

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES

In this appendix, we provide a brief snapshot of each of the districts in our sample. The case studies provide contextual information as well as data highlighting the number of standardized test administrations and the test completion time for district- and state-mandated tests in each school district. Additionally, we present teacher perspectives captured through our focus groups. We have used pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the districts participating in our study.

## VERTON: A Small, High-Poverty School District without 1:1 Technology



Overton serves a rural area with a population of approximately 8,000 people. The total student population in the district was roughly 1,500 during the 2014-2015 school year. A high percentage of Overton students live in poverty: over 95% of students in the district received free or reduced-price lunch.<sup>29</sup> The district is historically low performing. Since the 2008-2009 school year, the district has consistently earned either a “D” or an “F” rating or its equivalent. In 2015, the district was rated a “D” based on 2014-2015 data. Taking all federal, state, and local revenue into account, Overton received nearly \$11,000 per pupil.

## TESTING IN THE DISTRICT

Overton students in 2014-2015 took 256 state- and district-mandated assessments in K-12, counting all administrations of each test. Of the 256 tests, only 19% were state-mandated. The number of state and district assessments given in each grade averaged 20 but ranged from 0-31, with the greatest amount of state and district testing occurring in grades 5 and 8 (31 tests each). District testing accounted for 26 of the test administrations in these grades. Grade 3 students took the greatest number of state-mandated tests, with four state tests administered a total of eight times. District testing varied across the remaining grades, but every grade from K-8 took at least 21 district-mandated tests. High school students took no district-mandated tests.

On average, Overton students spent 15.6-16.2 hours taking state- and district-mandated tests in K-12 in 2014-2015. Students in grades 5 and 8 spent the greatest amount of time testing overall (28-30 hours and 28.83–30.83 hours, respectively). They also spent the most time taking district tests (both 15-17 hours). Grades 3, 6, and 7 spent about as much time on state tests as on district tests. Students in high school only took state tests. Students in grades K-2 and 4 spent more time on district tests than on state tests.

Case Study Table 1 shows the total number of tests and total completion time in each grade, broken out by district and state. Case Study Table 2 shows the number of tests that students took per grade in 2014-2015. For a test given multiple times a year, each administration is counted. This means that a total of four tests in a given grade may be four different tests or the same test administered four times a year. To clarify this, we have listed the name of the test with the number of administrations in parentheses in order to show how the total was derived.

<sup>29</sup> In 2014-2015, Overton began participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which enables the district to provide free lunches to 100% of the district’s students without collecting income data from all parents. Because districts can qualify for CEP for schools with a poverty rate as low as 40%, CEP makes precise poverty rates difficult to know. In 2013-2014, the last year before CEP went into effect in Mississippi, Overton had a free or reduced-price lunch percentage of over 95%.

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## OVERTON: A Small, High-Poverty School District without 1:1 Technology



### CASE STUDY TABLE 1: Number of Tests and Completion Time by Grade

| Grade                        | K    | 1  | 2  | 3     | 4  | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8           | 9         | 10   | 11        | 12 |
|------------------------------|------|----|----|-------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-----------|------|-----------|----|
| # of State Tests Given       | 5    | 3  | 3  | 8     | 4  | 5     | 4     | 4     | 5           | 3         | 2    | 2         | 0  |
| Time on State Tests (hrs)    | 2.7  | 1  | 1  | 11.58 | 10 | 13    | 10.83 | 10.83 | 13.83       | 7.33-9.33 | 5.75 | 4.92      | 0  |
| # of District Tests Given    | 21   | 21 | 21 | 21    | 24 | 26    | 24    | 24    | 26          | 0         | 0    | 0         | 0  |
| Time on District Tests (hrs) | 11   | 11 | 11 | 11    | 12 | 15-17 | 12    | 12    | 15-17       | 0         | 0    | 0         | 0  |
| # of Total Tests Given       | 26   | 24 | 24 | 29    | 28 | 31    | 28    | 28    | 31          | 3         | 2    | 2         | 0  |
| Total Time on Tests (hrs)    | 13.7 | 12 | 12 | 22.58 | 22 | 28-30 | 22.83 | 22.83 | 28.83-30.83 | 7.33-9.33 | 5.75 | 4.92-6.92 | 0  |

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## OVERTON: A Small, High-Poverty School District without 1:1 Technology



### CASE STUDY TABLE 2: Test Administrations per Grade

| Grade           | Pre-K | K  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5   |
|-----------------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| <b>State</b>    | N/A   | 1. MKAS <sup>2</sup> (2)<br>2. STAR Reading (3)                                      | 1. STAR Reading (3)  | 1. STAR Reading (3)  | 1. MKAS <sup>2</sup> (1)<br>2. STAR Reading (3)<br>3. PARCC ELA (2)<br>4. PARCC Math (2) | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)  | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)<br>3. MST (1)   |
| <b>District</b> |       | 3. STAR Reading (6)<br>4. STAR Math (9)<br>5. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>6. i-Ready Math (3) | 2. STAR Reading (6)<br>3. STAR Math (9)<br>4. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>5. i-Ready Math (3) | 2. STAR Reading (6)<br>3. STAR Math (9)<br>4. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>5. i-Ready Math (3) | 5. STAR Reading (6)<br>6. STAR Math (9)<br>7. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>8. i-Ready Math (3)     | 3. STAR Reading (9)<br>4. STAR Math (9)<br>5. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>6. i-Ready Math (3) | 4. STAR Reading (9)<br>5. STAR Math (9)<br>6. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>7. i-Ready Math (3)<br>8. Case21 Science (2) |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    |       | <b>26</b>  | <b>24</b>  | <b>24</b>  | <b>29</b>  | <b>28</b>  | <b>31</b>   |

