



## There's STILL Always Something Good Happening in Corunna!

Corunna Public Schools

Enrollment: 1,800

[www.corunna.k12.mi.us](http://www.corunna.k12.mi.us)



**During our original visit to Corunna, we found a strong and deep commitment to the expansion and support of FAME throughout the district. Chapter 2 of the Corunna story highlights some subsequent developments and adaptations to the FAME model that are worth sharing.**

By 2018-19, John Fattal (formerly the assistant superintendent and curriculum director for the district) had become the superintendent of Corunna Public Schools. Having a longtime supporter and believer in FAME in such an important position has been a definite advantage for FAME participation in the district. Dr. Kristy Walters continues to provide expertise in FAME and the formative assessment process for the district and continues to serve as a FAME Lead.

### Building on success

Since 2011, FAME has been a strong feature in teacher professional development, instructional improvement, and student performance in Corunna. Previously, over half of the faculty has actively participated in FAME as a Coach or Learning Team member.

As the 2018-19 school year approached, Corunna's leaders knew it was time to ask some serious questions about the district's direction, especially regarding professional development. Mr. Fattal, as has been his practice, depended heavily on existing research that supports best practices.

NOTE: This Case Study continues the story originally told in the FAME Case Study, *"There's Always Something Good Happening in Corunna,"* available at [www.FAMEmichigan.org](http://www.FAMEmichigan.org).

He also knew all efforts had to be a good fit for Corunna's teachers and of benefit to students. As a result, district leaders decided to continue to support FAME as a district-wide initiative, but with a twist.

"We think that the model we had been doing was good," Fattal said. "But we were losing some momentum, because we were asking teachers to do more and more.... We thought if we made [FAME participation] mandatory, without support, it would fail. By [State] mandate, we need to provide five days of professional development. We decided to use one day as our [Launching into Learning], and we would provide support with another day divided into six additional meetings after school. Teachers, meeting by building, would continue their learning, sharing, and dialogue about formative assessment."



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### FAME...with a twist

The emphasis on learning and embedding the formative assessment process would continue, since they recognized the value in improved teacher instruction and student learning. The changes would come in the ways Corunna would support each Learning Team's study and practice.

For most, the initial exposure to FAME and the formative assessment process is through an MDE-supported Launching into Learning training. With so many educators in the district already being familiar with FAME and formative assessment, they decided to hold their own launch—a "Corunna Launch." It was facilitated by Dr. Walters and Kim Young, Michigan Department of Education FAME coordinator for the state, with the assistance of some Corunna educators already involved in FAME. They helped with the facilitation and worked with different groups throughout the day.

With the expertise provided by these individuals and the already-established familiarity with FAME and the formative assessment process, the day was a success. They were encouraged by the targeted discussions about formative assessment in the classroom and the sharing of already-tested strategies for implementation. Returning FAME participants were re-energized and appreciative of the opportunity to continue their study and practice. New participants were pleased about the opportunity to become involved with an initiative that had already received positive feedback from teachers,

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*"The biggest thing right now is having more people who are knowledgeable about what formative assessment is, and the [FAME] Coaches can help people by aiding and answering questions."*

— Dr. Kristy Walters, FAME Coach

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students, and the community. The decision by the district to continue with FAME and have it become a major part of their professional development is an indication of the value they continue to place in the program.

### District approach...chapter 2

As the year unfolded, Dr. Walters was to be the primary person responsible for the planning of the six after-school meetings where all grade K-7 teachers met for one hour each month. As with the Launching into Learning, Dr. Walters was able to take advantage of the presence of FAME veterans in each of the buildings to assist with the meetings and other related tasks.

Since each meeting would be for one hour, a decision was made to focus on one component of the formative assessment process—formative feedback. It was selected because while formative feedback was an area of interest, it was not widely used in the district. They studied and talked about their past experiences using feedback in the classroom. They challenged and encouraged each other to implement what they had learned in providing feedback from the teacher *and* feedback from students.

To get a better understanding of the impact of their work, students were asked to complete a short survey about what instructional strategies they found most effective for their learning. Dr. Walters also had some of the students share their thoughts on camera. This led to the creation of a presentation with 16 students talking about what helped their learning the most. FAME Learning Teams viewed the presentation and talked about how they could be more effective with when and how they use the strategies.

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### CONTACTS



**John Fattal**  
Corunna Public Schools  
Superintendent  
[jfattal@corunna.k12.mi.us](mailto:jfattal@corunna.k12.mi.us)



**Dr. Kristy Walters**  
Corunna Public Schools  
Formative Assessment Coach  
[kwalters@corunna.k12.mi.us](mailto:kwalters@corunna.k12.mi.us)

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The Corunna teachers shared their 2018-19 experiences with the FAME Research and Development (R & D) Team, which is preparing a Focus on FAME professional learning document on formative feedback. This collaboration makes Corunna's learning available to a larger audience.

"We still have our four FAME Coaches in Corunna who are helping with teams," Dr. Walters said. "The biggest thing right now is having more people who are knowledgeable about what formative assessment is, and the Coaches can help people by aiding and answering questions."

These represent changes from the usual FAME Coach and Learning Teams model, where six to eight voluntary team members work with a Coach who serves as a facilitator (see FAME Professional Learning Model, back page). Under the updated plan, all Corunna teachers participate in a Learning Team. The Learning Teams, however, are organized by building. One advantage allowing this concept to work in Corunna is the high number of teachers who have already been involved in FAME. They are able to provide support to teachers who are new to FAME. Corunna's leaders believe this to be the best way to continue the good work already started, expand to other educators, and sustain the program for the long term.

