

**Fast Updates:**

* FAST testing is underway and going well at schools across DMPS – thank you for your patience as we worked to get this system up and running.  Please remember that the testing window will close on **October 10th**.  All students should be tested by that date.  Most technological and accessibility issues have now been resolved. Please contact Liz Griesel if you have teachers, support staff, coaches, or administrators who are not able to access the TIER system.
* All students should be assessed during each testing window, with the exception of students who have “alternate assessment” written into their IEPs. On the Universal Screening window, coaches should select “Alternate Assessment on IEP” from the dropdown menu for those students. If a student has a disability that prohibits them from taking the assessment, but “alternate assessment” has not yet been added to the IEP, please choose “disabled but no Alternate Assessment on IEP.” Please work closely with your SPED teachers and Consultant to determine who these students are before indicating this information in TIER.
* The Department of Education recently released benchmark scores for 2014-2015.  Please see the attached document for these scores. Conference profile forms have been updated accordingly and posted on each grade level's assessment page.
* Also attached are letters released by the Iowa Reading Research Center to help explain to families the purpose and content of the FAST assessments. These letters do not need to be sent home or signed by parent. However, they would be a great resource to use at conferences to provide families more information about FAST and resources for accessing more information.

**Science/Social Studies Materials Upgrade:**We are exploring a materials upgrade for Social Studies and Science for 2014-2015. Liz Griesel will be contacting teachers to serve on a committee to review social studies and science materials for grades k-5. After reviewing materials this year, the committee will determine if there is an appropriate recommendation that can be made.  This committee will be comprised of classroom teachers from each grade level, an instructional coach, an English Language Learner representative, a Special Education representative, and a parent representative. Please contact Liz if you have teachers who would be interested in serving on this committee.

**SMI/SRI Updates:**

* The cut points for SMI and SRI categories have not changed from 2013-2014. Attached is a document that lists the cut points for all district assessments. For more information, please contact Mary Ginstead or Cindy Slinger.
* ELL students should not receive accommodations during SMI or SRI testing. Please contact Vihn Nguyen with questions regarding ELL accommodations.

**Math Updates:**

* **QUARTERLY District Standards Based Assessments** –
  + We have received the feedback that the Quarter One Comprehensive District Standards-Based Assessment is causing some concern with teachers due to the fact that some of the questions are not posed the way the content may be represented in the Go Math materials.
  + The purpose of the Quarterly Benchmark Assessments is to provide predictive value for performance on the Iowa Assessment for our district as a whole. We need to support of students in being flexible with their academic vocabulary and representation of their knowledge of the Iowa Core Standards in order to prepare them for a variety of situations.
  + Common Formative Assessments and/or Go Math chapter assessments (modified by the team) should provide information regarding student’s understanding of the Go Math content and their response to this instruction.
  + We have a team meeting on September 19th to review Quarters 2 – 4 assessments at each grade level. Any further feedback is welcome. For more information, contact Anna Taggart or Carlyn Cox.

**Math Updates (Continued)**

* **Chapter Pacing** 
  + The biggest area of feedback we are receiving in regards to Go Math is in relation to pacing and increased rigor. Please share the following information with your staff:
    - Chapter One in Go Math is designed as a form of review from previous grade levels. That being said, this is the first time our students have seen a lot of this materials and therefore, it is not always review.
      * In the first few chapters of Go Math – teachers will most likely be spending more time in whole group instruction than in small group instruction – as a good majority of the students will need additional support.
      * The Tier 2 Small Group Lesson can be used in a whole group format following the Explore section – as another way to learn the content.
      * Lessons are taking longer than one day and **that is okay**. Please do remind teachers that these skills can also be put into Daily Math Review for additional practice.
      * The Continuous Calendar Schools wanted to share that Chapter 2 makes a lot more sense as a chapter and is better focused (no longer “review”). So basically, if you can get teachers through Chapter One they will find some relief in Chapter 2!
    - **What if we do not get through all of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 before we assess the Quarter Assessment?** *The great thing about our new District Assessments is that they are comprehensive. Therefore, if you do not get to a concept with your students, you still have the opportunity to assess the concept in Quarters 2, 3, and 4.*
* **Student Workbooks**
  + Share with teachers: **Students do not have to fill out every page in their student workbooks.** 
    - Teachers can use these workbooks at their discretion. They can have students fill out some of the pages or none at all. We do not recommend that students fill out every page of their student workbooks. We would like students to be using the technology and hand-on manipulatives as much as possible. The workbooks are meant to be recording tool.
    - I have been in several classrooms the past few weeks and I have been flipping through student workbooks. In a first grade classroom, the students were nearing the end of the chapter, the student had approximately 10 pages filled out for the entire chapter. Please contact Anna Taggart if you have further questions.
  + **What do we do with the student workbooks when they are complete?** 
    - This is a teacher/school decision. The recommendation is that students have access to the remaining pages at home. The teacher may send it home immediately finishing a chapter or wait until conferences.
* **Student Devices**
  + **In lieu of Personal Math Trainer, what can my students be doing on the devices?** 
    - Teachers will spend the first District PLC session discussing structuring small group instruction and using the Revolves.
    - Grade levels will spend some time discussing options for what can be used on the Revolves.
    - A reminder that Think Central has options that can be used on the Revolves: Mega Math, iTools, and Animated Math Models.
    - For further assistance – please talk with your Instructional Technology Coordinator.
* **Resources for Intervention and SPED Small Groups**
  + There are many resources through Go Math that are available for intervention. What resource(s) is utilized depends on many factors, including building schedules for support staff and individual student needs.
  + Intervention materials include:
    - Tier 2 Small Group 10-15 Lesson (available on the elementary website > Go Math Resources)
    - Strategic Intervention Guide (\*purchased for interventionists and SPED push-in support)
    - Intensive Intervention Guide (\*2 per grade level being delivered to your building next week)
    - Reteach Sheet (available in Chapter Resources on the elementary website > Go Math Resources)
    - On Your Own - *Guided Practice* (available in Student Edition)
    - Review the ‘Show What You Know’ pre-assessment and work on missing skills.
    - Personal Math Trainer (when available)
    - Fastt Math
  + The **Intensive Intervention Guide** will be delivered to schools next week. This will include 2 copies per grade level. Please discuss who will use the hard copies of this resource in your building. The Intensive Intervention Guide is also available on Think Central.