| Grade           | 6  | 7  | 8   | 9  | 10                      | 11                              | 12       |
|-----------------|--|--|---|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| <b>State</b>    | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)  | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)  | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)<br>3. MST (1)   | 1. PARCC Algebra I (2)<br>2. Biology 1 (1) | 1. PARCC English II (2) | 1. US History (1)<br>2. ACT (1) |          |
| <b>District</b> | 3. STAR Reading (9)<br>4. STAR Math (9)<br>5. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>6. i-Ready Math (3) | 3. STAR Reading (9)<br>4. STAR Math (9)<br>5. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>6. i-Ready Math (3) | 4. STAR Reading (9)<br>5. STAR Math (9)<br>6. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>7. i-Ready Math (3)<br>8. Case21 Science (2) |  |                         |                                 |          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>28</b>  | <b>28</b>  | <b>31</b>   | <b>3</b>                                   | <b>2</b>                | <b>2</b>                        | <b>0</b> |

### OTHER TESTS SOME, BUT NOT ALL, STUDENTS TAKE

For context purposes, we list below other tests that some students in Overton take in a school year.

- **Teacher-Created Tests.** Students at all grade levels routinely take tests created by their individual teachers to measure mastery of the curriculum. Students may also take tests created by groups of teachers, although no group tests were noted by Overton teachers in our focus groups.
- **SATP2 Re-tests.** Students who did not pass the 2013–2014 Algebra I, English II, Biology I, or U.S. History SATP2 exams were allowed to re-test two times.
- **Career Planning and Assessment System (CPAS).** The CPAS exam is given to vocational students in their senior year of high school. It is administered twice.

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## VERTON: A Small, High-Poverty School District without 1:1 Technology



- **Mississippi Alternate Assessment of Extended Curriculum Frameworks (MAAECF).** The MAAECF was given to all students with disabilities who were unable to participate in the regular state assessment in 2014-2015.
- **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).** NAEP is administered to a random group of students in grades 4, 8, and 12 every few years.
- **World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA).** The WIDA was administered to all students entering the district for the first time in 2014-2015 who reported speaking another language at home. This test was administered to determine students' eligibility for the English language development program.
- **Advanced Placement (AP) Tests.** AP tests are administered to students in advanced placement courses to determine if students can receive college credit.
- **PSAT.** The PSAT is typically administered to tenth grade students. The test is used to identify National Merit Scholars.
- **ReadWorks.** ReadWorks is a free, online resource that enables teachers to find reading passages and comprehension questions aligned to the state standards. It is not a testing program, but teachers can use the passages and questions as part of teacher-created tests.

## TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON TESTING

### I. Elementary Teachers

The perspectives of Overton elementary teachers about district assessments varied greatly. Some teachers expressed satisfaction with aspects of the district assessment program, while some expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the same aspects. For instance, one elementary teacher recommended continuing the STAR test because the teacher thought it was useful in identifying student skill deficiencies, while another elementary teacher recommended eliminating STAR tests because the teacher felt it did not accurately measure student readiness for the state ELA test. Furthermore, one teacher thought monthly STAR testing was beneficial while another found it detrimental. Finally, teachers were divided about whether the district tested too much or just enough. Two teachers thought that district testing was enough; one of these teachers indicated testing had been too much in the past but had been reduced at her school as of the interview. Only one of the teachers we interviewed thought that students experienced too much testing. This same, teacher, however, thought that no tests should be eliminated. These differences in perspectives may indicate a difference in how tests and data are used at various elementary schools across the district—even those tests administered districtwide—since each of the three teachers in the focus group worked at different schools.

As for state assessments, the elementary teachers were primarily concerned about a lack of clear communication about the 2015-2016 MAP assessment as of the date of the focus groups in November 2015. For two years in a row, none of the teachers knew what to expect from the state assessments. They viewed all other assessments as tools that should lead students to be successful on the state exams but found it hard to leverage other assessment data when they did not know what the state test would be like.

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## VERTON: A Small, High-Poverty School District without 1:1 Technology



### II. Middle School Teachers

Middle school teachers in Overton believed there was the “right amount” of testing at the middle school level, but they still had several concerns about both district and state testing. First, they felt that the district changed testing programs too often. One teacher commented that the district adopts a new progress-monitoring assessment each year, which is very disruptive to teachers. Teachers expressed the need for more professional development on the district assessments in place now so that they could utilize all the tools available within the testing software. Secondly, they believed there was too much ambiguity in the test questions in the district item bank that they must use for their nine-weeks assessments. They thought this led to unfair assessments. Additionally, they wanted access to detailed student performance data from the STAR assessments so that they could use it in making instructional decisions. Without the data, the STAR tests were of little value to them. Finally, they spoke strongly about needing data coaching to support their use of any assessment. Teachers wanted support not only on better utilizing testing software, but also on how to analyze the data that it provides. They also sought professional development on how to write better test questions aligned to state tests for their own teacher-created tests.

Overton middle school teachers held the same frustrations about state testing as teachers across the district. These frustrations include the rapid change in state tests and a lack of PARCC data, despite it being over six months after the test was administered at the time of the focus group. One middle school teacher was very vocal about wanting to entirely eliminate state testing because students constantly underperform. Middle school teachers also wanted more teacher input in state testing procedures at the school level to ensure that the process runs more smoothly.

### III. High School Teachers

Because there are no high school district-mandated assessments, the high school educators (2 teachers, 1 administrator) we interviewed were mostly concerned about the state-mandated assessments. High school educators believed PARCC required too much testing. They also expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with the lack of communication from MDE regarding state assessments. Changing assessments caused great confusion among teachers and hampered their ability to prepare their students. They expressed frustration at rumors that students would not need to pass the assessments to graduate. Students questioned whether they would have to take the test at all. Teachers feared being evaluated based on a test that students had no stake in.

