

Using EPAS in School Improvement:
Township High School
District 214's Experience



Contents

Acknowledgments	ii
Using EPAS in School Improvement: Township High School District 214's Experience	1
1. Context for Change	3
2. Changing Role for Assessment	5
3. Use of EPAS Results	7
4. Parent Involvement	15
5. Results	16
6. Lessons Learned	30
Timeline	33





Acknowledgments

This case study tells how Township High School District 214 in Arlington Heights, Illinois, faced the challenge of implementing a comprehensive academic assessment system. For more than ten years, District 214's administration and faculty worked diligently to investigate methods, lay the foundation for a long-term assessment system, and integrate their own resources with ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS)[®]. They succeeded in developing an assessment process that markedly improved their students' academic achievement and prepared more of them for the transition to postsecondary education. District 214's story offers insight and inspiration for other school districts facing similar challenges.

We are indebted to many individuals at the schools in District 214 who contributed to this study. In particular, we'd like to thank Marilyn Kulieke, PhD, Research Consultant, and Timothy L. Schaap, EdD, Data Analysis Consultant, for writing the case study, and Venetia Miles, Community Relations Coordinator, who served as editor. Their generous assistance and cooperation made it possible to share this remarkable story.

We also extend our gratitude to Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Ennis, The Board of Education, and all the students, parents, and staff at the schools in District 214, whose support and passion for change created a dynamic system for student success.

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Using EPAS in School Improvement: Township High School District 214's Experience

When Lauren took the ACT Assessment® to apply for college, she attained a composite score of 27, a score that will gain her admission into any of her top three college choices. Lauren was fortunate to be a student at Elk Grove High School in Township High School District 214. She benefited from the district's ten-year history of systematic assessment coupled with early intervention and continual monitoring of academic progress. Lauren, like most of her classmates, is ready for college.

As in other school districts across the United States, the test scores of the students in District 214 are subjected to intense public scrutiny. The schools in District 214 are ranked by local newspapers and considered by families moving into the Chicago area. Colleges make judgments about the quality of education being provided by the schools in District 214 when they allocate recruiting resources throughout the Midwest. In response to these pressures, administrators in District 214 began a comprehensive school improvement program based on two fundamental needs: to increase each student's opportunities after high school and to improve student readiness for college and other postsecondary educational opportunities.

In the last ten years, district administrators and educators have implemented a program to better prepare their students for college. The new program includes:

- Monitoring student progress throughout high school,
- Guiding students into taking the right college preparatory courses, and
- Making timely interventions with those students who need help.

Most important, the program encourages all students, teachers and administrators to use assessment results to *promote* student learning.





District 214 has also implemented a career and educational guidance program to help each student maximize his or her opportunities after high school. Beginning with career awareness and exploration in the eighth grade, students have ample time to plan the courses they need to take in high school and to make mid-course adjustments to be prepared for their post-high school goals.

Carefully woven through this guidance and preparation program is an open and supportive atmosphere that uses assessment to foster learning rather than to restrict student opportunities. Parents are involved in the entire process. District 214's story reveals a district leadership committed to ensuring that each and every student is ready for what they want to do when they graduate from high school.

1. Context for Change

Change is never easy, but District 214 realized the need for a comprehensive school improvement program that would sustain the progress made in the past, yet incorporate the necessary improvements to meet its goals. Among the tenets guiding District 214's school improvement program were:

- Curriculum must incorporate the Illinois state standards.
- Curriculum must incorporate the knowledge and skills students need to be ready for postsecondary work.
- Curriculum must reflect purposeful continuity and coherence.
- Each student's educational goals must be met so that each graduate is ready for post-high school opportunities.
- School environment must promote high achievement.
- Student progress must be monitored continuously and timely interventions made to improve student performance.
- School effectiveness must be informed by a data-driven system of information.
- Accreditation and accountability standards must be met.
- Faculty, staff, administrators, students, parents, and others must be engaged in this process.
- Staff development must be an essential source of support for continuing education of faculty and staff.

Profile of District 214

District 214 is a large high school district located northwest of Chicago, Illinois. District 214 has six high schools and four alternative programs with a total enrollment of approximately 12,500.

Approximately 10% of District 214's students receive free and reduced lunch assistance. Approximately 75% of the students are Caucasian, 2% African American, and 14% Hispanic.

Approximately 20% of District 214's high school graduates attend a two-year college, 60% attend a four-year college or university, and 20% enter the work world.

Faced with serving 12,500 students from approximately 30 sender schools, district administrators realized the need to engage their students in a more systematic program of career and educational planning. District 214 administrators envisioned a program that would:

- Help students become more aware of the career and educational opportunities available to them,
- Place students in the appropriate courses in the ninth grade, and
- Help students select the right courses in high school to take advantage of these opportunities.

Administrators also wanted to monitor student progress throughout high school and make timely interventions with those students who may not be making the necessary progress to be ready for their post-high school goals.

Prior to 1994, the district had been using a standardized grade-level achievement test together with a cognitive skills test to place students into their freshman classes. Though these tests seemed relatively effective for placing students into the right courses in ninth grade, they did not help address District 214's other needs.

Thus began the district's journey to rethink assessment.



2. Changing Role for Assessment

Beginning in 1994, District 214 implemented ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) by administering ACT's EXPLORE® program to all of its eighth-grade students. District administrators adopted the EXPLORE program, not only because it was effective in placing students into ninth-grade courses (thereby replacing the eighth-grade test that had been used for years) but also because it contained a career planning component that would serve as the foundation for a longer-term career planning program throughout high school.

Prior to 1994, district administrators had offered ACT's PLAN® program to their tenth-grade students on a Saturday at the student's expense. They decided in 1994 to offer PLAN to *all* students in the fall of their tenth grade at the district's expense. With all students now taking EXPLORE and PLAN, administrators began to envision how they could evaluate student growth and make timely instructional interventions to promote student achievement. Mandatory instructional programs were soon developed and offered to lower-scoring students to strengthen their skills in all four areas measured by the EPAS assessments: English, math, reading, and science.

In 1999, District 214 realized that they needed something more—not only to measure student growth, but to evaluate the effectiveness of their three-year core curriculum at the end of the eleventh grade. Although 80% of District 214's graduating high school seniors took the ACT Assessment sometime in the eleventh or twelfth grade, the district also wanted a measure of growth for all students at the end of the core high school program in eleventh grade. The "IACT" was born, an institutional administration of a retired form of the ACT Assessment; results were used to measure student progress, strengthen student skills, and evaluate the effectiveness of the core curriculum.

ACT's Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS)® provides information about students' academic progress, interests, and career plans at three key transitional points in their journey to high school graduation:

1. EXPLORE® provides baseline data on eighth- and ninth-grade students' academic achievement and enables teachers to help students plan their high school coursework. It also includes a career planning component that is sustained throughout the other programs.
2. PLAN®, typically administered to ninth- and tenth-grade students, provides a midpoint review of students' progress toward their educational and career goals at a point when there still is time to make instructional interventions.
3. ACT Assessment®, typically taken by eleventh- and twelfth-grade students, measures their academic readiness for college-level work. It also includes an interest inventory and a student biographical inventory, designed to provide postsecondary institutions a more comprehensive profile of each student.



