

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

District-Level Recommendations

Individual Recommendations

Newspaper Articles

Dr. S. Stuart Flanagan, Professor Emeritus
College of William and Mary

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<http://www.tfhs.net>

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.

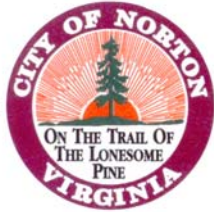
Third grade SOL English scores increased from a pass rate of 58% to 80% and Lee-Jackson Elementary School has been awarded Full Accreditation Status by the Virginia Department of Education.

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



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

AN EMAIL FROM A CLIENT USING OUR ASSESSMENTS FOR YEARS February 4, 2010

We were one of the first users of ROS (now entering our fifth year). For several years previous to that, we started using Flanagan Tests for Higher Standards (TfHS). There is a lot of discussion around TfHS, especially regarding the cost and the complexity of questions. Here are some thoughts about TfHS:

- (1) The complexity of the questions allows us to move past rote memory or simplistic approaches to instruction and evaluate whether our kids can think in complex ways.
- (2) The test bank has proven reliable and validated for us. Over the years, we have compiled the statistics correlating our SOL scores and our simulation testing results. That has led to us to the following: (a) any child who achieves a score of 70% or more will pass the subsequent SOL test 98% of the time; (b) coverage of the questions on the simulation test will allow prescription intervention in the areas of weakness, improve knowledge and result in a passing score on the SOL test; and (c) the questions provide good models for teachers in developing their own questions.
- (3) Our philosophy is to maintain an environment of constructivism within the classroom. TfHS allows us to aim high and if we don't make the mark, we are still above the SOL standards.
- (4) We experimented with teachers writing their own questions and using them a predictors of SOL success and achieved dismal results. The cost of training teacher (and retraining new teachers) are higher than purchasing the test questions
- (5) The student achievement booklet questions have been invaluable to us in writing benchmark assessments and combining them with constructed response questions.
- (6) Customer service from TfHS has been outstanding

ROS:

- (1) Before we had ROS, we laboriously attempted to do some data analysis through scantron sheets, with very limited success.
- (2) ROS has completely changed the instructional discussions within Winchester Public Schools. Within any classroom, you can either see the results displayed or hear the discussions during our professional learning communities.
- (3) ROS has been a way for teachers and administrators at each level to be completely involved in data decisions and instruction.
- (4) ROS has always been easy to call and, in many cases, suggestions for implementation have been incorporated in subsequent releases of the software.
- (5) Keeping student data current is an easy process.

Together, the two programs offer a robust area for instruction and are very cost effective.

We are facing severe economic conditions [worse than last year]. Last year, ROS and TfHS came up as topics for budgetary cuts. Each administrator in our buildings offered an alternative cut to these two. We are facing a similar dilemma this year and again, these two programs are being fought for by both teachers and administrators.

Give me a call if you need any information.

George L. Craig III

DDOT-Winchester Public Schools

540-667-4253 x 12132

WEST POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

At West Point Public Schools, K-12 teachers use Dr. Flanagan's Tests for Higher Standards to create instructional activities, benchmark assessments, and pre- and post-tests. They rely on data analysis of test results to design and revise instruction throughout the year. **As a result, our school division has the highest Standards of Learning pass rates in the Commonwealth.**

Margaret Hardt
Director of Instruction
West Point Public Schools
West Point, Virginia

SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

P.O. BOX 96
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

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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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

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

FAX: (276) 728-3195

TELEPHONE: (276) 728-3191
(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 that reads "DeWitt House".

DeWitt House
Assistant Superintendent- Instruction

DH/djs

www.henry.k12.va.us

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



Achieving Today ... Succeeding Tomorrow

Donna Carr
Assistant Superintendent
for Instruction

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April 11, 2003

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

Dear Dr. Flanagan:

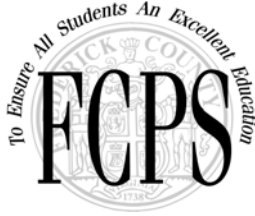
As it is time to begin looking at our renewal of Tests for Higher Standards, I wanted to take a minute to let you know that Accomack County Public Schools continues to benefit from having access to this test bank. In any standards based system, it is important to have an accurate gauge of student performance 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



Marvin T. Thompson, Principal
Betty Williams, Administrative Assistant
Justin Woodside, Counselor

Kerrydale Elementary School
13199 Kerrydale Road
Woodbridge, Virginia 22193
Promoting Respect, Responsibility and Citizenship



(703) 590-1262
(703) 670-6259 fax

April 8, 2003

Dr. Flanagan,

My school has recently begun using the *Tests for Higher Standards (TfHS)*. One of the primary reasons we selected it was to assist us in aligning our instructional practices with the SOLs.