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## HILLSIDE: A Small, Lower-Poverty School District with 1:1 Technology



Hillside serves a rural area with a population of approximately 15,000 people. The total student population in the district was roughly 2,700 during the 2014-2015 school year. Approximately 60% of Hillside students receive free or reduced-price lunch. The district is a high-performing district with an “A” accountability rating. Taking all federal, state, and local revenue into account, Hillside received nearly \$8,700 per pupil.

## TESTING IN THE DISTRICT

Hillside students in 2014-2015 took 144 state- and district-mandated assessments in K-12, counting all administrations of each test. Of the 144 tests, 33% were state-mandated. The number of state and district assessments given in each grade averaged 11 but ranged from 0-23, with the greatest amount of state and district testing occurring in grades 2 (18) and 3 (23). District testing accounted for 15 of the test administrations in these grades. In addition to taking the greatest number of tests overall, grade 3 students also took the greatest number of state-mandated tests, with four state tests administered a total of eight times. District testing varied across the remaining grades, but every grade from K-8 took at least six district-mandated tests. District testing at the high school level was confined to grades 9-10, but Hillside eleventh and twelfth graders are likely to take tests designed for a particular group of students, such as exams for an advanced diploma.

On average, Hillside students spent a total of 13 hours taking state- and district-mandated tests in K-12 in 2014-2015. Students in grades 8 and 10 spent the greatest amount of time testing overall and on both state and district tests. Students in grades K-2 and 9 spent more time on district than state tests; all other students spent more time on state tests.

Case Study Table 3 shows the total number of tests and total completion time in each grade, broken out by district and state. Case Study Table 4 shows the number of tests that students took per grade in 2014-2015. For a test given multiple times a year, each administration is counted. This means that a total of four tests in a given grade may be four different tests or the same test administered four times a year. To clarify this, we have listed the name of the test with the number of administrations in parentheses in order to show how the total was derived.

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## HILLSIDE: A Small, Lower-Poverty School District with 1:1 Technology

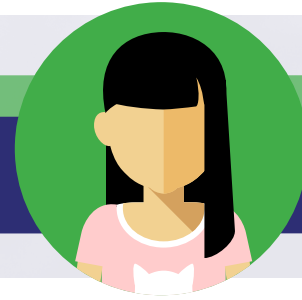


### CASE STUDY TABLE 3: Number of Tests and Completion Time by Grade

| Grade                        | K    | 1  | 2  | 3     | 4  | 5  | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9     | 10          | 11   | 12 |
|------------------------------|------|----|----|-------|----|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|------|----|
| # of State Tests Given       | 5    | 3  | 3  | 8     | 4  | 5  | 4     | 4     | 5     | 1     | 5           | 1    | 0  |
| Time on State Tests (hrs)    | 2.7  | 1  | 1  | 11.58 | 10 | 13 | 10.83 | 10.83 | 13.83 | 2-4   | 13.08-15.08 | 2.92 | 0  |
| # of District Tests Given    | 12   | 9  | 15 | 15    | 10 | 6  | 7     | 6     | 9     | 3     | 4           | 0    | 0  |
| Time on District Tests (hrs) | 3.25 | 3  | 6  | 6     | 7  | 6  | 7     | 6     | 11.83 | 8     | 11.75       | 0    | 0  |
| # of Total Tests Given       | 17   | 12 | 18 | 23    | 14 | 11 | 11    | 10    | 14    | 4     | 9           | 1    | 0  |
| Total Time on Tests (hrs)    | 5.95 | 4  | 7  | 17.58 | 17 | 19 | 17.83 | 16.83 | 25.67 | 10-12 | 24.83-26.83 | 2.92 | 0  |

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## HILLSIDE: A Small, Lower-Poverty School District with 1:1 Technology



### CASE STUDY TABLE 4: Test Administrations per Grade

| Grade           | Pre-K | K  | 1                                       | 2   | 3  | 4   | 5   |
|-----------------|-------|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| <b>State</b>    | N/A   | 1. MKAS <sup>2</sup> (2)<br>2. STAR Reading (3)          | 1. STAR Reading (3)                     | 1. STAR Reading (3)                                   | 1. MKAS <sup>2</sup> (1)<br>2. STAR Reading (3)<br>3. PARCC ELA (2)<br>4. PARCC Math (2) | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)                     | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)<br>3. MST (1) |
| <b>District</b> |       | 3. DIBELS (3)<br>4. STAR Math (6)<br>5. STAR Reading (3) | 2. STAR Math (6)<br>3. STAR Reading (3) | 2. STAR Math (6)<br>3. STAR Reading (3)<br>4. SRI (6) | 5. STAR Math (6)<br>6. STAR Reading (3)<br>7. SRI (6)                                    | 3. SRI (6)<br>4. NWEA MAP ELA (2)<br>5. NWEA MAP Math (2) | 4. NWEA MAP ELA (3)<br>5. NWEA MAP Math (3)         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    |       | <b>17</b>  | <b>12</b>                               | <b>18</b>   | <b>23</b>  | <b>14</b>   | <b>11</b>   |

| Grade           | 6   | 7   | 8  | 9   | 10   | 11         | 12       |
|-----------------|---|---|--|---|--|------------|----------|
| <b>State</b>    | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)                               | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)       | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)<br>3. MST (1)  | 1. Biology I (1)  | 1. PARCC English II (2)<br>2. PARCC Algebra I (2)<br>3. US History (1)                             | 1. ACT (1) |          |
| <b>District</b> | 3. NWEA MAP ELA (3)<br>4. NWEA MAP Math (3)<br>5. Orleans-Hanna (1) | 3. NWEA MAP ELA (3)<br>4. NWEA MAP Math (3) | 4. NWEA MAP ELA (3)<br>5. NWEA MAP Math (3)<br><br>6. Curriculum ELA (1)<br>7. Curriculum Math (1)<br>8. Curr. Science (1) | 2. Curriculum ELA (1)<br>3. Curriculum Math (1)<br>4. Curr. Biology (1) | 4. Curriculum ELA (1)<br>5. Curr. Math II (1)<br>6. Curr. Chemistry (1)<br>7. Curr. World Hist.(1) |            |          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>11</b>   | <b>10</b>                                   | <b>14</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>9</b>   | <b>1</b>   | <b>0</b> |