After the successful implementation of the IACT, the last assessment that was put into place by District 214 was the “IPLAN.” District 214 wanted to collect student performance information at the end of the ninth grade in order to examine growth as a result of the ninth-grade curriculum. After considering EXPLORE as a possible ninth-grade exit test, district staff and faculty decided that too many of their students might score at the high end of the EXPLORE score scale, which would limit their capacity to measure growth for the more advanced students. They decided to use IPLAN instead. Like the IACT results, the IPLAN results were used to evaluate student progress, identify student strengths and weaknesses, and evaluate the effectiveness of the ninth-grade core curriculum.

During the years that District 214 incorporated the EPAS system, the Illinois statewide assessment program went through a variety of changes. From the IGAP (Illinois Goal Assessment Program) in the early 1990s to the ISAT (Illinois Standards Achievement Test) in the late 1990s to the PSAE (Prairie State Achievement Examination) in 2001, the state program was evolving. Fortunately, the PSAE used the ACT Assessment as the core of its eleventh-grade program and through that program administered the ACT Assessment to all Illinois students. This allowed District 214 to move the IACT to the end of the tenth-grade, thus creating the Prairie State “mirror” exams (PSME). While the eleventh graders were taking the ACT through the PSAE program, their ninth- and tenth-grade students were taking the IPLAN or the IACT, respectively.

After six years, District 214 had an aligned assessment system that provided students multiple opportunities to become acquainted with the content and skills measured by the EPAS assessments. This established a strong base from which district administrators could:

- Strengthen course placement and special needs screening,
- Promote greater alignment of curriculum and instruction, and
- Implement a longer-term career planning system for monitoring student readiness.

3. Use of EPAS Results

Course Placement and Screening

A student's first assessment experience in District 214 is to take the EXPLORE assessment for course placement purposes. Each November, approximately 3,000 eighth-grade students take EXPLORE along with a writing sample test. If they miss the November test date, they have other opportunities to take it: the following February, May, or during the summer. The results of the assessment are used to place students into ninth-grade courses in high school.

The results have been effectively used to place students into one of three levels: basic, general education, and honors. The placement decisions are based on a variety of factors in addition to EXPLORE test scores, such as teacher recommendations and the results of the writing sample. Those students who have been taking an accelerated math course sequence are also administered an additional criterion-referenced math placement test to help determine if they are ready to be placed out of algebra I.

The results of the EXPLORE program provide information that is used not only for course placement but for screening students for specialized programs such as the English-as-a-Second-Language Program and the Talent Development Program.

Students who attain EXPLORE Reading or Mathematics Test scores of 24 or 25 are invited to an additional screening for the District 214 "Talent Development Program." This program diverges from many traditional elementary and middle school models of talented and gifted programs in that it identifies talent in areas that include but go beyond core coursework. EXPLORE results are used as an initial screening tool to assess talent in reading and mathematics and identify academically gifted students. Some students and parents, disappointed by their EXPLORE performance, may request a retest. In a few instances students succeed on their second assessment and go on to additional screening.





EXPLORE results are sent to both parents and the sender schools. During the spring, the district sponsors a biannual articulation luncheon with high school and sender school staff to provide an overview of the EXPLORE program, to explain and share the assessment results, and to discuss the course placement results.

Remediation

In 1999, the Township High School District 214 Board of Education approved a mandatory remediation policy that provided a framework for using EPAS as well as other district and state assessments to identify students who were not meeting district standards. Beginning in the summer of 2000, approximately 400 students began their high school experience by participating in a summer transition program designed to help strengthen their reading skills.

As a result of the program's success, current students with EXPLORE Reading Test scores below 13 are scheduled to attend the district's Transitional Summer School program. This may include students in such special populations as special education or limited English proficiency. In the reading portion of this program, students concentrated on two Standards for Transition® skills, Reading for Detail and Main Idea. The results from the 2002 Transitional Summer School program, based on 355 participants, are shown below.

Table I

RESULTS OF 2002 SUMMER TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM (% questions correct)

	Detail	Main Idea
Pretest (% correct)	49.5%	44.9%
Posttest (% correct)	68.2%	67.5%

During ninth grade, students begin a systematic process of building the skills they need to be successful in completing high school and to be ready for their post-high school plans. Using the results of the EXPLORE assessment, low-achieving students are identified to participate in special curricular programs. The programs are aimed at strengthening these students' high school readiness skills.

By the eleventh grade, high-ability students are offered variety in the courses that they can take. Lower-achieving students are required to take a third year of mathematics and four years of more prescriptive English classes. The lower the achievement level of a student, the more prescriptive the coursework is throughout the first three years of high school in District 214.

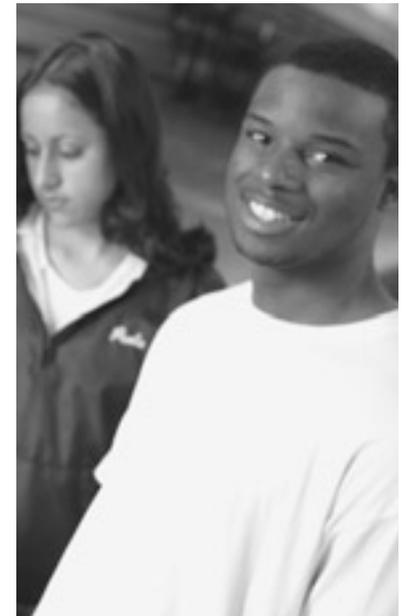
Monitoring Student Progress

After the administration of the PLAN test in the fall of the tenth grade, District 214 uses ACT's Linkage Reports to identify students whose growth between the time they took EXPLORE in the eighth grade and PLAN in the tenth grade did not meet expectations. These reports plot expected versus actual growth for groups of students as well as for individual students. Local student growth can also be compared to national student growth information. Rosters of students who do not meet expected growth are used to plan instructional interventions.

District staff meet with the students to discuss their EXPLORE and PLAN results. Videos and PowerPoint presentations are used to explain how to interpret the scores. The results are carefully explained so that each student understands whether he or she has made expected growth. Both students and their parents receive a copy of the student's score report with interpretive information.

Students whose growth did not meet expectations are enrolled in skill enrichment programs that are intended to address their specific skill strengths and deficiencies. These programs are not optional, but they are flexible to honor each student's ongoing academic demands. One high school in District 214 has had success with lunchtime programs that work on strengthening EPAS skills. A second high school has integrated ACT's Standards for Transition into the core curriculum. Two other high schools have designed ACT preparation classes during the school day for this purpose. These programs have followed a fixed curriculum of skills.