The *TfHS* were selected by the staff for its comprehensive alignment with the SOL Blueprint. It offers a variety of methods for teachers to assess student performance and also guide instructional planning. In just two weeks of use I received feedback from my teachers applauding the design and practicality of the tests. Each grade level currently uses the tests and the professional dialogue that has resulted is tremendous. From an administrator's perspective, it has been a wonderful tool to guide teachers to using and understanding the purpose of the SOL Blueprint.

Within two weeks teachers began displaying the data from the TfHS Simulation tests as well as the Achievement Booklets that accompany the tests. Students have responded with goal-oriented efforts to meet the standards being set forth in the classroom. We have also identified screening uses for many of the tests. One of my staff when asked about the tests referred to them as a god-send. As a first year teacher he says that it has helped him to quickly gain a better understanding of the Standards of Learning and better assist his special education students.

I consider the *TfHS* an important component in our efforts to meet the needs of our students. It has allowed the staff to work quickly and consistently towards curriculum alignment. I thank you for the opportunity to share with others the advantages of the *Tests for Higher Standards*.

Marvin T. Thompson
Principal
Kerrydale Elementary
Prince William County Public Schools

David Sable
Radford City Schools
1612 Wadsworth Street
Radford, VA 24141

Stuart Flanagan
Professor Emeritus, College of William and Mary
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<http://www.tfhs.net>
phone (804-725-7997) fax (804-725-5541)

Dear Dr. Flanagan,

I am writing this letter in reference to the success Radford City Schools has encountered utilizing **TEST FOR HIGHER STANDARDS (TfHS)** with the Virginia Grade Level Assessments (VGLA) for students with disabilities. Radford City Schools used the system for students in special education and 504 students during the 2004-05 school year. The TfHS system provided our staff information to assist in both the decision to use VGLA as well as the collection of evidence needed to score the VGLA.

Making the decision to not take an SOL test but instead utilize the VGLA is the decision of the IEP team or the 504 committee. These groups were able to look at past tests results and current TfHS Grade Level Test and Simulation Test cutoff scores to assist the teams in making these decisions. If a student scored at a level that indicated they could pass the SOL test, then the decision to use the SOL test was made by the team. If the student's score indicated they may have difficulties, then the VGLA route was utilized. These decisions were documented during IEP addendums or 504 plans. After teaching a specific SOL objective, teachers were able to collect evidence by using the Student Achievement Booklets to make snapshot and benchmark test using the software on the CD provided by TfHS. This evidence was collected over a period of time and submitted as the VGLA collection of evidence. This system provided documentation necessary to score the VGLA in an objective and clear manner. We submitted 34 tests in the Math, English and Writing areas to be scored by local staff. 34 students passed SOL tests that probably would not have passed had they taken the specific test. The Department of Education audited our tests and reversed two of our findings. At this time 32 students were provided passing SOL scores on the VGLA.

This rate provided a positive message to students who usually get negative messages regarding test results. The positive atmosphere has spread to staff who have always felt these students could learn but did not always retain the information for long periods of time or who could not always recall this information for the end of the year test due to their handicap or disability. This positive atmosphere has spread to parents as well as to the students themselves. Measuring success and feeling success have often not been afforded to students with disabilities. The TfHS system has provided Radford City Schools with the tools to assist our handicap and disabled students in measuring and feeling success, probably for the first time since SOL testing has been implemented.

We hope to continue this success one child at a time until we have provided a fair assessment system for our students whose handicaps and disabilities hamper their achievement and our assessment of their progress. Our students can build on their success rather than falter on their failures. As success is a powerful component in education, I have recently seen its results thanks to the system TfHS has provided in making decisions to use the VGLA as well as providing a clear objective collection of evidence.

