr. Toms relayed to you his presence at my classroom door at the end of the social studies SOL test and I told him that the moment the tests were out of the room and my children could speak, their first words were, "Thanks, Ms. Candler for giving us those Flanagan tests because they REALLY helped."

From the mouths of babes, or intelligent students, in my opinion. These children said it all. The tests prepared them for the SOL test, and my children's attitudes were not of fear and dread going into the tests, but ones of "Let's do this and get on with it." My students were confident and eager to show off their knowledge due to the fact that your test was a tool in my class that was used on a regular basis. The students utilized it as a means to an end, which for them was that our school is now accredited. Don't get me wrong, all of my students did not pass, BUT they all learned massive amounts of material this year.

Mr. Toms knows that I am an advocate of your tests and that my classroom last year was an exceptional grouping of students who used your tests, and his mapping, to make it an incredible year of learning!!! I will be addressing the county fourth grade teachers at a meeting Mr. Toms has planned to wisely stress the importance of your tests in the classroom. Several of us have been asked to speak to the others and to emphasize the use of your test as a teaching and measuring tool, along with his curriculum mapping, as a key to success in the SOL tests.

So, now I have finally delivered my message to you! Thank you for making your test available and for it being the key to success on SOL test scores and, for once, providing students with a test that actually builds their self-confidence and self-esteem. With the taking of your tests they see that they are obtaining knowledge and mastering the skills required to pass the SOL tests. Children do not feel threatened or fearful of what they have mastered, and if they pass your test, they know they can pass the SOL tests.

Thank you!!

Sincerely, and with appreciation,

[.....]

Fourth grade teacher during the regular session at Goodview Elementary, and freshman, sophomore and senior English during the summer session.

Basically, a teacher of Bedford County students and giver of your tests!

Dr. Flanagan:

Thanks for the thoughts. Just want to share a very exciting project at [.....]. We are simulating an SOL testing week at [.....] using your test. First we had a Pep rally. All 3rd, 4th and 5th graders were given painters hats which were dubbed "Thinking Caps". My art teacher allowed each to design their hats. Teachers and staff were provided hats also. Now to the good news. Math testing has been completed. Social Studies in 4th grade has been completed.

We know what we need to teach...3rd graders aced the test. **85% of the students passed. 5th graders were not as fortunate. This is the great news.** We were able to isolate a strand...Estimation and Measurement...As it turns out there are two reasons for the poor performance. 1. Many of the isolated objectives missed were 4th grade objectives. 2. The teachers have not introduced this objective yet. Teachers begin to realize how important certain strands were. **Grade 4 Social Studies:** Overall we were at 75%.

WE LOVE THE DATA WE ARE GETTING! My teachers did not want more testing but they love this because it aligns with the SOLs and it allows us to have a common language. I have looked for something like this for the past 20 years ...Thank you again.

Dr. Flanagan

I am so sorry I missed you at the Myrtle Beach conference. I was there Monday morning and was preoccupied with an afternoon meeting and did not even go into the exhibits.

Here we go again, begging for your help. That's because your work is the best we know and it aligns so perfectly with our (SC) needs. We need to look at some samples of rigorous, standards-based test items in science and social studies. I know you sent something to [.....] in Social Studies. Do you have SAMPLES that we could look at before we decide? We desperately need to help our high school teachers address standards and match test items to their instruction.

I met this morning with (associate superintendent) and others and we think your work may be helpful. I am going to be out of the office for the rest of the week, but will return next Monday ready to get some things in place.

Thanks so much for being so available.

Dr. Flanagan,

I went through your program for testing the standards. I am very impressed with the program. It is exactly what we have been trying to get going at our school. Thank you for sharing this with us. I am not only a teacher at Briggs; I am also a parent. My daughter is a sixth grader and my son is in second grade. I can't tell you how relieved I am to know that my children will now receive the proper standards mastery instruction and assessment. I look forward to working with you and this program.

(National Board Certified Teacher)

Dr. Flanagan,

The local school systems are **using your materials with great success and are very pleased with the work they you are doing to help children achieve.** I teach at a small college in the department of Education. I would like more information on your materials including cost so that we may consider using these in our teacher preparation program. It is helpful that our teachers are familiar with materials currently used in the school in which they will student teach.

Thank you for your time.

Dr. Schimmoeller
Peggy A. Schimmoeller, Ed.D.