### OTHER TESTS SOME, BUT NOT ALL, STUDENTS TAKE

For context purposes, we list below other tests that some students in Hillside take in a school year.

- **Teacher-Created Tests.** Students at all grade levels routinely take tests created by their individual teachers to measure mastery of the curriculum. Students may also take tests created by groups of teachers. For Hillside’s specialized curriculum in grades 9-12 (referred to herein as “Curriculum”), teachers must submit student coursework as part of each Curriculum exam in order for students to receive an overall score in each Curriculum course. These coursework assignments, though part of the Curriculum exams, are developed and assigned by each teacher using guidelines provided by the Curriculum.



# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## HILLSIDE: A Small, Lower-Poverty School District with 1:1 Technology



- **Advanced Curriculum Assessments.** For students to receive the Advanced Curriculum diploma, which is an honors diploma in the Curriculum program, they must take Advanced Curriculum assessments, which are for advanced courses beyond the standard Curriculum course of study. Hillside students in eleventh and twelfth grades may choose to pursue the Advanced Curriculum diploma.
- **SATP2 Re-tests.** Students who did not pass the 2013-2014 Algebra I, English II, Biology I, or U.S. History SATP2 exams were allowed to re-test two times.
- **Edsphere.** Edsphere is a computerized personalized-learning program for ELA that contains diagnostic assessments with aligned skill-building lessons for remediation. This program, and its assessment, is used at the discretion of Hillside teachers.
- **Advanced Placement (AP) Tests.** AP tests are administered to students in advanced placement courses to determine if students can receive college credit. AP Calculus is offered at Hillside High School.
- **Mississippi Alternate Assessment of Extended Curriculum Frameworks (MAAECF).** The MAAECF was given to all students with disabilities who were unable to participate in the regular state assessment in 2014-2015.
- **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).** NAEP is administered to a random group of students in grades 4, 8, and 12 every few years.
- **World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA).** The WIDA was administered to all students entering the district for the first time in 2014-2015 who reported speaking another language at home. This test was administered to determine students' eligibility for the English language development program.
- **PSAT.** The PSAT is typically administered to tenth grade students. The test is used to identify National Merit Scholars.

## TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON TESTING

### I. Elementary Teachers

All teachers at the elementary level thought students were overexposed to testing, despite the fact that Hillside had a low number of tests relative to others in our sample. Recent changes in district curricula, state standards, and state assessments were a source of extreme anxiety to teachers. They described an environment in which district and state testing had become so frequent that parents and students could not differentiate the purposes and importance of each of the tests.

Elementary teachers thought that the STAR Reading, NWEA MAP, and SRI assessments were valuable to their work because they provided immediate feedback, automatically grouped students for remediation, and easily tracked student growth. They also found STAR Reading to be

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## HILLSIDE: A Small, Lower-Poverty School District with 1:1 Technology



an accurate predictor of success on the third grade MKAS<sup>2</sup> test. Despite strongly liking each of these products individually, they felt that all of the products used together amounted to too much time taken away from instruction.

Elementary teachers additionally expressed great dissatisfaction with state-mandated testing. They had not yet received scores from the PARCC exam as of November 2015, and they did not know how to use the MKAS<sup>2</sup> cut score to make meaningful analyses about the performance of their students.

### II. Middle School Teachers

Like their elementary counterparts, middle school teachers thought students were overexposed to testing. All expressed dissatisfaction with the state- and district-mandated assessments given to middle school students, although they more strongly disliked the state assessments. Middle school teachers believed that testing was necessary but felt that more emphasis on data analysis and use was required to make testing truly worthwhile. They felt that too many tests not only took away from instruction but also prevented them from making good use of any one test.

### III. High School Teachers

Of all the Hillside teacher groups, high school teachers were the most satisfied with the current testing regimen in Hillside, even though they still had concerns about testing. Two of three high school teachers thought students were overexposed to testing, but the picture is more complicated at high school where “over-testing” can be ascribed to the double-testing for both Hillside’s Curriculum tests and the state tests, rather than frequent progress-monitoring assessments.

An encouraging sign was that all high school teachers were satisfied with the Curriculum assessments. They thought these tests were helpful to their instruction and that student success on the assessments translated to success in college. Like elementary and middle school teachers, they were dissatisfied with the state assessments. They thought the time invested in preparing for and taking state assessments was wasted.

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## MANNEQUIN: A Mid-Sized, Lower-Poverty District without 1:1 Technology



Mannequin serves a community with a population of over 30,000 people. The total student population in the district was roughly 5,800 during the 2014-2015 school year. Approximately 40% of Mannequin students received free or reduced-price lunch. The district is a high-performing district with an “A” accountability rating. Taking all federal, state, and local revenue into account, Mannequin received nearly \$8,500 per pupil.

## TESTING IN THE DISTRICT

Mannequin students in 2014-2015 took 130 state- and district-mandated assessments in K-12, counting all administrations of each test. Of the 130 tests, 37% were state-mandated. The number of state and district assessments given in each grade averaged 10 but ranged from 0-15, with the greatest amount of district and state testing occurring in grades 3-8. Grade 3-8 students took 14-15 state- and district-mandated tests each year. High school students took far fewer district and state tests, but Mannequin high school students are more likely to take tests that are designed for a particular group of students, such as exams for advanced placement or career and technical education courses. Grade 3 students took the greatest number of state-mandated tests, with four state tests administered a total of eight times. District testing was consistent across each of the following grade spans: K-3 (three assessments with seven total administrations), 4-8 (four assessments with a total of ten administrations), and 9-12 (three assessments with a total of four administrations). The number of district-mandated math tests was greater than district-mandated ELA tests only because the district’s K-3 ELA screener is considered a state test. The district did not mandate any assessments in other subject areas.

On average, Mannequin students spent 11.9-13.9 hours taking state- and district-mandated tests in 2014-2015. Fifth and eighth grade students spent the greatest amount of time testing. In grades 3, 5, 8, and 9-11,<sup>30</sup> students spent more time on state tests. Students in grade 4 spent comparable amounts of time on state and district tests. Students in grades K-2 and 6-7 spent more time on district tests.

Case Study Table 5 shows the total number of tests and total completion time in each grade, broken out by district and state. Case Study Table 6 shows the number of tests that students took per grade in 2014-2015. For a test given multiple times a year, each administration is counted. This means that a total of four tests in a given grade may be four different tests or the same test administered four times a year. To clarify this, we have listed the name of the test with the number of administrations in parentheses in order to show how the total was derived.

<sup>30</sup> This assumes ninth graders took both the PARCC Algebra I exam and the Biology I exam.

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## MANNEQUIN: A Mid-Sized, Lower-Poverty District without 1:1 Technology



**CASE STUDY TABLE 5:** Number of Tests and Completion Time by Grade

| Grade                        | K        | 1      | 2      | 3           | 4        | 5        | 6          | 7           | 8           | 9          | 10        | 11        | 12 |
|------------------------------|----------|--------|--------|-------------|----------|----------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----|
| # of State Tests Given       | 5        | 3      | 3      | 8           | 4        | 5        | 4          | 4           | 5           | 3          | 2         | 2         | 0  |
| Time on State Tests (hrs)    | 2.7      | 1      | 1      | 11.58       | 10       | 13       | 10.83      | 10.83       | 13.83       | 7.33-9.33  | 5.75      | 4.92      | 0  |
| # of District Tests Given    | 7        | 7      | 7      | 7           | 10       | 10       | 10         | 10          | 10          | 3          | 1         | 0         | 0  |
| Time on District Tests (hrs) | 3.67-6   | 3.67-6 | 3.67-6 | 3.67-6      | 8.67-11  | 8.67-11  | 8.67-11    | 8.67-11     | 8.67-11     | 2.5-3.75   | .833-1.25 | 0         | 0  |
| # of Total Tests Given       | 12       | 10     | 10     | 15          | 14       | 15       | 14         | 14          | 15          | 6          | 3         | 2         | 0  |
| Total Time on Tests (hrs)    | 6.37-8.7 | 4.67-7 | 4.67-7 | 15.25-17.58 | 18.67-21 | 21.67-24 | 19.5-21.83 | 19.50-21.83 | 22.50-24.83 | 9.83-13.08 | 6.58-7    | 4.92-6.92 | 0  |

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## MANNEQUIN: A Mid-Sized, Lower-Poverty District without 1:1 Technology



### CASE STUDY TABLE 6: Test Administrations per Grade

| Grade           | Pre-K | K   | 1   | 2   | 3  | 4  | 5  |
|-----------------|-------|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| <b>State</b>    | N/A   | 1. MKAS <sup>2</sup> (2)<br>2. STAR Reading (3)                 | 1. STAR Reading (3)   | 1. STAR Reading (3)   | 1. MKAS <sup>2</sup> (1)<br>2. STAR Reading (3)<br>3. PARCC ELA (2)<br>4. PARCC Math (2) | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)  | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)<br>3. MST (1)                                      |
| <b>District</b> |       | 1. STAR Math (3)<br>2. District ELA (2)<br>3. District Math (2) | 2. STAR Math (3)<br>3. District ELA (2)<br>4. District Math (2) | 2. STAR Math (3)<br>3. District ELA (2)<br>4. District Math (2) | 5. STAR Math (3)<br>6. District ELA (2)<br>7. District Math (2)                          | 3. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>4. i-Ready Math (3)<br>5. District ELA (2)<br>6. District Math (2) | 4. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>5. i-Ready Math (3)<br>6. District ELA (2)<br>7. District Math (2) |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    |       | <b>12</b>   | <b>10</b>   | <b>10</b>   | <b>15</b>  | <b>14</b>  | <b>15</b>  |

| Grade           | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10                      | 11       | 12                              |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|-------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|
| <b>State</b>    | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)  | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)  | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)<br>3. MST (1)                                      | 1. PARCC Algebra I (2)<br>2. Biology 1 (1)       | 1. PARCC English II (2) |          |                                 |
| <b>District</b> | 3. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>4. i-Ready Math (3)<br>5. District ELA (2)<br>6. District Math (2) | 3. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>4. i-Ready Math (3)<br>5. District ELA (2)<br>6. District Math (2) | 4. i-Ready ELA (3)<br>5. i-Ready Math (3)<br>6. District ELA (2)<br>7. District Math (2) | 3. Dist. English I (1)<br>4. Dist. Algebra I (2) | 2. Dist. English II (1) |          | 1. US History (1)<br>2. ACT (1) |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>14</b>  | <b>14</b>  | <b>15</b>  | <b>6</b>   | <b>3</b>                | <b>2</b> | <b>0</b>                        |

### OTHER TESTS SOME, BUT NOT ALL, STUDENTS TAKE

For context purposes, we list below other tests that some students take in a school year.