The Grade Level Tests and Simulation Tests have assisted us in making data driven decisions which are sometimes difficult to make when working with students with disabilities. The Student Achievement Booklets via snapshot and benchmark assessments provided us pockets of information we could use to demonstrate SOL objectives were being taught and mastered. This information could also be used to re-teach areas needing remediation. Finally, this information provides the basis for scoring the VGLA as the collection of evidence.

On behalf of our staff, students, and parents, I would like to thank you for working with Radford City Schools the past three years so we could implement the TfHS system to assist us in obtaining these positive experiences. We are looking forward to next year and the many challenges implementing the VGLA (3rd to 8th Grade SOL Testing) and VSEP Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (End of Course SOL Testing). The TfHS system will become an important tool for Radford City Schools to implement these programs and we look forward to sharing our results with you annually.

Sincerely

David M. Sable
Director of Special Education
Division Director of Testing
Radford City Schools
dsable@reps.org



For Immediate Release
February 23, 2005

Contact: Charles Pyle
Director of Communications
(804) 371-2420
Julie Grimes
Public Information Officer
(804) 225-2775

(SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS HIGHLIGHTED IN RED USE TESTS FOR HIGHER STANDARDS)

**Board of Education Recognizes High-Performing
Title I Schools and School Divisions**

Six public school divisions and 77 schools are being honored by the Board of Education for raising the achievement of economically disadvantaged students and meeting or exceeding the objectives of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. “The success of these schools and school divisions demonstrates that all children can learn and achieve and that all schools can meet high standards of performance,” said Board of Education President Thomas M. Jackson, Jr.

NCLB requires schools and school divisions to meet annual objectives for increasing student achievement based on the results of statewide assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics. Schools and school divisions meeting these objectives are considered to have made adequate yearly progress (AYP). Title I of the federal education law provides funding to school divisions and schools for programs to raise the achievement of economically disadvantaged students.

Hopewell City public schools earned the “Highly Distinguished Title I School Division” designation for exceeding AYP requirements and for making progress in closing achievement gaps between student groups. At its February meeting today in Richmond, the Board of Education presented Hopewell with a plaque in honor of the accomplishment.

Five divisions earned the designation of “Distinguished Title I School Division” by making AYP for two straight years and exceeding all annual measurable objectives. These divisions are **Bath County public schools**, Buena Vista City public schools, Craig County public schools, **Highland County public schools**, and **Lexington City public schools**. Superintendent of Public Instruction Jo Lynne DeMary and Deputy Superintendent Patricia I. Wright will present a plaque to each division during upcoming visits.

Seventy-seven public schools in Virginia that receive funding under Title I of NCLB have been recognized by the Board as “Title I Distinguished Schools” for meeting AYP, maintaining full accreditation for two consecutive years, and having mean test scores for both English and mathematics at the 60th percentile or higher.

Each Title I Distinguished School will receive a framed certificate from the Board of Education and an outdoor banner. The 77 schools, grouped by division, include:

- **Albemarle County — Brownsville Elementary, Crozet Elementary, Stony Point Elementary, and Woodbrook Elementary;**
- Augusta County — Edward G. Clymore Elementary and Wilson Elementary;
- **Bedford County — Big Island Elementary;**
- Botetourt County — Breckinridge Elementary;
- **Charlottesville City — Greenbrier Elementary;**
- **Chesterfield County — Bensley Elementary;**
- Clarke County — D.G. Cooley Elementary;
- **Danville City — Forest Hills Elementary and Woodrow Wilson Elementary;**
- **Dinwiddie County — Southside Elementary;**
- Falls Church City — Thomas Jefferson Elementary;
- Franklin County — Glade Hill Elementary, Henry Elementary, and Sontag Elementary;
- **Frederick County — Apple Pie Ridge Elementary and Armel Elementary;**
- **Giles County — Narrows Combined;**
- Gloucester County — Abingdon Elementary and Thomas C. Walker Elementary;
- Goochland County — Goochland Elementary;