Dr. Flanagan is a dedicated educator who is committed to helping schools become accredited. It speaks well that he would let us "kick the tires." Our experience with **TfHS** has been great. It's teacher friendly and is directly correlated with the Standards. A couple of teachers from other schools have already talked to my 5th grade teachers. If anyone wants to send staff over here for a brief "How to" session, we will be glad to host either groups or individuals. We received this three weeks before we gave the writing tests and had it up and running within a week so that we could give the SIMS tests two weeks prior to testing. Our teachers think it helped their students tremendously.

Thanks,

Dr. Flanagan-

We have 430 students in entire school. grades 3 and 5 (a total of 170) and would like a quote for nest year. We have not received our SOL subject scores at this time but received our writing scores taken in March. We receive a 95% pass rate. **The best in our school history!** We thank you for your support and excellent tests.

Dr. Flanagan,

I am ecstatic. Our third grade students, who test showed were very weak in second grade, did phenomenally on the SOLs. I know that the TfHS materials made the difference, and with the training you will be giving all the area 2 schools this fall, we will do even better next year - which is rapidly becoming this year. (Wait until you hear the results from Kerrydale where Marvin Thompson succeeded me and has further implemented TfHS. Spectacular!)

You can take pride in offering a great product to the schools of Virginia. That should be very satisfying to you. I know I really appreciate it.

Hope you are having a great summer. I am looking forward to seeing you in August.

C. newspaper

Clarendon 1 sees gains on Exit Exam

By KRISTA PIERCE
Item Staff Writer

Clarendon School District 1 has a reason to celebrate. Preliminary reports from the state Department of Education show high school students taking the Exit Exam for the first time made significant gains over their peers who took the test for the first time last year.

In addition, students retaking the test showed marked improvement over students in the same position last year.

"We started out the year with focused instruction," Superintendent Dr. Clarence Willie said. "We instituted a program of benchmark testing to see where students are."

Willie said the testing program pinpointed problem areas, which teachers and students then worked to improve. Although writing scores are not in, Willie reported to the board of trustees during a regular meeting Monday night that significant strides had been achieved in both reading and math scores.

According to Willie, 10th-graders attempting the test for the first time showed an overall score increase of 725 to 751. The percentage of students scoring above standard increased from 57.7 percent to 67.9 percent.

In reading, those same students showed an overall score increase of 723 to 749. The percentage of students scoring above standard this year is 78.2 percent, a 21.9 percent increase over last year's scores.

Students taking the test for the second time also made progress. Willie said the state is reporting 63.6 percent of 11th-grade students attempting the test for the second time scored above standard in math, compared to 42.8 percent in 2002.

Reading scores also increased, from 35.2 percent of students scoring above standard last year to more than 59 percent this year.

Statewide last year the percentage of students scoring at or above standard in math was 80.5 and 82.2 percent in reading.

Willie said he feels good about the gains made by students this year.

"We've got real dedicated folks working in our schools and it shows," Willie said.

Daily Press

SOL TRIAL RUNS GET SCHOOLS READY

TEST SIMULATIONS LET TEACHERS, KIDS KNOW WHERE TO FOCUS

Date: Friday, November 29, 2002
Page: C1 By MATHEW PAUST Daily Press
Dateline: MATHEWS

Your school is haunted by SOL demands. Specters of failure are scaring your staff. Who ya gonna call?

The ghostbusters whom 1,000 schools in Virginia and South Carolina are calling call themselves Tests for Higher Standards. They're a partnership of testing experts -- Stuart Flanagan of Mathews County and David Mott of Richmond.

Their products include exams that simulate the Standards of Learning tests and others designed to help teachers discover in which areas their students may need extra attention.

Mathews school officials credit the Flanagan/Mott program in part for all three of the county's schools winning full accreditation under Virginia's Standards of Learning.

Donna Power, Lee-Jackson Elementary School principal, says an advantage it has over similar programs that are found online is that the Flanagan/Mott approach still uses paper tests.

"That's especially important at the third-grader level. They still use paper and pencils. It familiarizes them with the SOL format," Power says.

She also notes that the tests are accurate in their focus on areas most likely to turn up on the SOLs.

Flanagan and Mott bring decades of experience to their enterprise, one that Flanagan says he works at "in lieu of retirement."

Among his lengthy credentials are 30 years as a professor at the College of William and Mary teaching math and math education-related courses in research, testing and curriculum development.

He got into the business of helping schools improve test scores in the 1980s, when he developed a manual for teachers then facing the SOL predecessor: Literacy Passport.

Flanagan says the success of his manual, which included practice tests and teaching tips, helped sell the program after he teamed up with Mott, a 20-year veteran of the Virginia Department of Education's student testing division.

"We were the first to develop an SOL program," he says. Others have come along since, but they, he says, "are not producing materials as carefully crafted as ours."

Tests for Higher Standards has branched into South Carolina, which designed a school accountability program similar to Virginia's SOL, he says.

These two states, Flanagan notes, have a leg up on others in complying with the new federal No Child Left Behind requirements, which will require annual math and English testing in grades three through eight.

Virginia, which requires SOL tests in grades three, five and eight, is planning to extend the testing to include the fourth, sixth and seventh grades.

Federal education officials will assess a state's performance by looking at the results in grades four and eight.

Flanagan and his partner are gearing up for this advent as well as a move in Virginia to require SOL testing at the high school level to be done online. This is being phased in now.

Flanagan says Tests for Higher Standards will offer a pilot online program in the current school year.

"We're on the verge," he says, of deciding when and what to offer.

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Math Success Dispels Myths

By Maxine Lutz

WILLIAMSBURG-The release of Virginia sixth graders' math scores on the Literacy Passport Test this week confirmed for a College of William and Mary professor what he's believed all along: students considered most at risk for school failure can learn.

Stuart Flanagan believes that with proper instruction even underachieving students can succeed. The help that Flanagan gave middle school teachers dispels "a lot of people's myths," he said.

Higher math scores by WJC's and 30 other school division's sixth graders' are being attributed to Flanagan's monograph, "Ideas for Middle School Mathematics to Assist in Literacy Passport Testirg."

The number of James Blair Middle School sixth graders who passed the math part of the test grew more than 10 percentage points, from 64% to 75.8%, while those passing math at Berkeley Middle School went up six percentage points, from 82% passing to 89% passing.

While Flanagan is delighted with the overall rise in local scores, he's particularly pleased with the progress made by WJC's black students. 64% of Blair's black students passed this year while only 39% passed in 1990. The number of black Berkeley students who passed went up 26 percentage points, from 51% to 77% passing.

He also notes progress made by the counties with the worst scores in the state, Charles City and Accomack, where he also helped out. Charles City's math scores came up 28 percentage points and Accomack's came up 17. Both rural counties had only half of their sixth-graders pass the math test last year.

"The typical excuses people use why students can't achieve is a

myth," Flanagan said. The success of Charles City and Accomack students is significant, he said, because both counties have a large number of poor and minority children - both groups considered at-risk for failure. "This answers the question 'Can minority students succeed?'," Flanagan said.

To help teachers get kids ready for the literacy test, which all Virginia students must pass before they can advance to ninth grade, Flanagan asked himself, "What do I need to meet the demands of the [math] test?"

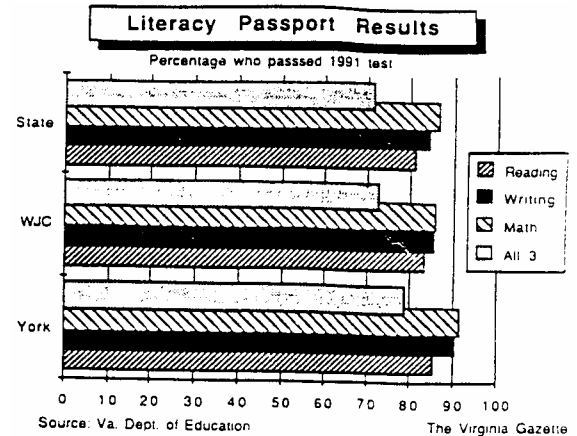
To help teachers, he:

- Developed a way to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses.
- Designed specific strategies to improve teaching, particularly problem-solving and estimation.
- Wrote a sample achievement test covering what kids should have learned.
- Developed a questionnaire to assess students' self image and attitudes.
- And, suggested ways to get families involved.

Flanagan dismisses criticism of teaching kids what they need to know to pass a specific test. "It's illegal to do otherwise. The literacy passport tests the knowledge that the state requires be taught. You *have* to teach these objectives. As a teacher, you test what you teach.

He said he "resented" the literacy test when it was first suggested because he didn't think the state should "determine who would go to ninth grade."