Two schools in District 214 have also implemented a teacher advisory system. These advisory groups usually include 16-20 students across all high school years. The main purpose of these groups is to create a systematic adult-student relationship to help focus on the students' academic progress. This program appears to be an excellent way to engage students in monitoring their progress and taking ownership of their preparation process throughout high school. The personalized attention they receive in a nonclassroom setting helps to empower students to take charge of their progress.





Test Preparation

Two of the most difficult aspects of any assessment program are how to achieve a clear understanding of the knowledge and skills being measured on the test and how to help students perform their best on the test. This especially holds true for students who come from economically disadvantaged families where there often is little access to test preparation materials or test preparation courses.

In 1999, District 214 introduced a Test Preparation Program as an outgrowth of a continuing concern by district staff that, even though several of the high schools offered test prep classes, these classes were not accessible to all students. Some test prep classes had a fee associated with them, thus making it difficult for all students to afford the class. And there were differences in the quality of the classes being offered. As a result, District 214 designed a common test preparation program as a cooperative effort among all six high schools. It is now offered at a consistent cost, whereby students from any district high school can enroll and students on free and reduced lunch can participate for only the cost of materials. All the teachers who deliver the program have been trained through staff development workshops. They also have incorporated the IACT at the end of the program, as well as a satisfaction survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the test prep program and improve it each year.

A recent research project evaluated the performance of more than 700 students in the Test Preparation Program and compared their performance to more than 2,000 other students not enrolled in the program. The results of this study indicate that students in the Test Preparation Program showed a 25% greater gain on the English Test score, a 45% greater gain on the Mathematics Test score, a 24% greater gain on the Reading Test score, and a 37% greater gain on the Science Test score. No doubt many factors could account for this difference, including self-selection factors and the motivation of students participating in such a program. However, the research results are sufficiently promising that the district has continued to integrate test-taking strategies into the core curriculum for all students.

“EPAS is a real help for school counselors. As we work with students to plan for their futures, we need to look at their academic achievement levels as they progress through four years of high school. The predictability of scores in relationship to post-high school education and a future career gives our students a special road map, as well as a realistic life goal.”

— Dr. Anna Marie Yates
Counselor
Elk Grove High School
District 214

Counseling Using EPAS Results

Parents receive the results from the EXPLORE program in the late winter of their student's eighth-grade year at the Freshman Orientation meeting or through the mail. They also receive a "Life and Career Planning Portfolio—Know Yourself from 9 to 12." Parents use this portfolio to organize the counseling and assessment information they will receive over the next four years. Counselors also receive all EXPLORE information as the basis for their work with students as they enter high school.

In the fall of the ninth-grade year, students participate in an in-school workshop during which their EXPLORE scores are explained. Each student computes a predicted ACT score and compares it to a chart that includes the ACT score and GPA needed for entrance into colleges in the state of Illinois.

Students also begin their Life and Career Planning Portfolio, which is kept at school over the next four years. They work with their counselors on a four-year course plan using their EXPLORE scores, interest inventory results, and self-reported career choices as the basis of the plan.

In the tenth and eleventh grades, students incorporate their PLAN results into their Life and Career Planning Portfolio. The career planning information provided through PLAN is compared to each student's high school course plan to make sure the course-taking plans are consistent with the student's goals after high school.

The twelfth-grade year starts with students reviewing the Prairie State Achievement Examination results and deciding whether they want to retake the PSAE. Students are provided with additional information about the ACT scores required to bypass remedial coursework if they are planning to attend a local community college. The 60% of students planning to attend a four-year university can evaluate their ACT scores against admission requirements for their preferred universities.

The Life and Career Planning Portfolios are given back to students in September of their senior year to use in the college admissions process and in applying for a job. Beginning with the class of 2003, each portfolio contains a letter that students wrote to themselves during freshman year. The letter outlines what they would like to be doing five and ten years after they graduate from high school.

See Table 2 on the next page for a summary of the counseling timeline.



Curriculum Alignment

In August 1999, district staff began an extensive curriculum revision project in response to a state mandate to integrate the Illinois Learning Standards into all high school courses required for graduation. The goal was for all freshman students in 2001 and beyond to take a standards-based core curriculum.

An integral part of this curriculum integration project was to embed ACT's Standards for Transition in the core courses to help ensure that all students would be ready for some type of postsecondary education. Thus, the Standards for Transition were used to help evaluate the curriculum and ensure that the college readiness standards were among those being taught in the core curriculum.

Table 2

DISTRICT 214 COUNSELING TIMELINE

SCHOOL YEAR	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER
8th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students take EXPLORE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orientation to high school Life and Career Planning Portfolios begin Interpretation and use of EXPLORE reports Course placement plans 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New student placement using EXPLORE
9th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create 4-year course plan Interpretation of EXPLORE results 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students take IPLAN Course placement based on IPLAN results, grades, teacher recommendation Update Life and Career Planning Portfolios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New student placement using PLAN
10th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students take PLAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretation and use of PLAN results Update Life and Career Planning Portfolios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students take IACT Course placement based on IACT results, grades, teacher recommendations Update Life & Career Planning Portfolios 	
11th Grade			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course placement based on IACT results, grades, teacher recommendations Students take PSAE, which includes the ACT Assessment Guidance using World-of-Work Map results 	
12th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students receive completed Life and Career Planning Portfolios Review PSAE results and determine whether they retake the ACT, all of the PSAE, or neither 			

The mandate was seen by some school staff as an opportunity to restructure all academic programs. They focused on increasing student learning by:

- Aligning the courses included in the core curriculum,
- Integrating critical skills important for college readiness,
- Improving test scores,
- Enhancing course content through increasingly more sophisticated instructional contexts, and
- Expanding opportunities for teacher collaboration and creativity.

To improve student performance and evaluate the effectiveness of their curricular alignment effort, teachers realized they needed specific information about their students' achievement relative to other students in the school and district. A locally developed software program called "ACT Reporter" provided the information they needed. Teachers received tailored reports for each course that detailed which areas of knowledge and/or skills were difficult for their students. This audit of student achievement through a school improvement framework has become a means for teachers to revise their instruction and focus their curriculum more precisely.

The annual results of the state PSAE program provide each high school with an indication of the extent to which their curriculum is aligned with the state and college readiness standards. In 2002-03, teachers completed a curricular mapping of their courses. Before teachers identified improvement goals for the 2003-04 school year, they examined their curriculum maps for gaps in frequency and/or intensity of EPAS skills. By using the Standards for Transition, all EPAS skills are mapped into the curriculum so that all students, regardless of academic program, have an opportunity to achieve these skills prior to the second semester of their eleventh-grade year.

School Improvement Process

The state of Illinois requires all schools to engage in a school improvement planning process in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social science. These initiatives are reported annually through the Illinois School Report Card. In addition, the regional accreditation commission, the North Central Association (NCA), requires schools to monitor student progress in reading,

"The silver bullet is in the seamless integration of the skills delineated in the EPAS Standards for Transition within the curriculum's content. These skills foster both basic and critical competencies and, when purposefully placed within the curriculum, can enhance academic content while allowing more than ample space for higher-order approaches to curriculum."