- Hanover County — Beaverdam Elementary and Elmont Elementary;
- Henry County — Carver Elementary School, Fieldale Elementary, and Rich Acres Elementary;
- Highland County — Highland Elementary;
- King And Queen County — Lawson-Marriott Elementary;
- Lee County — Elydale Elementary and Keokee Elementary;
- Lexington City — Harrington Waddell Elementary;
- Loudoun County — Middleburg Elementary and Potowmack Elementary;
- Lynchburg City — Robert S. Payne Elementary;
- Mecklenburg County —Buckhorn Elementary and Chase City Elementary;
- Newport News City — George J. McIntosh Elementary;
- Page County — Luray Elementary;
- Patrick County — Stuart Elementary;
- Pittsylvania County — John L. Hurt Elementary;
- Poquoson City — Poquoson Elementary and Poquoson Middle;
- Portsmouth City — Simonsdale Elementary;
- Richmond City — Ginter Park Elementary;
- Roanoke County — Glenvar Middle and William Byrd Middle;
- Rockbridge County — Effinger Elementary and Natural Bridge Elementary;
- Rockingham County — Fulks Run Elementary, Mountain View Elementary, and South River Elementary;
- Russell County — Belfast Elk Garden Elementary, Copper Creek Elementary, and Lebanon Elementary;
- Salem City — East Salem Elementary and G.W. Carver Elementary;
- Scott County — Fort Blackmore Elementary, Hilton Elementary, Nickelsville Elementary, Shoemaker Elementary, and Weber City Elementary;
- Spotsylvania County — Harrison Road Elementary;
- Staunton City — Thomas C. McSwain Elementary;
- Tazewell County — Abbs Valley Boissevain Elementary;
- Virginia Beach City — Windsor Oaks Elementary and W.T. Cooke Elementary;
- Warren County — Hilda J. Barbour Elementary;
- Washington County — Greendale Elementary, High Point Elementary, and Watauga Elementary;
- West Point — West Point Elementary;
- Williamsburg-James City County — Matthew Whaley Elementary;
- Wise County — St. Paul Elementary; and
- York County — Tabb Elementary.

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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

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

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



Office of the Superintendent
Stevenson Administration Building

Richard A. Moniuszko, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

May 2, 2005

Dr. Stuart Flanagan
Professor Emeritus
College of William and Mary
Post Office Box 276
North, VA 23128

To Whom It May Concern:

As a district we have had great experiences with *Tests for Higher Standards*. We started using TFHS several years ago when we were in search of well-constructed, challenging test items that are aligned to our state standards. TFHS met that criteria, and we find them to be effective instructional-assessment tools.

We use the TFHS items to create benchmark tests for grades 3-8 and diagnostics for high school level. The items are highly aligned to our standards in content and format and are useful tools to help teachers diagnose their students' strengths and weaknesses.

In addition to using TFHS to create benchmarks and diagnostics, we are in the process of loading the assessment items into our districts instructional management system which will allow teachers to create, electronically, their own 'mini tests' that are aligned to state standards. With this process, teachers will then create customized tests that contain high quality items to specifically address the needs of students.

Due to the success we have had with the assessments, I would highly recommend Tests for Higher Standards.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Moniuszko, EdD
Interim Superintendent



Spartanburg County School District Two

Administrative Offices

4606 Parris Bridge Road
Boiling Springs, South Carolina 29316

Telephone: (864) 578-0128
Fax: (864) 578-8924

May, 5 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

We have been using the services of TfHS for several years and have found the tests and items to be of great value in preparing our students for PACT and most recently for HSAP and End of Course. Teachers use the tests to sharpen their understanding of assessment and standards.

Recently TfHS has created for us a battery of benchmark tests for diagnostic purposes aligned with our district curriculum guides. The data help teachers understand the level of student mastery of standards once taught. This data feedback at standard level is something that teachers have wanted from accountability testing but have not been able to obtain. The diagnostic testing provides high-level independent assessment at PACT-level difficulty. Therefore, our students become accustomed to test rigor while our teachers receive valuable feedback on student performance.

The management team at TfHS has closely worked with us on developing assessments that meet our needs and accomplish our goals. We value this close working relationship and look forward to continued collaboration on developing future assessments.

Sincerely,

Deryle F. Hope, Ed. D
Asst. Supt., Curriculum & Instruction
Spartanburg School District Two
Spartanburg, South Carolina

St. Mark Elementary School

6628 Thurgood Marshall Hwy

Telephone: (843) 382-3935

Kingstree, SC 29556

Fax: (843) 382-3940

Rumell Taylor, Principal

August 8, 2007

Dear Dr. Flanagan:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of endorsement for the test prep material, *Tests for Higher Standards*, that you provide to improve instruction. We have used this material for the past five years, and our school has met Adequate Yearly Progress and had an Absolute Rating of "Good" on our school report card for each of the five consecutive years. We are hopeful that our 2007 test scores will be good this year.