**Elementary Math Acceleration Committee:**

We are looking to create a systematic process for accelerating advanced math students in all DMPS elementaries to align with the current acceleration model in the middle and high schools. If you are interested in being part of this committee, or have a teacher who would be beneficial to the process, please contact Anna Taggart before October 1st.

**The KITE Project’s First Challenge**

* Are you interested in having a team of technology coordinators spend a day at your building completing those tasks on your staff’s ‘to-do’ list?  iPad management, computer lab setup, mobile cart tune-up, one on one tech support, reimaging computers to Windows 8.1, leading differentiated PD, setting up and migrating files to OneDrive, the possibilities are endless.  Heck, get creative: gather up obsolete & surplus equipment, move furniture, run copies, take lunch duty, whatever is within reason and within the law, we will consider.  The KITE Project is announcing the first challenge of the 2014-15 year to highlight our newly released Windows 8.1 training. We know some people are nervous about switching over and we hope this training will help with the transition. We will look at the Windows 8.1 completion percentage of each building’s certified staff from the start of the year until October 15.  The elementary and secondary building with the highest percentage of completion will earn the incentive.  Plus, we won’t show up empty-handed either...we’ll bring cookies for the staff as well.  For more information, contact your Technology Coordinator.

**Information Technology (IT) Blueprint:**   
DMPS is in the process of developing a multi-year strategic plan that seeks to align our technology goals to District needs.  **To clearly define the starting point, we will soon be asking for your assistance in assessing the use of technology throughout the school district.  Your feedback will help us to better understand and address how technology can positively influence the effective and efficient operation of schools and central office.**

The project will address the following key areas:

* Improving consistency and quality of information technology services available across all DMPS campuses
* Upgrading the network and security systems
* Increasing the instructional technology programs and opportunities
* Reviewing the information technology department’s organizational structure
* Providing accurate and appropriate information to decision makers

**The overarching goal for the study is to ensure the alignment of DMPS’ information technology systems with the school district’s mission-critical teaching and learning initiatives**. The technology planning process is divided into several phases. During the Audit, Needs Analysis, and Data Collection phase, the Center for Educational Leadership and Technology (CELT) team will work collaboratively with DMPS staff to perform comprehensive information gathering that focuses on the diverse needs of all stakeholders. **Using site visits, focus groups, key stakeholder interviews, document reviews, end-user surveys, and inventories an accurate profile of the current status and impact of information technology in the schools will be developed.**

An initial draft of the ***Information Technology Blueprint*** will be submitted to DMPS by December 2014. A final ***Information Technology Blueprint*** will be submitted by January 2015. The project will conclude with a presentation of the completed ***Information Technology Blueprint*** in February 2015.

We need your help! There are a variety of ways in which you could help support DMPS in this initiative:

* Educate yourself on the IT Blueprint (a website will be sent out next week with many informative resources).
* Encourage your colleagues to become involved as well!
* Participate in a focus group. **CELT will be in Des Moines to collect information from stakeholders October 6-10**. We need your thoughtful and reflective feedback. If you are interested in participating, please contact Connie Broich at 242-8285.

This is an exciting opportunity to expand our IT capabilities! Thank you in advance for your help with this important initiative! For more information, contact Holly Crandell or Dan Warren.

**Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) Update:**As you know, the Department of Education’s TLC system holds significant potential for DMPS in incremental funding for instructional staffing. While our grant application scored in the top third of all applicants last year, the algorithm used for distribution of awards did not provide for enough remaining funding for a district of our size. However, we are submitting again for the 2014-15 school year. The application is due by October 31 and awards are slated to be announced by the end of December. While our application is solid, we have contracted with Crock Leadership Associates to help facilitate updating approximately 60% of our grant application to assure even more robust scores this year. They will manage the overall process for stakeholder engagement to include holding a series of on-site meetings with key stakeholders, facilitation of the advisory committee, and writing/editing of the final DMPS TLC grant application. We look forward to this opportunity to re-apply for this funding. If you have questions about this process, please contact Holly Crandell at 242-7568.