— Dr. Charles Venegoni
English and Fine Arts
Division Head
John Hersey High School
District 214

mathematics, and writing (two out of the three targets in any five-year cycle). No Child Left Behind legislation adds a third requirement—to monitor the number of students meeting state standards in reading and mathematics across subgroups.

District 214 continues to provide all staff with EPAS data that illustrate that all students can learn, regardless of their race, socioeconomic status, or disability. District 214 central office and building administrations are deeply committed to a process of school improvement and have worked with the district office of Research and Evaluation to use data to help teachers set instructional goals. In an attempt to make data accessible to teachers and administrators, the district worked with the National Study of School Evaluation in 2000-2001 as a pilot school to implement school improvement software.

District 214 has several years of total class data on thousands of students showing academic growth from EXPLORE to IPLAN to PLAN to IACT and to the ACT Assessment administered as part of the PSAE. This information is so rich that the district was able to predict an “expected growth” score for each scale score on each EPAS test. From this information, they know that students with ACT composite scores of 19 or lower are at high risk of not meeting standards on the PSAE. Through regression analyses, they have extrapolated data to determine that, in general, students with IACT composite scores lower than 17, IPLAN composite scores lower than 16, and EXPLORE composite scores lower than 14 are “at risk” of not meeting standards without substantive interventions.

Individual teachers have access to EXPLORE, IPLAN, PLAN, and IACT scores for the students in their respective classes so they can help individual students. They may choose to offer interventions based on the student scores, individual item analyses, and/or EPAS Standards for Transition.

In the fall of each year, staff examine their students’ overall achievement on the EPAS assessments as they relate to progress on the district’s school improvement goals and North Central Association accreditation goals. Administrators and teachers work together to analyze and modify their instructional interventions and to set goals for the new school year. With three years of data on the expected growth of students as they move from EXPLORE, IPLAN, IACT, to the ACT, District 214 is able to evaluate the effectiveness of the improvements they have implemented.



4. Parent Involvement

The EPAS assessments provide a variety of information that is used to communicate with parents. The first mailing to eighth-grade parents from the high school contains the ACT booklet *It's Your Future!*, which provides parents with information about the EXPLORE test and expectations for their sons and daughters. PLAN test results, which are sent to parents of tenth-grade students in December/January, include a detailed score report that provides parents with a variety of information to help interpret the results. Support materials focusing on the EPAS Standards for Transition are sent to parents to help them understand what students need to know to be ready for postsecondary education.

Communicating with parents about students' academic progress is an important part of the EPAS program. Beginning with EXPLORE, through the ninth-grade IPLAN, the tenth-grade fall PLAN, the tenth-grade spring IACT, to the eleventh-grade ACT, parents know where students begin, how they have changed over time, and how their student's growth compares to what is expected. Both the national expectations of growth from the Linkage Reports and the district's predicted growth have helped parents understand the extent to which their students are progressing. At Elk Grove High School, parent newsletters are sent home to notify parents about students whose academic growth has exceeded expectations.

One of the distinctive aspects of the District 214 assessment program is the effort to communicate results and provide interpretive materials to parents and students. Whatever districtwide assessment a student takes, a report will follow. In the fall of the twelfth-grade year, students receive their Life and Career Planning Portfolios from the school, which contain the results of every assessment they have taken in the district. The portfolio provides a snapshot of where students started their high school experience and is the launching point for their future.

“Whenever we come together with students and their parents to talk about their progress through school and their post-high school plans, we talk about their EXPLORE to PLAN to ACT performances. For many, this facilitates the relationship and leads to a continuing conversation. The EPAS system forms the structure for clear, concise, specific, and highly personalized planning.”

— Frank DeRosa
Principal
Elk Grove High School
District 214

5. Results

The results District 214 achieved in implementing EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT Assessment show steady student growth. For the most part, the following results are compared to those before District 214 began implementing EPAS in 1994 to the results in 2001, the last year of voluntary testing. Beginning in 2002, Illinois implemented the PSAE through which all eleventh-grade students (college- and noncollege-bound) took the ACT Assessment. In many cases we have reported results for 2003, the most recent year of the PSAE. The results achieved by District 214 are organized according to the following topics:

- Participation
- Growth in ACT Assessment scores
- Growth in ACT Assessment scores by gender and by race/ethnicity
- Comparisons of District 214 results to state results
- Analyses of ACT Assessment results over time by race/ethnicity for students taking core/noncore courses
- Progress in NCLB areas and in meeting Illinois state standards
- College readiness indicators

Increased Participation

District 214 experienced growth in the number of students taking the ACT Assessment from academic years 1993-1994 through 2002-2003 (Table 5.1).

- Between 1994 and 2001, District 214 participation in the ACT Assessment grew 7%. This growth is based on students who took the ACT voluntarily.
- Between 1994 and 2003, the latest year when all students were required to take the ACT Assessment as part of the PSAE, District 214 participation grew 38.6%.
- District 214 scores increased along with participation.



Table 5.1

DISTRICT 214 PARTICIPATION

Academic Year	1993–1994	1994–1995	1995–1996	1996–1997	1997–1998	1998–1999	1999–2000	2000–2001	2001–2002	2002–2003
N-count	1,911	1,895	1,826	1,884	1,916	1,711	1,988	2,048	2,577	2,650

Increased ACT Assessment Scores

District 214 student scores on the ACT Assessment from the beginning of the program in 1994 through 2001 are reported in Table 5.2 (page 19). In each of the four tests, students increased their performance on the ACT Assessment on average by 0.4 (reading and science) to 1.0 (English). Moreover, in 2003, during which all students took the ACT Assessment through the Illinois statewide PSAE program, the average scores exceeded the average scores in 1994 with the exception of science. This is most impressive given that *all* students were tested in 2003 not just college-bound students as was the previous practice. Highlights in each of the test areas are provided below:



English

- 1994 average score 21.1, in 2001 rose to 22.1 (+1.0)
- 2003 average score was 21.5, higher than 1994 average

Mathematics

- 1994 average score was 22.2, in 2001 rose to 23.1 (+0.9)
- 2003 average score was 22.5, higher than 1994 average

Reading

- 1994 average score was 21.9, in 2001 rose to 22.3 (+0.4)
- 2003 average score was 22.0, higher than 1994 average

Science

- 1994 average score was 22.1, in 2001 rose to 22.5 (+0.4)
- 2003 average score was 21.9, slightly lower than 1994 average

Composite

- Average composite score increased from 21.9 in 1994 to 22.6 in 2001 (+0.7)
- 2003 average composite score was 22.1, higher than 1994 average

Comparison of student scores in 1994 and 2001 by gender also revealed increases in all test areas for both males and females. Here are some highlights:

Increased ACT Assessment Scores by Gender

English

- 1994 average score for females was 21.6, in 2001 rose to 22.5 (+0.9)
- 1994 average score for males was 20.6, in 2001 rose to 21.6 (+1.0)

Mathematics

- 1994 average score for females was 21.6, in 2001 rose to 22.5 (+0.9)
- 1994 average score for males was 22.7, in 2001 rose to 23.8 (+1.1)

Reading

- 1994 average score for females was 22.1, in 2001 rose to 22.6 (+0.5)
- 1994 average score for males was 21.7, in 2001 rose to 22.1 (+0.4)

Science

- 1994 average score for females was 21.6, in 2001 rose to 22.1 (+0.5)
- 1994 average score for males was 22.6, in 2001 rose to 23.0 (+0.4)

Composite

- 1994 average score for females was 21.8, in 2001 rose to 22.5 (+0.7)
- 1994 average score for males was 22.0, in 2001 rose to 22.7 (+0.7)
- Minimal differences in gender performance in both 1994 and 2001; there was no increase in the difference between female and male performance between 1994 and 2001 since the increases by males and females were comparable.



Table 5.2**GROWTH IN ACT ASSESSMENT TEST SCORES**

	Graduation Year	1993–1994	1994–1995	1995–1996	1996–1997	1997–1998	1998–1999	1999–2000	2000–2001	Δ 1994–2001	2002–2003 ¹
	N-count	1,911	1,895	1,826	1,884	1,916	1,711	1,988	2,048		2,650
English	Mean	21.1	21.2	21.3	21.9	21.7	21.9	21.7	22.1	+1.0	21.5
	sd	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.4	5.8		6.1
Mathematics	Mean	22.2	22.3	22.3	22.8	23.2	23.0	22.8	23.1	+0.9	22.5
	sd	5.3	5.3	5.1	5.3	5.5	5.3	5.3	5.4		5.6
Reading	Mean	21.9	22.2	22.2	22.1	22.2	22.2	21.9	22.3	+0.4	22.0
	sd	6.1	6.2	6.3	5.9	6.2	6.1	5.9	6.2		6.1
Science	Mean	22.1	22.3	22.3	22.3	22.3	22.3	22.0	22.5	+0.4	21.9
	sd	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.7	5.0	4.9	4.8	5.0		5.2
Composite	Mean	21.9	22.1	22.2	22.4	22.5	22.5	22.2	22.6	+0.7	22.1
	sd	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.8		5.0

Increased ACT Assessment Scores by Race/Ethnicity

Average ACT Assessment scores obtained by District 214 students by race/ethnicity are shown in Table 5.3. Over this eight-year period, the average scores for African American and Caucasian students increased in all four test areas and composite score, thereby closing the gap between African American and Caucasian performance. The average scores for Mexican American and Puerto Rican students increased in math and science during this period. Puerto Rican students also had a slight increase in average composite scores. Average scores in all other test areas for these three groups decreased.

¹ 2003 was the second and most recent year of the Illinois statewide PSAE program through which all eleventh-grade students were tested.

Table 5.3**GROWTH IN ACT ASSESSMENT TEST SCORES
BY RACE/ETHNICITY—DISTRICT 214**

	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
African American					
1994 (n=22)	15.9	17.4	17.6	18.3	17.4
2001 (n=28)	18.7	19.6	20.5	19.8	19.7
Δ	+2.8	+2.2	+2.9	+1.5	+2.3
Caucasian					
1994 (n=1433)	21.4	22.1	22.1	22.3	22.1
2001 (n=1523)	22.7	23.3	23.0	22.9	23.1
Δ	+1.3	+1.2	+0.9	+0.6	+1.0
Mexican American					
1994 (n=46)	19.1	19.5	20.1	19.9	19.7
2001 (n=88)	18.4	20.2	19.1	20.0	19.5
Δ	-0.7	+0.7	-1.0	+0.1	-0.2
Asian American					
1994 (n=145)	20.9	24.6	22.2	22.5	22.7
2001 (n=235)	20.3	23.7	20.1	21.3	21.5
Δ	-0.6	-0.9	-2.1	-1.2	-1.2
Puerto Rican					
1994 (n=36)	18.3	19.4	19.3	19.6	19.3
2001 (n=26)	17.7	20.2	18.5	20.6	19.5
Δ	-0.6	+0.8	-0.8	+1.0	+0.2

**Increased Performance Compared
to State Results**

Another indicator of progress is to compare the average ACT Assessment results for District 214 to Illinois state results between 1994 and 2003. Table 5.4 reports the results for college-bound students in 1994 and all students in 2003.

- In 1994 and 2003, District 214 average scores are higher than state averages.
- The difference between District 214 averages and state averages increased significantly between 1994 and 2003, suggesting that District 214's progress outpaced the progress of all schools in Illinois on average.

Table 5.4**COMPARISON OF 1994 AND 2003 ACT ASSESSMENT RESULTS—DISTRICT 214 AND STATE OF ILLINOIS**

	1994					2003				
	District 214		State		Δ	District 214		State		Δ
	Mean	sd	Mean	sd		Mean	sd	Mean	sd	
English	21.1	5.4	20.5	5.5	0.6	21.5	6.1	19.6	6.3	1.9
Mathematics	22.2	5.3	20.6	5.2	1.6	22.5	5.6	20.2	5.5	2.3
Reading	21.9	6.1	21.4	6.2	0.5	22.0	6.1	20.4	6.2	1.6
Science	22.1	4.8	21.2	4.8	0.9	21.9	5.2	20.1	5.1	1.8
Composite	21.9	4.7	21.1	4.8	0.8	22.1	5.0	20.2	5.3	1.9

Increased ACT Assessment Scores for Students Taking Core Preparatory Program by Race/Ethnicity

ACT research has shown that students who take a core coursework program in high school, defined as four years of English, three years each of mathematics, social science, and science, are more likely to attain higher ACT Assessment test scores than students who take a less-than-core preparatory program in high school—provided that the courses they take are rigorous courses, the students work hard in these courses, and they obtain good grades. For the most part, this finding suggests the same trend in District 214 results from 1994 through 2001.