I attribute much of our success to the implementation of the Flanagan test prep materials. Since this resource is PACT-like in format and correlates closely with the South Carolina Curriculum Standards for grades three through eight, it is a valuable resource.

If school principals are not using this valuable resource, I whole-heartedly recommend that they review this material and incorporate it into their curriculum. I am sure that schools that use this material will see an improvement in their standardized test scores.

We are hoping for a safe, successful and productive school year and, of course, we plan to continue to use your materials, Dr. Flanagan.

With best regards,

Rumell Taylor

302 Perry Road
Greenville
South Carolina 20609

To whom it may concern,

We began using Tests for Higher Standards in the fall of 2004. We use the tests as our quarterly benchmark assessments and as end of the year assessments for 5K and grades 1 and 2.

Teachers like the CD for several reasons. The teachers can develop their own assessments based on the standards that have been taught during a grading period. These tests are very easy to create by simply cutting and pasting questions from the bank of questions on the CD. Another reason the teachers enjoy Tests for Higher Standards is that the questions are in a format similar to PACT and the variety of questions are the same: short answer, multiple choice, graphs, timelines, etc.

Next year we are planning to purchase the scanner that compliments the program in order to get results much faster so that the teachers can plan remediation, re-teaching, or moving ahead.

Teachers have the freedom to tailor their assessments to their own students without having to depend on commercially produced materials that may not be beneficial to them or their students.

Thank you,
Anne Alewine
Instructional Coach
Cherrydale Elementary School

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.

I have some astounding news for you. We have received preliminary 8th grade PACT test results from the SDE. One of our teachers used TFHS extensively for her 8th Social Studies classes. We tested 57 regular ed students and 54 made at least basic. ONLY 3 SCORED BELOW BASIC. This is an overall passing rate of 84%. Last year we had a pass rate of about 63% Our test scores are up in all other areas also.

I want you to know that my school is one of 69 in the State of VA to close the achievement gap between middle class students and low income students. I credit much of this success to two factors...Hi expectations for kids and an assessment tool that teachers have confidence in using. My staff has the upmost confidence in your test.

I had 3 high school student in my first round of summer school. Two of them had to take the Algebra SOL and one had to take the Geometry SOL.

The first girl had missed the Algebra SOL by 1 point each time she took it in May-399 both times. She got a 417 this time. Guess what materials I used to help her? Yours-

The second girl is a young lady who has missed school since February due to a car accident-and I've been going to her house since May-we had quite a bit of work to do-and she took her Algebra SOL for the first time on Friday-she made a 470!!!!

The last one, a young man, who hated Geometry, absolutely hated it, came in every day for about an hour and 1/2 for two weeks. I used your materials to find his weaknesses and to review...Prior to last Friday, he had failed the Geometry SOL twice-Friday he made a 425.

I can't thank you enough. Thank you for letting me use your materials with these students.

Just a note of thanks, I've just received our preliminary results for our SOL tests. It looks as if we went up 10 points in the area of reading. We are looking at being around 85%. This is the first time since the SOL's have been given we are in the 80's. I also feel sure we will be off the 1st year AYP area. Our free and reduced lunch numbers show a 83% pass rate. This is fantastic.

Dr. Flanagan,

I apologize for this. We are certainly using the tool so we need to pay for it! I was out of work in Dec. and this month due to surgery. This is my first day back. I thought I had taken care of this before going on leave but now it is TRULY taken care of on the school's end and on the way to the DO. I apologize for this delay.

I have good news - COLT made AYP!!!! Also, we are in continuing school improvement and not in corrective action. It is amazing to hear the teachers talk about the change in their rigor and routines with us doing common assessments with analysis and reteaching following. I am thankful for your product which helped up move quickly in this direction.

Hope you are having a great beginning of the year.

Thank you, Stuart.

We did receive the Fed-X Packet on Wednesday. I have given it to my CFA tech person and she will hold on to it until our IT returns to work in Sept.

I still can't believe our district did not contract with you district-wide. But at least you have an rfp with us. There really is not other product that compares to yours for VA. And we should all be using the same instruments school to school if we truly want some sort of monitoring and predictability in our testing that is valid....teacher-made tests may help on the spot in the classroom but they would never have the test credibility that your assessments do.