- **Teacher-Created Tests.** Students at all grade levels routinely take tests created by their individual teachers to measure mastery of the curriculum. Students may also take tests created by groups of teachers. Elementary school teachers in Mannequin work in grade-level teams to create weekly tests for each grade level. High school teachers in each subject area give quarterly assessments in addition to any tests mandated by the district.
- **SATP2 Re-tests.** Students who did not pass the 2013-2014 Algebra I, English II, Biology I, or U.S. History SATP2 exams were allowed to re-test two times.
- **Career Planning and Assessment System (CPAS).** The CPAS exam is given to vocational students in their senior year of high school. It is administered twice.

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## MANNEQUIN: A Mid-Sized, Lower-Poverty District without 1:1 Technology



- **Mississippi Alternate Assessment of Extended Curriculum Frameworks (MAAECF).** The MAAECF was given to all students with disabilities who were unable to participate in the regular state assessment in 2014–2015.
- **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).** NAEP is administered to a random group of students in grades 4, 8, and 12 every few years.
- **World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA).** The WIDA was administered to all students entering the district for the first time in 2014–2015 who reported speaking another language at home. This test was administered to determine students' eligibility for the English language development program.
- **Advanced Placement (AP) Tests.** AP tests are administered to students in AP courses to determine if students can receive college credit.
- **International Baccalaureate (IB) Tests.** IB tests are administered to students in IB courses to determine if students can receive college credit.
- **PSAT.** The PSAT is typically administered to tenth grade students. The test is used to identify National Merit Scholars.

## TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON TESTING

### I. Elementary Teachers

Elementary teachers in Mannequin thought that students are given too many tests and that testing takes too much time in the school year. Their concerns were based on the district assessments and the third grade MKAS<sup>2</sup>. They felt the district assessments were not aligned to their pacing guides and, as a result, to what was taught in the classroom. This makes data from the test of little instructional value to them. Teachers believed that data from STAR, i-Ready, and teacher-created weekly tests were sufficient for making instructional decisions in their classrooms. They valued the STAR and i-Ready exams highly because the results are immediate, allowing them to analyze data quickly and serve their students more effectively. Interestingly, they felt that a high-stakes test like MKAS<sup>2</sup> should be given in an earlier grade when students are still being taught to read and appropriate interventions can be provided.

### II. Middle School Teachers

Mannequin's middle school teachers thought that students took too many state- and district-mandated tests even though Mannequin tests the least of all the districts studied. They reported the district-mandated i-Ready tests made many of the resources (e.g., computers, labs, and the media center) that would enhance their lessons unavailable due to the frequency of computerized testing. They have concerns about whether the i-Ready test data is valuable because they do not think that students take them seriously (they noted that this was the first year of i-Ready and that, as of October when the focus group occurred, it was too early to determine whether the cost in terms of time and resources would be worthwhile). One teacher estimated a test was given in the building somewhere on 36 days of the school year.

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## MANNEQUIN: A Mid-Sized, Lower-Poverty District without 1:1 Technology



The middle school teachers thought that the assessments they created in their own classrooms were most valuable to their practice because they provide instant feedback about student learning, and they are aligned to what has been taught in the classroom. They also thought that students take teacher-created assessments more seriously because they are more aligned to classroom lessons and students get to show what they have been taught.

### III. High School Teachers

High school teachers thought that students took too many state- and district-mandated tests. Teachers have to cover classes for others during test administration days, and it takes away valuable instruction time. Additionally, they thought that state tests, particularly the Mississippi-created subject-area tests, set a low bar for students. Because all other tests are created to ensure that students can be successful on the state tests, other tests reinforce the low bar. They think that students are not being challenged, and teachers are not able to teach more rigorous skills and content because the state tests dictate the focus of their classrooms.

The high school teachers thought that their own assessments were most valuable because they were rigorous and more reflective of what their students were capable of doing. They thought that district-created assessments are more helpful when student data from the exams is compiled, analyzed, and used in a collaborative meeting where teachers discussed the implications. Teachers with less experience also found district-created exams more helpful because they did not have as many teacher-created tests of their own to rely upon.

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## SUNSET: A Mid-Sized, High-Poverty District with Partial 1:1 Technology



The Sunset School District serves a community with a population of over 30,000 people. The total student population in the district was roughly 5,600 during the 2014-2015 school year. A high percentage of Sunset students live in poverty: over 90% of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.<sup>31</sup> The district is historically low-performing. Since the 2008-2009 school year, the district has consistently held either a “D” or an “F” rating or its equivalent. In 2015, the district was rated an “F” based on 2014-2015 data. Taking all federal, state, and local revenue into account, Sunset received nearly \$8,900 per pupil.

## TESTING IN THE DISTRICT

Sunset students in 2014-2015 took 269 state- and district-mandated assessments in K-12, counting all administrations of each test. Of the 269 tests, only 18% were state-mandated. The number of state and district assessments given in each grade averaged 21 but ranged from 6-27, with the greatest amount of state and district testing occurring in grades 3 and 5 (27 tests each). District testing accounted for 19 and 22, respectively, of the test administrations in these grades. In addition to tying for the greatest number of tests overall, grade 3 students also took the greatest number of state-mandated tests, with four state tests administered a total of eight times. District testing varied across the remaining grades, but every grade from 2-12 took at least 19 district-mandated tests.