### Future plans

Based on the 2018-19 experiences, Mr. Fattal and Dr. Walters continue to assess and make changes to improve teacher instruction and student performance. In a staff perception survey done in winter 2019, over 95% of the staff stated they believed the district should continue to embed formative assessment as a district goal. It remains the number one district goal for 2019-20, and includes plans to increase high school participation. This will be an interesting story to follow as the years unfold, and we expect there to be more chapters to come.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How might a school and/or district support the wider use of the formative assessment process by classroom teachers?
- What type of support from administrators and district offices is needed to promote such collaborative practices?
- How might faculties of school(s) work together to provide the needed support to learn about and to use formative assessment practices with their students?

### RELATED LINKS

Corunna Case Study (Chapter 1) [https://famemichigan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CaseStudy\\_Corunna\\_6.19.pdf](https://famemichigan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CaseStudy_Corunna_6.19.pdf)

### About FAME Case Studies

The FAME Research and Development Team members **Denny Chandler**, **Tara Kintz**, and **John Lane**, led by **Ed Roeber**, connect FAME participants to best practice and a growing set of formative assessment resources. They gather detailed information on FAME approaches with the potential to be replicated in districts across

Michigan. The FAME Project will share these stories through online resources, publications and media platforms. **To inquire about how your FAME Learning Team can be featured in a future case study, contact [dtchandler@fuse.net](mailto:dtchandler@fuse.net).**

Editor: Linda Wacyk, Communications Management – Michigan Assessment Consortium; [lwacyk@michiganassessmentconsortium.org](mailto:lwacyk@michiganassessmentconsortium.org)

## About FAME

[Formative Assessment for Michigan Educators \(FAME\)](#) is a joint effort by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Michigan Assessment Consortium. FAME is designed to reach all Michigan teachers and administrators with training in formative assessment. When applied to classroom instructional practice, the formative assessment process can become a vital part of improving teacher practice and positively impacting student achievement. In fact, the formative assessment process used by students and teachers in an effective and intentional manner connects to [Michigan's Top 10 in 10 Strategic Goals and Strategies](#) (Goals 2, 3, and 4).

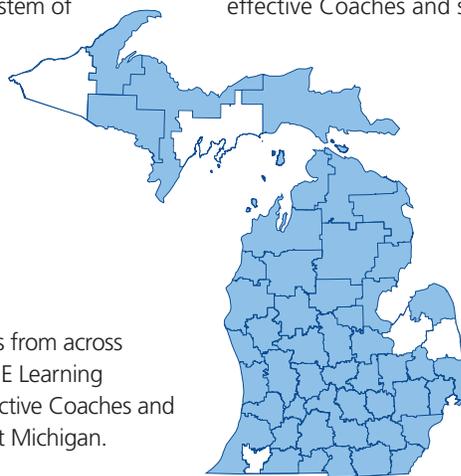
***“Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become more self-directed learners.”*** (CCSSO SCASS, 2017)

FAME began in 2008 in order to address MDE’s goal to provide different approaches to reach high school students who were low achievers. MDE partnered with Measured Progress to develop and implement the FAME program. According to Kim Young, who directs FAME for MDE, *“The formative assessment process is an essential part of a comprehensive assessment system. By financially supporting and endorsing FAME, the Michigan Department of Education is sending a strong message of the importance of formative assessment.”*

Today, this initiative continues as a collaborative endeavor of the MDE and the Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC). The mission of MAC is to improve student learning and achievement through a system of coherent curriculum, balanced assessment, and effective instruction. MAC’s role in FAME is to coordinate trainings, maintain an extensive online library of resources, and conduct research on professional development using the Coach and Learning Team model and its impact on teacher practice and student achievement.

By 2018, more than 800 FAME Coaches from across Michigan had been trained to lead FAME Learning Teams. At present, approximately 250 active Coaches and Learning Teams are working throughout Michigan.

**Kimberly Young**, Michigan Department of Education Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability, has served as the FAME manager since 2006. Contact her at [youngk1@michigan.gov](mailto:youngk1@michigan.gov).



**Shaded areas illustrate the influence of FAME Teams and Coaches throughout Michigan.**

***“Working collaboratively, educators will learn, implement, and reflect on the formative assessment process in order to guide student learning and teachers’ instructional practices.”***

FAME Project Goal

## FAME professional learning model

New FAME teams start in a similar manner. An individual learns about the FAME program from a conference presentation, a publication, or current FAME participant, and then shares it with others. A group of educators decides to become involved in FAME. One person agrees to take on the additional responsibilities of being a Coach, and then submits an application to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to form a new Learning Team. The number of new Learning Teams each year is influenced by available state and local finances and applicant location (MDE seeks to have active Learning Teams located throughout the state).

Once accepted, new Learning Teams are ready to start FAME training. Coaches complete their initial training via webinar and other learning sessions. In the fall, the Coach and Learning Team members participate in a session of *Formative Assessment: Launching into Learning*. This one-day training session provides information about the FAME program, the formative assessment process, and the Learning Team model. Teams complete the Launch prepared to begin their work.

Over time, Coaches have the opportunity to receive additional MDE-sponsored training — Cognitive Coaching Foundation Seminar® (Days 1-8) and Adaptive Schools Foundation Training® (Days 1-4). These trainings are critical in the development of effective Coaches and successful Learning Teams.

An additional layer of support is provided to each new and returning Coach through Regional Leads — former FAME Coaches who provide support for a group of Coaches. The Leads serve as a nearby resource person and valuable asset to Coaches, who learn — along with their Learning Teams — that they do not exist in isolation. Leads also schedule meetings with Coaches to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas.

Learn more at [www.famemichigan.org](http://www.famemichigan.org).