Oh well, so much for my thoughts...glad to be working with you again.

We will be in touch.

Dr. Stuart,

The third benchmark test was the last test for this school year. Thanks so much for all of your help. I am looking forward to working with you again next year.

Thanks,

Krystal Thompkins, Social Studies Coordinator

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! It is a pleasure working with you good folks.

Damon

Woodruff High was named The Blue Ribbon High School for SC this week. Thanks for making that possible for us. Kindest regards and personal best wishes.

Dr. Flannagan, I firmly believe that Tests for Higher Standards was instrumental in helping us know where our students are in off levels and where we need to take them. Thank you for your support of Hopewell Schools.

The online scoring has been a blessing for Hopewell. We are able to score six weeks assessments and analyze the findings.

Prince William Elementary School: Thanks...we are loving the test and our scores are super.

Many thanks Stuart, I can always depend on you and that is comforting in an uncertain world. MA

Prince William County School

I just feel like that al that it takes for you to put those tests together- you should know the good that it does. I finished the R/L/R section today and we take the SOL on Monday! I have done almost everything. In the last 3 years of summer school I have taught all 4 grades of English. In regular school I have taught 4,5, and 6 self contained all subject areas- prior to that K-7 reading and also do K-5 after school remediation 3 days a week currently! I love kids of all ages and all subject areas. You are very correct in concluding that I have a very wide range of past experiences. I love teaching !! Thanks for your tests and I use them for all grade levels!! Because I KNOW they work!!!! Thanks and have a terrific weekend!!

Thanks for the thoughts. Just want to share a very exciting project at Vaughan. We are simulating an SOL testing week at Vaughan 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 allow 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.

1. 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...There were 18 questions in this one strand. Thus we will respond in the following manner:

Begin teaching the objective on our Instructional Calendar-8-step Process (Step 2)

Send some of the students back to 4th grade for mini lessons

Use the Achievement booklets in the classroom, targeting that objective.

Use the Achievement booklets for Principal Chats--Part of that 8 step process I've talked to you about.

Use the Achievement booklets..targeting that objective for homework with parents.

Send the students to the Compass Learning Computer lab to reinforce Estimation and Measurement

Use your Achievement booklets for the Extended Day remediation periods (8-step process)

Most importantly, 4th grade teachers will be required to give the math test at the end of the year to insure more accountability.

Grade 4 Social Studies: Overall we were at 75%. Further analysis revealed that one teacher was at 46%.

Others were higher, thus the 75% average. I have always known that I had a weak teacher at 4th grade. This confirms my thoughts. I will be moving her to 2nd grade next school year. Since 75% is nothing to sing about and this teacher is weak, my assistant principal will work directly with that classroom. We are not sure she has the skills to teach 4th grade. Objectives missed were 4.3, 4.8, 4.10, 4.12, 4.13, 4.15 4.18 etc. We think the wordage on 4.8 needs to be addressed " front end estimation.

Special Programs--There is a definite gap in the ESOL and SPE. ED students. We have got to redefine those programs as does others nation wide.

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.

Don't forget to buy No Excuses, Closing the Gap--Patrica Davenport...This along with your test is going to be powerful. I have looked for something like this for the past 20 years ...Thank you again.

Prince William County Principal

I would like to say thank you on the part of all of us. My teachers are extremely excited to have a product that works for them and that gives us vital data geared toward improving our instructional program. We really appreciate your time and greatly look forward to working with you as we integrate your assessment program into our school.

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.

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?"

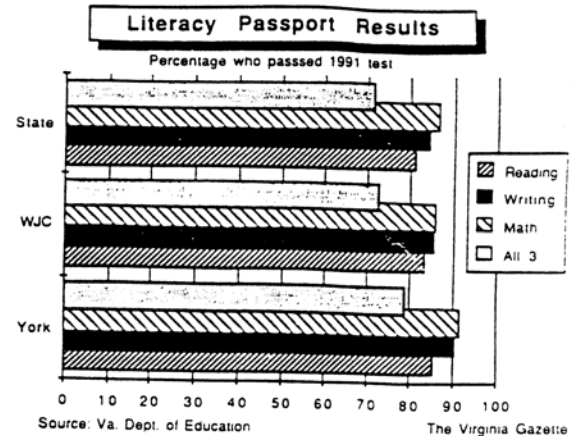
To help teachers, he:

- 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.