On average, Sunset students spent 48.9-49.2 hours taking state- and district-mandated tests in K-12 in 2014-2015. Students in grades 5 and 8 spent the greatest amount of time testing overall (63 and 62.8 hours, respectively) and on state tests (13 and 13.8 hours, respectively); students in grade 5 are also tied for the most time spent on district tests (50 hours; tied with grade 4). All grades but kindergarten and grade 1 spent more time on district tests (49 hours annually) than on state tests (average time between 7.1-7.4 hours annually).

Case Study Table 7 shows the total number of tests and total completion time in each grade, broken out by district and state. Case Study Table 8 shows the number of tests that students took per grade in 2014-2015. For a test given multiple times a year, each administration is counted. This means that a total of four tests in a given grade may be four different tests or the same test administered four times a year. To clarify this, we have listed the name of the test with the number of administrations in parentheses in order to show how the total was derived.

<sup>31</sup>In 2014-2015, Sunset began participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which enables the district to provide free lunches to 100% of the district’s students without collecting income data from all parents. Because districts can qualify for CEP for schools with a poverty rate as low as 40%, CEP makes precise poverty rates difficult to know. In 2013-2014, the last year before CEP went into effect in Mississippi, Sunset had a free or reduced-price lunch percentage of approximately 90%.



# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## SUNSET: A Mid-Sized, High-Poverty District with Partial 1:1 Technology



### CASE STUDY TABLE 7: Total Number of Tests and Total Completion Time by Grade

| Grade                        | K   | 1 | 2  | 3     | 4  | 5  | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9           | 10    | 11          | 12 |
|------------------------------|-----|---|----|-------|----|----|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|----|
| # of State Tests Given       | 5   | 3 | 3  | 8     | 4  | 5  | 4     | 4     | 5     | 3           | 2     | 2           | 0  |
| Time on State Tests (hrs)    | 2.7 | 1 | 1  | 11.58 | 10 | 13 | 10.83 | 10.83 | 13.83 | 7.33-9.33   | 5.75  | 4.92        | 0  |
| # of District Tests Given    | 3   | 3 | 19 | 19    | 22 | 22 | 19    | 19    | 19    | 19          | 19    | 19          | 19 |
| Time on District Tests (hrs) | 1   | 1 | 49 | 49    | 50 | 50 | 49    | 49    | 49    | 49          | 49    | 49          | 49 |
| # of Total Tests Given       | 8   | 6 | 22 | 27    | 26 | 27 | 23    | 23    | 24    | 22          | 21    | 21          | 19 |
| Total Time on Tests (hrs)    | 3.7 | 2 | 50 | 60.58 | 60 | 63 | 59.83 | 59.83 | 62.83 | 56.33-58.33 | 54.75 | 53.92-55.92 | 49 |

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## CASE STUDY TABLE 8: Test Administrations per Grade

| Grade           | Pre-K | K   | 1                   | 2   | 3   | 4  | 5  |
|-----------------|-------|---|---------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>State</b>    | N/A   | 1. MKAS <sup>2</sup> (2)<br>2. STAR Reading (3) | 1. STAR Reading (3) | 1. STAR Reading (3)   | 1. MKAS <sup>2</sup> (1)<br>2. STAR Reading (3)<br>3. PARCC ELA (2)<br>4. PARCC Math (2)                              | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)  | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)<br>3. MST (1)  |
| <b>District</b> |       | 3. STAR Math (3)                                | 2. STAR Math (3)    | 2. STAR Math (3)<br>3. District ELA (4)<br>4. District Math (4)<br>5. District Science (4)<br>6. District History (4) | 5. STAR Math (3)<br>6. District ELA (4)<br>7. District Math (4)<br>8. District Science (4)<br>9. District History (4) | 3. STAR Math (3)<br>4. STAR Reading (3)<br>5. District ELA (4)<br>6. District Math (4)<br>7. District Science (4)<br>8. District History (4) | 4. STAR Math (3)<br>5. STAR Reading (3)<br>6. District ELA (4)<br>7. District Math (4)<br>8. District Science (4)<br>9. District History (4) |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    |       | <b>8</b>  | <b>6</b>            | <b>22</b>   | <b>27</b>   | <b>26</b>  | <b>27</b>  |

| Grade           | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10   | 11   | 12   |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>State</b>    | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)  | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)  | 1. PARCC ELA (2)<br>2. PARCC Math (2)<br>3. MST (1)  | 1. PARCC Algebra I (2)<br>2. Biology I (1)   | 1. PARCC English II (2)  | 1. US History (1)<br>2. ACT (1)  |  |
| <b>District</b> | 3. STAR Reading (3)<br>4. District ELA (4)<br>5. District Math (4)<br>6. District Science (4)<br>7. District History (4) | 3. STAR Reading (3)<br>4. District ELA (4)<br>5. District Math (4)<br>6. District Science (4)<br>7. District History (4) | 4. STAR Reading (3)<br>5. District ELA (4)<br>6. District Math (4)<br>7. District Science (4)<br>8. District History (4) | 3. STAR Reading (3)<br>4. District ELA (4)<br>5. District Math (4)<br>6. District Science (4)<br>7. District History (4) | 3. STAR Reading (3)<br>4. District ELA (4)<br>5. District Math (4)<br>6. District Science (4)<br>7. District History (4) | 2. STAR Reading (3)<br>3. District ELA (4)<br>4. District Math (4)<br>5. District Science (4)<br>6. District History (4) | 1. STAR Reading (3)<br>2. District ELA (4)<br>3. District Math (4)<br>4. District Science (4)<br>5. District History (4) |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>23</b>  | <b>23</b>  | <b>24</b>  | <b>22</b>  | <b>21</b>  | <b>21</b>  | <b>19</b>  |

### OTHER TESTS SOME, BUT NOT ALL, STUDENTS TAKE

For context purposes, we list below tests that some students take in a school year.

