



Community Consolidated School District 181

Administration Building
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Re: Assessment Update at Middle School

Dear Parents:

In a few weeks, the results of the state tests will be released to the public. We are pleased with the excellent performance of our students and schools. The district is committed to provide the appropriate assessments to support our schools in instructional improvement.

This letter will update you regarding a change in the assessment program at the middle school level. Last year, the district introduced the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests in Reading, Math and Language Arts in grades 6, 7, and 8. The MAP tests are individualized assessments given online in either a whole group setting in the computer lab or as an individual assessment. Approximately 3 hours is allocated for the administration of these tests. It takes almost 3 weeks for students to cycle through these tests at a school as large as the middle schools with a population of approximately 700 to 750 students.

The middle school teaching staff received basic training in the program but not the full complement of trainings available to best utilize the data and link it to our tiered curriculum. In November 2007, the Assessment Director left the district. Due to the limited central office staff, we were unable to follow-through with the MAP training program leaving a void with the data utilization.

The district decided to provide MAP testing on a limited basis at the middle school level for the fall. We will provide training to the staff as well as determine the "best fit" of these assessments with the needs of our population. In the spring, we plan to administer the assessment to all students. This will allow us to capture spring-to-spring norms in order to gauge student growth.

Several issues factored into our decision. The first is that we want our building staff to have an adequate knowledge base to appropriately utilize the assessment data. The second is that we want to guard the instructional time for the students who would be allocating three hours for a test session that yielded limited data for decision-making at this time. Third, the technology conversion to wireless access as well as the upgrade to a fiber network to increase our broadband capacity in the district limited the ability to test over 1,400 students efficiently.

Also, we are administering AIMS Web on a limited basis this year at the middle schools based on the needs of the students. Aims Web is designed to identify early reading problems. All students that need AIMS Web either as a screening measure or for progress monitoring will receive the assessment this year.

For your information, MAP testing at the elementary level is continuing in the fall and spring and staff will receive additional training as well. If you have questions, please contact me at 887-1070-x 266.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bonnie Strykowski
Chief Accountability Officer