Here are some of the highlights:

- Tables 5.5 and 5.6 report the detailed results. Please note that some of the sample sizes are quite small, so results need to be interpreted cautiously.
- While some racial/ethnic groups increased their performance over time, the finding revealed that some groups did not improve their performance, indicating the need for further attention. African American, Caucasian, and Puerto Rican students who took a core preparatory program increased their

Table 5.5

**ANALYSIS OF ACT ASSESSMENT RESULTS 1994-2001
FOR STUDENTS TAKING CORE BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

		English			Math			Reading			Science			Composite		
		1994	2001	Δ^1	1994	2001	Δ^1	1994	2001	Δ^1	1994	2001	Δ^1	1994	2001	Δ^1
African American/Black	N	6	8		6	8		6	8		6	8		6	8	
	Mean	20.7	23.3	2.6	21.2	23.1	1.9	21.7	24.3	2.6	20.7	22.3	1.6	21.2	23.1	1.9
	sd	4.5	7.1		5.8	7.1		6.9	7.4		4.1	6.7		4.6	6.8	
Caucasian American/White	N	471	647		471	647		471	647		471	647		471	647	
	Mean	22.8	24.0	1.2	23.5	24.5	1.0	23.9	24.2	0.3	23.4	24.0	0.6	23.5	24.3	0.8
	sd	4.9	5.2		4.9	5.0		5.8	5.7		4.6	4.4		4.4	4.5	
Mexican American/Chicano	N	8	32		8	32		8	32		8	32		8	32	
	Mean	20.1	19.4	-0.7	21.3	21.0	-0.3	21.3	19.7	-1.6	21.6	20.5	-1.1	21.3	20.3	-1.0
	sd	5.1	4.8		2.4	4.7		7.1	4.4		3.1	4.2		3.6	4.1	
Asian American/Pacific Islander	N	58	94		58	94		58	94		58	94		58	94	
	Mean	22.8	21.8	-1.0	26.1	24.7	-1.4	24.2	21.7	-2.5	23.9	21.9	-2.0	24.3	22.6	-1.7
	sd	5.7	5.5		5.0	5.5		6.9	6.4		5.1	4.3		5.2	4.8	
Puerto Rican/Cuban/Other	N	14	6		14	6		14	6		14	6		14	6	
	Mean	20.0	20.0	0	21.1	23.2	2.1	21.9	23.8	1.9	20.1	24.0	3.9	20.9	23.2	2.3
	sd	5.3	6.4		3.8	7.2		5.9	7.8		4.0	7.7		4.1	6.8	

¹ Δ = Average 2001 – Average 1994

average scores on the ACT Assessment between 1994 and 2001. Mexican American students and Asian American students, however, experienced slight decreases in average scores during the same time period, which may have been due to a change in the population of students in those subgroups.

- Average scores attained by students taking a core preparatory program outscored those students taking a noncore preparatory program in every racial/ethnic group and for every year, 1994-2001.



Table 5.6

**ANALYSIS OF ACT ASSESSMENT RESULTS 1994-2001
FOR STUDENTS TAKING LESS THAN CORE BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

		English			Math			Reading			Science			Composite		
		1994	2001	Δ^1	1994	2001	Δ^1	1994	2001	Δ^1	1994	2001	Δ^1	1994	2001	Δ^1
African American/Black	N	14	18		14	18		14	18		14	18		14	18	
	Mean	14.2	16.6	2.4	16.1	18.1	2.0	16.2	18.9	2.7	17.3	18.4	1.1	16.0	18.1	2.1
	sd	4.5	5.1		3.4	3.8		5.3	5.2		2.9	3.8		3.4	4.1	
Caucasian American/White	N	958	828		958	828		958	828		958	828		958	828	
	Mean	20.7	21.7	1.0	21.4	22.4	1.0	21.2	22.0	0.8	21.7	22.1	0.4	21.4	22.2	0.8
	sd	5.2	5.7		5.1	5.3		5.9	5.9		4.6	4.8		4.6	4.9	
Mexican American/Chicano	N	37	55		37	55		37	55		37	55		37	55	
	Mean	18.9	17.8	-1.1	19.2	19.7	0.5	19.8	18.8	-1.0	19.5	19.7	0.2	19.4	19.1	-0.3
	sd	5.0	5.7		5.3	4.6		5.2	6.5		4.3	4.5		4.3	4.9	
Asian American/Pacific Islander	N	87	136		87	136		87	136		87	136		87	136	
	Mean	19.6	19.2	-0.4	23.6	22.9	-0.7	20.9	19.1	-1.8	21.5	20.9	-0.6	21.6	20.7	-0.9
	sd	6.4	6.6		5.6	5.7		6.9	6.4		4.7	4.8		5.5	5.3	
Puerto Rican/Cuban/Other	N	22	19		22	19		22	19		22	19		22	19	
	Mean	17.2	16.9	-0.3	18.2	19.5	1.3	17.5	16.8	-0.7	19.2	19.8	0.6	18.2	18.5	0.3
	sd	4.6	4.9		4.1	4.8		5.0	4.6		3.7	4.6		3.8	4.2	

¹ Δ = Average 2001 – Average 1994



Progress in NCLB Areas and in Meeting Illinois State Standards: Class of 2003

An additional indicator of the effectiveness of District 214's efforts is to examine student progress in the focus areas of the No Child Left Behind Act—reading and mathematics. District 214 records of students who had taken EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT Assessment were analyzed, and their average growth was compared to average growth nationally between these two pairs of assessments. The results in reading and mathematics are highlighted below:

Reading

- District 214 students experienced a higher than average growth in reading. Students who took EXPLORE and PLAN experienced an average growth in reading of 2.29 scaled score points. Average growth nationally is 1.9.
- District 214 students taking PLAN and the ACT Assessment have had essentially equivalent growth as students nationally. Students who took PLAN-ACT experienced an average increase of 3.47 scaled score points in reading while the average growth nationally is 3.40.
- District 214 students had significantly more students meeting state standards in reading than all Illinois schools on average. The percentage of students in District 214 meeting or exceeding the Prairie State reading standard is 68.7%, compared to 58.2% for the state.

Mathematics

- District 214 students who took EXPLORE and PLAN experienced an average growth in math of 1.98, which is equivalent to the average growth nationally of 2.0.
- District 214 students who took PLAN and the ACT Assessment experienced substantially larger growth than students nationally. District 214 students experienced an average increase in score of 3.08 scaled score points compared to the average national growth of 1.9.
- District 214 students had significantly more students meeting state standards in math than all Illinois schools on average. The percentage of students in District 214 meeting or exceeding the Prairie State mathematics standard is 70.3%, which is a dramatic improvement over the state percentage of 53.6%.

The effectiveness of the district in meeting state performance standards is yet another indicator. Table 5.7 below shows the percentages of students in District 214 meeting or exceeding the Prairie State standards in 2003. District 214 attained higher percentages of students meeting or exceeding state standards in all areas than the average percentages across all Illinois schools.

Table 5.7

PERCENT MEETING ILLINOIS STATE STANDARDS IN 2003

	Reading	Math	Writing	Science	Social Science
District	68.7	70.3	74.8	66.3	70.4
State	58.2	53.6	59.5	52.8	56.7

Increased Readiness for College

Another indicator of the effectiveness of District 214’s efforts is the percentage of students who attain ACT Assessment scores that are sufficiently high that students are quite likely to succeed in credit-bearing college coursework. Through research, ACT has identified three College Readiness Benchmarks:

- 18 in English
- 22 in mathematics
- 24 in science

Students need to meet or exceed these benchmarks if they are to have even odds of succeeding in a college English composition course, college algebra course, and college biology course, respectively². The results for District 214 students, from 1994 to 2001, are highlighted below:

English

— Percent of District 214 students ready for standard English increased from 83% to 86% between 1994 and 2001. Even when all students were tested in 2003, 83% of **all** students were ready for a standard college English composition course.