- **Teacher-Created Tests.** Students at all grade levels routinely take tests created by their individual teachers to measure mastery of the curriculum. Students may also take tests created by groups of teachers, although no group tests were noted by Sunset teachers in our focus groups.
- **A+ Learning.** A+ Learning is a computerized personalized-learning program for all subjects that creates individualized lessons for students and has an assessment component. Middle school students enrolled in computer lab class use this program.
- **USA Test Prep.** USA Test Prep is a computerized testing program that individual teachers may use to create tests or generate bell-ringer questions. Sunset High School teachers use this program to create “checkpoint” assessments throughout the school year.
- **SATP2 Re-tests.** Students who did not pass the 2013-2014 Algebra I, English II, Biology I, or U.S. History SATP2 exams were allowed to re-test two times.

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## SUNSET: A Mid-Sized, High-Poverty District with Partial 1:1 Technology



- **Advanced Placement (AP) Tests.** AP tests are administered to students in advanced placement courses to determine if students can receive college credit. Several AP courses are offered at Sunset High School in each of the four core subject areas.
- **Mississippi Alternate Assessment of Extended Curriculum Frameworks (MAAECF).** The MAAECF was given to all students with disabilities who were unable to participate in the regular state assessment in 2014–2015.
- **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).** NAEP is administered to a random group of students statewide in grades 4, 8, and 12 every few years.
- **World-Class Instructional Design Assessment (WIDA).** The WIDA was administered to all students entering the district for the first time in 2014–2015 who reported speaking another language at home. This test was administered to determine students' eligibility for the English language development program.
- **PSAT.** The PSAT is typically administered to tenth grade students. The test is used to identify National Merit Scholars.

## TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON TESTING

### I. Elementary Teachers

Sunset elementary teachers had many different concerns about testing, although they had mixed opinions on whether students were “over-tested.” First, they noticed the increase in testing at the elementary level over time. This increase is particularly hard on grades 3–5, and they worry that third graders feel “burnt out,” especially due to the high-stakes MKAS<sup>2</sup>. One of their biggest concerns had to do with district testing and its alignment to district curriculum maps. They felt that there were alignment issues between the curriculum maps and the assessments in each subject. Additionally, K–1 teachers expressed reservations about plans to extend district assessments to K–1. Teachers worried that the tests would not be written to an appropriate reading level for students still learning basic literacy skills. Furthermore, they expressed pressure to finish teaching the year’s objectives in the first three quarters of the year in order to spend the last nine weeks doing review and test prep. Finally, elementary teachers expressed dissatisfaction with state-mandated testing, saying that they never received scores from the PARCC exam after feeling that the test itself was too long. They felt unprepared for PARCC because they lacked resources about what the test would be like. They were experiencing similar feelings about MAP when the focus groups occurred in November 2015.

Elementary teachers did have some positive things to say about testing. They acknowledged testing’s importance to instructional decision-making and felt that their colleagues thought the same. They found district testing more helpful than harmful. Elementary teachers were very positive that the STAR Reading and Math assessments were valuable to their work because they provide immediate feedback, automatically group students for remediation, and easily track student growth. They also found STAR Reading to be an accurate predictor of success on the third grade MKAS<sup>2</sup>.

# APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES, CONTINUED

## SUNSET: A Mid-Sized, High-Poverty District with Partial 1:1 Technology



### II. Middle School Teachers

Of all of the Sunset teachers interviewed for this report, middle school teachers were the most positive about testing. They did not voice strong complaints about the prevalence of either state- or district-mandated testing. The largest area of concern was the alignment of the district's nine-weeks assessments to curriculum maps. Like teachers at the elementary level, middle school teachers reported problems with the nine-weeks assessments covering content that was not on the curriculum map until later in the year. This mismatch caused feelings of anxiety among students and feelings of unfairness among teachers. They wanted more communication from the instructional strategists about what objectives would be covered by the exams so that they could better prepare students. One teacher also expressed concern that the questions on the district assessments relied too heavily on "regurgitation" of information rather than critical thinking.

Like the elementary teachers, Sunset middle school teachers reported that they must teach all of their objectives in the first three quarters of the year so that they could spend the entire last nine weeks reviewing. Teachers at one middle school stated that some of the core subject teachers even rotated to new students during this time to give students a different "perspective."

### III. High School Teachers

High school teachers interviewed were mostly positive about testing but did express two important concerns. First, high school teachers felt that the STAR Reading exam had not been properly implemented at the high school. They had serious questions about its accuracy because they observe many students not taking the test seriously and simply marking answers to complete it. Furthermore, teachers reported the test was administered too late in the semester (October) and that not all teachers received the data, making it not helpful to them as a tool. Second, teachers reported that the district benchmark assessments are given too frequently at the high school, which is on a 4X4 block schedule. To simulate nine-weeks assessments, the district benchmarks are given every four and a half weeks in state-tested subjects. Between these tests, teachers are required to give "checkpoint" assessments. Considering both the district assessments and the checkpoint assessments, these teachers are required to test every two weeks. Teachers felt that this constant testing takes away from instructional time, which is already limited due to block scheduling. They felt the district should move to a pre-assessment, midterm assessment, and end-of-course exam. Lastly, state-tested teachers reported that they must teach all of their objectives in the first three quarters of the semester because they spend the last quarter reviewing for state tests. With the frequent assessments and pressure to finish teaching content early, teachers feel a lot of pressure to cover every objective.