But his attitude has changed because the test "has helped a group of students that most divisions didn't focus on. Seldom do we focus on the needy. My notion is this will help the disadvantaged. Without these minimal skills these children have no future."



...from the Virginia Gazette

Schools fare well in test score study

BY JANET CAGGIANO
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

The 1996-97 school year is not quite two months old, but 17 school divisions in Virginia have already been named to the state honor roll.

About half the school divisions that made the grade were honored for their improved scores on standardized tests. The others were recognized for their consistent high scores.

School divisions in New Kent County, King and Queen County and West Point were the nearest to Richmond to make the list.

The Family Foundation released the results yesterday in a 127-page report, "The Virginia Education Report Card: A Report on the Status of Public Education in Virginia and What Works." The Family Foundation is a conservative non-profit public policy organization based in Fairfax. Founded in 1987, the group is made up of about 40,000 parents and teachers across the state.

Cheri Pierson Yecke, one of Gov. George Allen's appointees to the state Board of Education, conducted the study as part of her course work for a doctorate in education at the University of Virginia. The Foundation financed publication and distribution of the report.

Researchers gathered standardized test results and averaged the scores. The highest scorers were named "top performers." School systems showing the most improvement from 1992 to 1996 were named "rising stars."

In New Kent County in the past four years eighth-graders taking the Iowa Test of Basic Skills improved 11 percentage points in reading and 12 in math. Fourth-grade scores jumped 10 points in reading and nine in math during the same time period. The division was named a "rising star" in two areas.

"We are very pleased with the effort of our kids," said Howard Ormond, principal at New Kent Middle School. "They took on the responsibility and they took ownership."

Like others making the honor roll New Kent officials credit remedial programs, an emphasis on phonics, better preparation and intervention programs as the keys to improving test scores.

West Point was honored as a top performer in four categories, as were Poquoson, Radford and Falls Church. "I've heard educators say that it doesn't make a difference what you do - that it's the cultural background of the child," said Dr. Jane Massey-Wilson, superintendent of West Point schools. "I disagree with that. The things we do make a difference."

King and Queen County sixth-graders showed the most improvement on the Literacy Passport exam. Over the past four years, students improved 11 percentage points on writing, 23 on math and 30 on reading. The school system credits better preparation for those gains.

"We hired a retired math professor from William & Mary to help prepare the students," said Henry Albert, Principal at King and Queen Elementary School. "We constantly give pre-tests. That way, you can really gauge

Honor Roll *

A study financed by a conservative public policy group and based on test scores in elementary, middle, and high school listed 17 Virginia school divisions as "top performers" (consistently high levels of achievement) and "rising stars" (significant improvement). Grade 4 reading and math tests are scored separately. Grade 8 tests are scored together. The divisions:

Arlington County

Top performer Grade 8 reading/math

Bath County

Rising star Grade 4 reading, math

Bland County

Rising star grade 11 core areas

Craig County

Rising star Grade 4 reading math

Fairfax County

Top performer Grade 11 core areas

Falls Church

Top performer Grade 4 reading, math; Grade 8 reading/math; Grade 11 core areas

Highland County

Rising star Grade 11 core areas

King and Queen County

Rising star Grade 6 literacy passport

Loudoun County

Top performer Grade 8 reading/math

New Kent County

Rising star Grade 4 reading; Grade 8 reading/math

Norton

Rising star Grade 4 math

Patrick County

Rising star Grade 4 reading, math; top performer Grade 6 literacy passport

Poquoson

Top performer Grade 4 reading, math; Grade 8 reading/math; Grade 11 core areas

Radford

Top performer Grade 4 reading, math; Grade 8 reading/math; Grade 11 core areas

Salem

Top performer Grade 4 reading, math

West Point

Top performer Grade 4 reading, Math; Grade 8 reading/math; Grade 11 core areas

York County

Top performer Grade 11 core areas

* At least 10 of these divisions used Flanagan's program

where you are and the progress you are making."

King and Queen uses other techniques, including pep rallies and pizza parties, to motivate students.

"Despite the gains, we still have to stay on our toes," Albert said. "We still want to improve. We want to do as well as we can."

Walt Barbee, president of the Family Foundation, said the study focuses on what works in public education.

"Public education has gotten a lot of criticism, but it deserves a lot of credit too," Barbee said.

The Associated Press contributed to the report.