² The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are based on course placement research in postsecondary institutions whereby students have a 50% chance of obtaining a course grade of B or better and greater than 75% chance of obtaining a C or better.

- From 1994-2001, the number of students scoring in the highest English score range (33-36) increased from 1% to 4%. Even when all students were tested in 2003, 4% of all students attained scores in the highest range.
- From 1994-2001, the number of students scoring in the lowest English score range (1-12) decreased by 1%. When all students tested in 2003, the number of students scoring in the lowest range increased by only 1%.



Mathematics

- Percent ready for standard college algebra coursework increased from 65% in 1994 to 71% in 2001. When all students were tested in 2003, 63% were ready to enter a college algebra course.
- From 1994-2001, the number of students scoring in the high mathematics score range (33-36) increased from 3% to 4%. When all students tested in 2003, 5% attained scores in highest range.
- From 1994-2001, the number of students scoring in the lowest math score range (1-12) decreased from 1% to less than 1%. In 2003, the number rose to 1%, but fewer than in 1994.

Reading

- From 1994-2001, the number of students scoring in the highest reading score range (33-36) remained the same, 6% in 1994 compared to 6% in 2001. When all students tested in 2003, 5% of all students attained scores in the highest range.
- From 1994-2001, the number of students scoring in the lowest reading score range (1-12) also remained constant at 5%. This percentage also remained the same in 2003.

Science

- Percent ready for college biology coursework increased from 34% in 1994 to 40% in 2001. When all students were tested in 2003, 35% scored at or above an ACT score, indicating readiness to enter a college biology course.
- From 1994-2001, the number of students scoring in the highest science score range (33-36) remained constant, 2% in 1994 compared to 2% in 2001. This percentage also remained the same in 2003 when all students tested.

— From 1994-2001, the number of students scoring in the lowest science score range (1-12) also remained the same, 1% in 1994 compared to 1% in 2001. This percentage rose to 3% in 2003 when all students were tested.

Between 1994 and 2001, District 214 increased in number (and percentages) of students ready for college-level work in English, math, and science. It also saw increased numbers of students scoring in the highest score ranges in English and math and decreased percentages of students scoring in the lowest score ranges in English and math. See Table 5.8 for a summary of the growth in college readiness indicators for District 214 students.

Table 5.8

SUMMARY OF COLLEGE READINESS INDICATORS FOR DISTRICT 214 (1994-2001)

	1994	2001	2003 (all students)
% ready for credit-bearing college work			
English	83%	86%	83%
Math	65%	71%	63%
Science	34%	40%	35%
% scoring in highest ACT score range			
English	1%	4%	4%
Math	3%	4%	5%
Reading	6%	6%	5%
Science	2%	2%	2%
% scoring in lowest ACT score range			
English	7%	6%	7%
Math	1%	0%	1%
Reading	5%	5%	5%
Science	1%	1%	3%



College Readiness Indicators by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

The percentages of District 214 students ready for college-level work in English, math, and science by gender and race/ethnicity are shown in Table 5.9. The percentages in boldface represent increases in students meeting or exceeding the college readiness benchmarks between 1994 and 2001. Here are a few highlights of these results:

English

- A high percentage of females have met/exceeded the English college readiness benchmark in 1994 and 2001.
- Percentage of males meeting/exceeding the English college readiness benchmarks increased 4% between 1994 and 2001.
- When all students tested in 2003, the percentages of students meeting/exceeding the English benchmark did not decrease significantly.
- Percentages of African American, Caucasian, Mexican American students meeting/exceeding the English benchmark increased between 1994 and 2001. Those for Asian American and Puerto Rican students slightly decreased.

Mathematics

- The percentages of students meeting/exceeding the college algebra readiness benchmark increased between 1994 and 2001 for both genders and all racial/ethnic groups.
- When all students tested in 2003, the percentages of students meeting/exceeding the college algebra benchmark decreased from the 2001 percentages only slightly for all groups except Hispanics.

Science

- The percentages of students meeting/exceeding the college biology readiness benchmark increased between 1994 and 2001 for both genders and all racial/ethnic groups except Asian Americans.
- When all students tested in 2003, the percentages of students meeting/exceeding the college biology benchmark were similar to the 1994 percentages for females, males, Caucasians, and Asian Americans. The 2003 percentages were lower for African American, Mexican American, and Puerto Rican students.

Table 5.9**COLLEGE READINESS INDICATORS
BY GENDER AND RACE**

	1994		2001		2003	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
% ready for credit-bearing coursework						
English						
Females	970	87%	1059	86%	1326	84%
Males	941	81%	981	85%	1309	80%
African American	22	41%	28	68%	37	64%
Caucasian	1433	86%	1523	89%	1833	89%
Mexican American	46	67%	88	68%	139	54%
Asian American	145	77%	235	76%	210	75%
Puerto Rican	36	69%	26	66%	77	57%
Mathematics						
Females	970	62%	1059	68%	1326	61%
Males	941	68%	981	74%	1309	67%
African American	22	33%	28	39%	37	30%
Caucasian	1433	64%	1523	73%	1833	73%
Mexican American	46	46%	88	55%	139	28%
Asian American	145	81%	235	82%	210	77%
Puerto Rican	36	44%	26	46%	77	30%
Science						
Females	970	32%	1059	35%	1326	31%
Males	941	38%	981	45%	1309	39%
African American	22	14%	28	19%	37	8%
Caucasian	1433	35%	1523	42%	1833	41%
Mexican American	46	19%	88	23%	139	5%
Asian American	145	42%	235	30%	210	37%
Puerto Rican	36	17%	26	30%	77	6%

The results achieved by District 214 are impressive. Scores increased from 1994 through 2001, and District 214 increased in the number of its students who are ready for college-level work in English, math, and science. The percentages of District 214 students meeting state standards are above the state average, and District 214's average growth in composite scores between EXPLORE and PLAN and between PLAN and the ACT Assessment has exceeded national averages. As further evidence of progress, when all students took the ACT Assessment as part of the PSAE program in 2003, their average scores did not decrease significantly from the averages for the college-bound students. In fact, in many instances, they were equivalent to the average scores of District 214 college-bound students who took the ACT Assessment in 1994.





6. Lessons Learned

District 214's experience with EPAS provides a number of insights into the implementation of a systematic and sustainable assessment program. In the many challenges faced by students, teachers, administrators, and parents during this improvement process, there were many lessons learned.

1. Take Assessment Results Seriously

Administrators and teachers must support the premise that all students can improve on the knowledge and skills measured by an integrated assessment program. This is especially important if a school chooses to use EPAS as the basis of a systematic process for increasing student achievement.

2. Measure Student Progress Through an Integrated Approach

This challenge involves melding accreditation, school improvement planning, No Child Left Behind requirements, and EPAS into one seamless instructional-assessment process.

