


Becoming Benchmark Ready at Fairfield County School District

with Mastery by Instructure

 South Carolina  2,300 Students

 Adopted Mastery Connect
Mastery Item Bank
Mastery View Predictive Assessments: 2013



Learn how Fairfield County adopted data-informed instruction, trained their staff on interpreting data reports, and became a state leader in assessment and curriculum map development with the right people, program, and Mastery by Instructure.

BRIDGING THE GAP

Fairfield County is a rural district in South Carolina situated between the capital of Columbia and Charlotte, North Carolina, committed to academic excellence. In recent years, it has received many awards, such as SCASA's Palmetto's Finest Award Winner, Palmetto's Gold and Silver Award Schools, and National Beta Club Schools of Distinction, to name a few.

After a previous vendor stopped fulfilling their assessment needs, Fairfield County needed a new partner in assessment.

"86% of our students are children of poverty, and we have made extraordinary efforts to close the achievement gap. That was one of the reasons why we started utilizing Mastery Connect close to 12 years ago. When we started this journey, we were looking for a platform to administer our benchmark assessments," Dr. Claudia Avery, Deputy Superintendent of Academics at Fairfield County, said.

Key Insights

- The relationship with Instructure has been critical to successful implementation and beyond.
- Mastery Connect builds student ownership of learning by empowering them to identify which concepts they have mastered and where they need to continue growing.
- Communicating expectations and providing educators with the opportunity to learn is essential for the buy-in of an assessment management system.
- Offer diverse, reliable formats to showcase student learning with Mastery Item Bank and Mastery View Predictive Assessments.

A LASTING PARTNERSHIP

The Instructure and the Mastery Connect teams have provided the technology and partnership needed since day one. Avery explained that their guidance was a major selling point when students and teachers were experiencing benchmarks for the first time and that the partnership over the years remains unwavering. Fairfield County has relied on its team of educators and their collaboration with Instructure to advise and build a standards-aligned assessment program in which students excelled.



Mastery Connect literally saved us because of the support that they provided us from the beginning and along the way. I would tell anyone this.

Dr. Claudia Avery, Deputy Superintendent at Fairfield County



DATA-DRIVEN, DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Creating a data-driven classroom starts with formative assessment.

“[Part of] our approach to assessment [is to] use the formative assessment data to inform and guide teaching and learning. So for the teachers, once they've given a formative assessment, they can adjust their strategies and classroom practices based on their students' needs,” Testing Coordinator, Amy Coker, said.

In addition to formative assessment, interventions for students in the classroom can be done strategically with data from Mastery Connect, according to Dr. Tiffany Simpson, Elementary Curriculum Coordinator.

“With Mastery Connect, all the data we receive has been effective... it's been beneficial to the teachers when they are grouping students and designing interventions to ensure they're able to pull those students that need additional assistance. With a certain skill, they can look at that Mastery Connect data and use it to guide their instruction.”

“And with Mastery Item Bank, teachers can create high-quality [formative] assessments. So the data is valid and reliable, and it helps teachers to inform their instructional decisions again, and then they can focus on targeted areas of improvement,” Coker added.

IMMEDIATE RESULTS WHEN AND WHERE THEY'RE NEEDED

Mastery Connect gets data into the hands of teachers and students faster. According to Dr. Avery, students and faculty at Fairfield County have come to rely on this real-time data.

“The results are so immediate. Teachers can use the data immediately to determine the next instructional steps and whether it's Tier One instruction or what they need to do for specific students at a more tiered level of support.”

Fairfield County's experience with Mastery Connect and the Mastery by Instructure assessment content shows the power of bringing data into the classroom.

To learn more about streamlining data-driven instruction, download your free copy of [A District Leader's Guide to Using Data](#).



And [with Mastery View Predictive Assessments], we want to ensure that our students have been exposed to different formats versus just multiple choice...Because the bottom line is if you teach the standards, and track student mastery of the standards, then our students should be able to do well on any assessment.



Leevette Malloy, Director of Secondary Education at Fairfield County

BRINGING EVERYONE ON THE SAME PAGE

Fairfield County uses Mastery View Predictive Assessments for its benchmark assessments. They also facilitate professional development to encourage educators to take full advantage of the data reports.

“With the benchmark assessments, we train educators (especially new staff members) on how to read the report when it comes back. We cover DOK levels 1, 2, and 3, and the percent of items answered correctly, projected achievement level, and more. This explanation ensures they have a thorough understanding before going back to train their staff members and facilitating that process in their buildings,” Malloy explained. [And when] talking about our state assessment, we identify where the majority of our questions are going to be such as level twos and threes and where our students are falling.”

In addition to providing data reports for teachers to inform instruction throughout the year, Mastery View Predictive Assessments are a reliable predictor of student performance on future summative assessments.

“Our benchmarks are pretty much in line as a predictor for the State English EOC exam...Students may fall anywhere between a 3 to 5 percentage point difference,” Malloy said.

Simpson added that these assessments give students “an opportunity to master, reconnect, and get another couple of experiences using the same tools they’ll use on state tests.”

EMPOWERING STUDENT LEARNING JOURNEYS

There have been several moments where Fairfield County has realized Mastery Connect’s impact - especially regarding student ownership and advocacy for their learning.

“...The first instance was when a teacher shared that a student scanned their bubble sheet and saw [that] they were in the red. The student turned to the teacher and said. ‘I can do better than that. Can I retake the assessment?’ For a child to say, I could do better than that. Then they went back to their seat and worked on some more of the assignment. The teacher provided a different strategy to reach that particular student. And then, the student went back to retake the assessment [and showed mastery]. For me, that is when I realized that Mastery Connect is doing exactly what we want it to do,” Dr. Avery said when describing the impact of Mastery Connect.

ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Looking ahead, Fairfield County plans to continue learning and using data from Mastery by Instructure products to provide students with the best learning experience possible. As a result of their digital 1:1 and assessment initiatives, one of their Title One elementary schools won a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence honor this year.