

**Online Registration**

Online registration will be launching in late May/early June. The technology department has created a 15 minute video for parents to assist them in the process. To view the video, click [here](http://youtu.be/8yRgfm1vF8Q). Additionally, there is a new link titled Training Videos under the Help Resources section of Technology Resources that will now be the central location for all training videos. **\*Cindy Slinger will be available at our Teaching + Learning Meeting for questions**.

**TLC + General Fund Allocation: Holly Crandell will be available at our Teaching + Learning Meeting for questions.**

There have been a number of inquiries regarding the information that Superintendent Ahart shared with you regarding funding for staffing. This is a very complex issue and the information below seeks to provide as much clarity as possible. There are two converging issues regarding DMPS funding for the 2015-16 school year and beyond: 1) General Fund appropriations and 2) TLC funding.

**General Fund Appropriation**

Historically, the growth rate needed to maintain current expenditures for DMPS has been approximately 3-3.5% each year.  The Governor recently announced on January 13 that the recommended growth rate for the 2015-16 school year would be 1.25% and 2.45% for the 2016-17 school year.  This growth rate is significantly below what DMPS expected to receive and creates a challenging budget situation.   Many DMPS costs such as health and dental insurance premiums, utilities, and supplies, will increase more than 1.25% next year.  DMEA and AFSCME contracts are to be re-negotiated for the coming year.  This creates a situation where the revenues may not be sufficient to meet the increased costs of current staffing levels and operations for the 2015-16 school year.

**Teacher Leadership and Compensation System**

* This is ‘new’ money, an addition to current State funding.  This money is not ‘taken’ from General Funding;  but this new funding is probably the main reason that the Governor and the legislature has determined there is less money to give for ‘General’ allowable growth.
* This $10 million dollar allocation will allow DMPS to move forward with hiring new positions via this categorical funding (can only be used for the identified purpose).  The Iowa Department of Education has indicated that these funds are not at risk over the next few years, but they must be used in accordance with the TLC plan.
* The various positions listed within the TLC system gives DMPS the opportunity to realign staffing to meet the challenge of reduced increases in General funding and the requirements of the new TLC funding.  DMPS leadership is carefully re-evaluating the distribution of coaches to maximize the funding.
* At the end of the day, TLC funds will provide DMPS the opportunity for a net increase in positions that would not have otherwise existed.

**Iowa Assessments: Cindy Slinger will be available at our Teaching + Learning Meeting for questions.** There will **not** be an Iowa Assessment presentation at the February T & L Meetings as there was in previous years. Instead, Building Administrators and Testing Coordinators are expected to view the Iowa Assessment KITE module before the February T & L Meetings. This module takes approximately 25 minutes to complete. The KITE is available for viewing at <https://dmschools.mindtickle.com/> The Iowa Assessment for Building Administrators and Test Coordinators

We are utilizing KITE in order to use T & L Meetings for learning and collaboration instead of disseminating informational items. However, there will be a Q & A Session at the February T & L Meetings to answer any questions building administrators and test coordinators may have after completing the module.  The Critical Iowa Assessment Information booklet (attached) will be referenced throughout the Overview of Administering the Iowa Assessments module.

Additionally, the assessment team has developed a KITE Module, *The Iowa Assessment for Teachers and Staff*, for teachers and staff administering the Iowa Assessment to students. The module is available at the link above. This module takes approximately 25 minutes to view and will help provide for more consistent test administration.  We have developed this KITE Module as a resource for building leaders and encourage all appropriate staff to view the module.

**FINAL CALL! Removal of Discontinued Textbooks:**

Central Stores is wrapping up the collection of discontinued textbooks, including Math Expressions and Investigations. If your school still has textbooks that need to be removed, please complete the steps below. **If you have questions, please contact Tom Sheehy (Central Stores) or Carlyn Cox**.

1. Collect and organize materials that need removed. If using boxes, please ensure they are study and are not overloaded. *(\*\*Note: Please do NOT pack discontinued materials with current materials.*)
2. Complete the electronic transfer form: <http://fs8.formsite.com/DMPSchools/form81/index.html>. The “deliver to location” is Central Stores. Specific items do not need to be listed on this form, however please indicate the quantity of materials and indicate that they are DISCONTINUED.
3. Place materials in a central location that is easily accessible for pick-up.

**Science/Social Studies Materials Exploration Committee:**

In December, our Science/Social Studies Materials Exploration Committee made the recommendation that materials review in the area of science be suspended until the fall of 2015, pending state approval of the Next Generation Science Standards. However, the committee recommendation was made to continue our exploration of social studies materials.

Focusing on the need for a technology-based set of materials, the team is currently reviewing social studies materials from Teach TCI and Discovery Education. Next steps will be determined in late March. **Please contact Carlyn Cox, Amber Graeber or Liz Griesel if you have any questions**.

**Instructional Technology Support Sessions**

The Instructional Technology Support Sessions are being offered every Tuesday and Thursday in the Large Lab at Prospect. Instructional Technology Coordinators will be on hand to assist staff members in their learning.

Each session will have an assigned Focus Topic; however, bring any questions you may have. These sessions will focus on personal and professional growth for the individual staff member.

Session Start Times: 7:45, 9:30, 11:45, 1:30, 3:15

Session Focus Topics:

* SAM (Scholastic Achievement Manager): February 19
* Lync (Web Conferencing): February 24
* Digital Storage/OneDrive: February 10, 26
* Epson/SMART Notebook: February 12, 17

**Please talk with your Instructional Technology Coordinator if you have questions**. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Scholastic Update**

As many have experienced, both the SRI and SMI tests were updated in October during our scheduled shutdown. As part of this shutdown and upgrade, the latest versions of the software were loaded onto our servers. This has created a few situations that everyone should be aware of.

1) The tests will look different than the previous version. Wording has been updated, the question banks have been expanded, layout has been made clearer, and features have been added.

2) The SRI now has 2 subtests – our students in grade 3 and beyond will take the Reading Comprehension Assessment (RCA). This is essentially the same assessment we have previously administered with some minor enhancements. The SMI saw more meaningful changes, and Scholastic has provided us with a statement regarding the analysis of this data. Scholastic indicates that there was an average Quantile loss of 38 when transitioning to the new version of the SMI.

3) The calculations when running a "Growth" report may come up inaccurate, or not at all. This does not mean that we can't compare growth from fall to winter or spring, but rather that we may need to hand calculate the growth from fall to winter/spring using the fall raw score and the most recent score from a student.

4) When looking at individual students, the Progress to College & Career Report is still likely the most valuable report. The report has remained the same as in the past, the only addition to the report is wording of the name "College & Career". These were added to the name because as part of the updates, the test was expanded to included higher level math skills to help determine College & Career readiness. **If you have further questions, please feel free to contact J. Starr**.