“Our experience with the EPAS system has provided focus and accountability to the process of assessment in High School District 214. Each year that we have administered these tests we have grown more confident in our ability to plan and implement strategic instructional improvements that are based upon student needs. Consequently, we are intervening when and where it matters.”

— Dr. Elizabeth A. Ennis
Superintendent
Township High School
District 214

School and district improvement initiatives, NCA accreditation, and NCLB processes all require standardized assessments to validate achievement. There must be a method of articulating all these assessments so that results can be compared and interpreted coherently.

3. Create an Assessment-literate Staff

An understanding of how to collect, analyze, manage, report, and support the purposeful utilization of assessment data is a significant task. Collecting data without using it makes it challenging to keep an assessment program in place. An assessment-literate staff will have a basic understanding of measurement and the ability to interpret data.

4. Make Students Accountable for their Growth

For almost all high school students in the United States, the ACT Assessment has some relevance. As a student ponders his or her future and the possibility of college, the importance of a good score on the ACT becomes increasingly apparent. Students can become self-directed learners by using EPAS. Using predicted ACT scores and item analysis results tied to Standards for Transition are two ways that EPAS results can be used to raise achievement.

5. Use a Data-driven System to Make Decisions and Communicate Results

Each stakeholder in the process needs different information to evaluate the process. This results in the need for electronic reporting as well as paper results. Instituting a reporting capability to meet the needs of individual stakeholders is essential to making data meaningful.

6. Align Curriculum and Assessment

Classroom teachers must be focused on their courses and their curriculum and the instructional methodologies needed to deliver them. They need to be sure that they are teaching what students need to know to be ready for postsecondary education/work and also to be sure that their curriculum is aligned with their assessments.

7. Believe that All Students Can Achieve

A successful assessment program does not just happen. It requires passion. In her book *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*, Margaret Wheatly writes:

“Large and successful change efforts start with conversations among friends, not with those in power. Some friends and I started talking.... Change doesn’t happen from a leader announcing the plan. Change begins from deep inside a system, when a few people notice something they will no longer tolerate, or respond to a dream of what’s possible. We just have to find a few others who care about the same thing. Together we will figure out what our first step is, then the next, then the next. Gradually, we become large and powerful. We don’t have to start with power, only with passion.”





In District 214, passion for change came from many places:

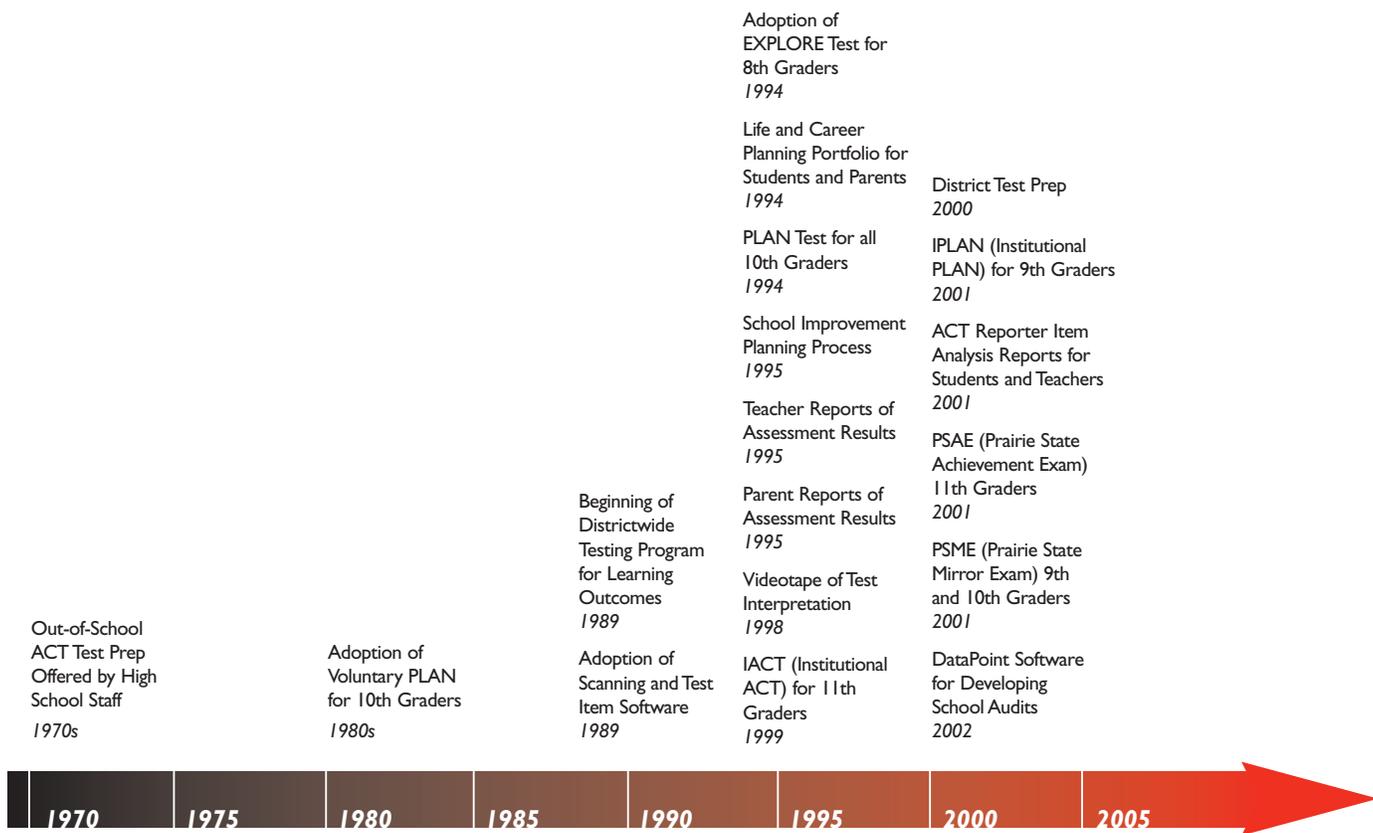
- From the strong support of the school board and superintendent to a maintenance crew that carried desks up flights of stairs so that students would test under appropriate conditions.
- From the special education coordinators who tested *all* special needs students to the assessment staff who worked through problem after problem to make sure that all students had equity of opportunity.
- From the parents who made sure that their children arrived at school with breakfast to the vast majority of students who gave their best effort when it didn't even affect their grades!

Faculty, staff, and parents dreamed and created a legacy to enhance the futures of students in District 214. Hopefully, their success will inspire other districts facing the challenges of improving and measuring student achievement.

Timeline—EPAS Development

Township High School District 214

For most districts, the implementation of a comprehensive system takes time—to weigh what is currently in place and effective, to analyze what is missing, and to determine the priority areas to integrate. The timeline for District 214 is summarized below.



Timeline



For more information or assistance,
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