

# Granville County Uses PLATO eduTest Assessment to Better Instruct and Prepare Students for End-Of-Grade Test



## Overview—Granville County School District, Oxford, NC

- Currently, eleven schools serving grades 2–8 in Granville County Schools are using PLATO eduTest Assessment.
- Granville teachers using PLATO eduTest Assessment can quickly identify students' academic strengths and weaknesses in mathematics and reading and modify instruction to address individual learning needs.
- Granville students have responded positively to the interactive graphics and instant feedback of the PLATO assessments.

Granville County Schools is a well-respected district in the State of North Carolina; former superintendents have gone on to serve as state superintendent, deputy state superintendent, and as the leader of a national association for chief state school officers. Thomas Williams, Granville's current superintendent, served as the executive director of former Governor Hunt's Business Committee for Education before being selected for the top leadership role in Granville County Schools. The chairman of Granville's Board of Education, Leonard E. Peace, Sr., serves as an advisor to the State Board of Education. "Our Board of Education has always placed the development of strong leadership at the core of their mission," said Jan Allen, public information officer. "From recruiting and selecting strong leaders for the superintendency to developing strong instructional leadership focus at the classroom level, the impact of this core value is seen in very measurable results—higher student achievement."

## Granville Seeks to Recruit and Retain the Best Teachers

Raleigh/Durham is one of the fastest growing areas in the country, and as a result, Granville is building and expanding schools in the southern portion of the district. "Attracting and keeping quality teachers is an important goal for our Board of Education and the Granville community," reports Allen. "Providing teachers with the tools they need to be successful in their work is a powerful retention strategy." This is one of the reasons why the district began offering PLATO eduTest Assessment to its teachers in the fall of 2003. Currently, eleven schools serving grades 2–8 in Granville County Schools are using PLATO eduTest Assessment.

**INSTITUTION:** Granville County School District, North Carolina

**STUDENT POPULATION:** Serves approximately 8,600 racially-diverse students in 14 schools—two high schools, three middle schools, and nine elementary schools—seven of which are Title I schools.

**CLASSES:** Granville teachers use PLATO eduTest Assessment to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in mathematics and reading.

**CONTACT:** Russell Dixon, Instructional Technology Specialist

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JAN ALLEN,  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

## Teachers Use PLATO eduTest Assessment to Better Target Student Needs

Teacher response to PLATO eduTest Assessment has been tremendous. “Teachers see it as a valuable tool to assess student learning and regroup instruction accordingly. It empowers our teachers to be leaders—to see how their students are responding to instruction, and then tailor their instruction to targeted areas of improvement as seen through the analysis of student performance on benchmark assessments,” said Superintendent Tom Williams. “Before Granville began using PLATO eduTest Assessment teachers only had access to information on how their students performed on the entire test, not the individual objectives,” said Russell Dixon, Granville County School’s Instructional Technology Specialist. “The data provided with the previous testing method was not nearly as helpful to teachers as the reports that they are able to access using eduTest Assessment. Teachers think PLATO eduTest Assessment is very useful because they can quickly identify their students’ academic strengths and weaknesses in math and reading, and then modify instruction to focus only on the objectives that the students have not mastered. The teachers are using it as a diagnostic tool for individual instruction and to prepare for the end-of-grade state tests,” said Dixon.

Granville used a “train the trainer” professional development model to introduce teachers to PLATO eduTest Assessment. According to Dixon, the transition to PLATO eduTest Assessment was easy, and he feels the analysis by individual student, classroom, school, or the entire district is excellent. “The individual student analysis allows our teachers to personalize instruction. Not only are they using the benchmarks, but they are also creating their own tests.”

“Our teachers are using results to target areas in need of improvement and are creating mini lessons and class activities to address these needs,” said Ellen Gould, the director of instruction at Stovall-Shaw Elementary School. “Many teachers also use the eduTest Assessment reports to help

parents see areas of strength and need during parent/teacher conferences. We plan to continue to use eduTest Assessment as a tool to help parents work with our school to ensure student success,” said Gould.

PLATO eduTest Assessment “allows teachers to focus on areas of weakness, as indicated by the teacher-created assessments,” said Ann Timberlake, director of instruction at C.G. Credle Elementary School. “As a result, teachers can provide students more time in our instructional computer lab, assign a peer tutor, provide more small-group instruction, and inform parents,” said Timberlake.

## PLATO eduTest Assessment Also Gets Good Marks From Students

“Our students prefer PLATO eduTest Assessment to the paper-based bubble sheets that we previously used,” said Dixon.

“Because our students are visual learners, the graphics included with many of the assessment items are very appealing. With eduTest, we are assessing them using a medium familiar to them.”

“Our students like the instant feedback on how they did on the assessment,” said Rebecca Tilley, director of

instruction at Joe Toler-Oak Hill Elementary School. Pauline M. Brady, director of instruction at Mount Energy Elementary School, said her students “enjoy using the computer and have adapted well to the test structure.” “The first time the format was a little unfamiliar, and there was some anxiety, but now they are very comfortable with the process,” said Brady.

According to Mr. Dixon, Granville County Schools has committed to use PLATO eduTest Assessment for at least another three years. Dixon expects that teachers and students in Granville will continue to use the assessment reports to further modify their instruction and to improve student achievement.

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REBECCA TILLEY,  
DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTION