

Fall 2009

2009-2010 School Year



WEST NORTHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT 31

# Assessment Newsletter

## Student Assessment Program For the 2009-2010 School Year

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*Dear Parents/Guardians,*

Providing a World Class Education requires the implementation of a formal student assessment system that will supply us with data regarding each child's academic progress. Data collection allows for an objective perspective for making decisions regarding the instructional process for both individuals and student groups. Data driven decision making is not only a state and federal requirement, it is the key to effective school improvement and for monitoring students' progress or needs.



District 31 administrators and faculty are committed to making data informed decisions to improve our core instructional programs and to identify appropriate interventions to assist students at risk of failure. The assessment program we have in District 31 is based on a triangulation system. This means that it includes three major categories - classroom assessments, local formal assessments and state mandated tests. The results from these three data sources assist us in making informed decisions about each student's educational program.

You will learn more about classroom assessments from your child's teachers throughout the school year. Some may be designed by the teacher and some may be part of an adopted instructional program.

State mandated tests include the Illinois Standards Achievement Test and ACCESS. Local formal assessments include Curriculum Based Measurement, Measures of Academic Progress, InView and Terra Nova.

This newsletter provides detailed information, in a question/answer format, about each of the assessments noted above. It is our hope that this information will assist you in understanding what the tests are and why they are administered. Additionally, a letter of explanation will accompany each set of test results you receive. If, however, you still need assistance in understanding and interpreting the results, we encourage you to contact your child's teacher or school principal.

*Professionally yours,  
Dr. Alexandra Nicholson  
Superintendent of Schools*

### Local Formal Assessments

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#### ◆ Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM)

##### *What is Curriculum Based Measurement?*

Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) is a simple, statistically reliable and practical means of measuring student skills in basic

academic subject areas. The student is given brief, timed exercises to complete, using materials drawn directly from the child's academic program. Results tell teachers how individual students are progressing in the areas tested and they provide grade level and school-wide benchmarking.

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# Local Formal Assessments

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## **Who administers CBMs and how long do they take?**

CBM are one to three minute one-on-one assessments administered by teachers.

## **Who takes CBMs and what subject areas are tested?**

All students in kindergarten through grade eight take CBMs. Academic areas measured by CBMs are as follows:

- Kindergarten and grade one: CBMs measure early literacy skills.
- Grades two through five: CBMs measure reading fluency.
- Grade six, seven and eight: CBMs measure fluency and comprehension.

## **When are CBMs administered?**

CBMs are administered to all students three times per school year in the fall, winter and spring. Students whose literacy levels are considered at risk are given more frequent CBMs for progress monitoring.

## **When and how will parents receive CBM results?**

Parents will receive information regarding the CBMs their students will take from their respective schools. CBM results for Winkelman students will be mailed home in late September, January and May and are discussed during parent/teacher conferences. CBM results for Field students will also be mailed home at a time to be determined and communicated with parents.

## **◆ Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)**

### **What is MAP?**

MAP tests were developed by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). They are adaptive computerized assessments that reflect a child's instructional level. Results identify

specific skills and concepts each child has learned. MAP test questions are aligned with the Illinois State Learning Standards which are a strong basis of our District curricula. Therefore, MAP provides us with information on how each child is performing with the Illinois State academic requirements and the local District expectations.

### **How are MAP tests adaptive?**

MAP tests are uniquely designed to generate test questions adapted to each student's instructional level. Test items adjust to each student's ability. When a student answers a test item correctly, the next test item's difficulty level increases. When a student answers a test item incorrectly, the next test item's difficulty level decreases. This adjustment of item difficulty continues throughout the test and results in identifying the child's instructional level. An instructional level informs us of the skills and concepts individual students have learned and what they need to learn. This gives teachers valuable information on what and how to teach each student.

### **Who takes MAP tests and what subject areas are tested?**

All students in grades two through eight take the MAP tests. In grade two, students take the Primary MAP tests in reading and math. In grades three through eight, students take the MAP tests in reading, language usage and mathematics.

Students in the English Language Learners program who read no English do not take the reading or language usage MAP tests. They do, however, take the math tests with the assistance of an interpreter to translate the questions into their native language.

### **How often are MAP tests administered to students?**

MAP tests can be administered up to four times per school year. District 31 tests all students in grades two through

eight two times per school year. Grades two through seven are tested in the fall and spring. Fall test results establish an instructional baseline. Spring results show academic progress made during the school year. Grade eight students are tested in the fall and winter in lieu of the spring. Winter test results give teachers valuable academic growth information to relay to the high school for consideration with freshman class placement. Additionally, many eighth grade students do not take spring testing seriously, thus the results are often not reliable.

Some students also take the MAP tests mid-year when additional data is needed in order to make effective instructional decisions for them. Parents of students who take mid-year MAP tests are notified of such by their classroom teachers.

## **Who administers MAP tests and how long do they take?**

Students take MAP tests in their respective school's computer labs, supervised by MAP proctors. Often, these proctors are their computer teachers and classroom teachers. MAP tests are not timed. On the average, students complete each test within one hour; however, students can take as much time as they need to complete them. Since second grade students take two tests, their total test time is about two hours. Since third through eighth grade students take three tests, their total test time is about three hours.

## **How are MAP tests scored?**

### **• RIT Score**

MAP uses a scale score called RIT to measure a student's achievement and growth. RIT stands for Raush Unit. RIT scores are on a scale that is directly related to curriculum. The higher the RIT score, the more curriculum content your child has mastered. The RIT score is an equal interval scale, similar to feet and inches. This makes growth in learning easy to measure.

# Local Formal Assessments

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- **RIT Range**

NWEA predicts what your child's lowest and highest RIT scores could be if he/she were to take the same test multiple times. This is reflected in a RIT Range.

- **Percentile Score**

The percentile score is the percent of students in the NWEA norm group study who had a RIT score less than or equal to your child's score. For example, a percentile rank of 87% means your child scored the same as or better than 87% of the students who took this test nationally.

- **Percentile Range**

The percentile range corresponds to the RIT Range.

- **Lexile Range**

A Lexile is a unit for measuring text difficulty based on word complexity, word frequency and sentence length. MAP provides a Lexile Range that represents the difficulty level of books each student can read independently with success. Thousands of books have been analyzed and assigned Lexile scores. The titles of these books and their corresponding Lexile scores can be found on [www.lexile.com](http://www.lexile.com). This site is helpful when parents and teachers are helping children find books that will be challenging, yet not frustrating nor boring to read.

### ***When and how are MAP results available?***

As soon as a student completes a test, his/her overall score appears on the computer screen. This score does not give any details about how the student did on the different skills and concepts tested.

Teachers have access to their formal class score reports for each test taken 24 hours after his/her class completes that test.

Official score reports are mailed home

to parents once we have had the opportunity to order, receive and print them out. We schedule a two-week period of time for all classes to go to the computer lab to complete their tests. These official score reports become available to us at the end of that two-week time period.

## ◆ **InView Cognitive Skills Assessment**

### ***What is the InView?***

InView is a test of critical cognitive abilities that provides highly reliable academic ability scores. It provides information about the thinking process. InView results are used as one criteria for placement into gifted and enriched programs.

### ***What does the InView test?***

The InView has five subtests including verbal reasoning-words, verbal reasoning-context, sequences, analogies and quantitative reasoning. Each subtest presents students with novel problems to solve designed to assess cognitive reasoning skills in these areas.

### ***Who takes the InView, what does it test and how often is it taken?***

All students in grades two through six take the InView each school year in January.

### ***What type of results do the InView tests reveal?***

InView scores appear as scale scores, local percentiles and national percentiles by grade and age. The total scale score generates a cognitive skills index (CSI). This is not considered a true IQ score because the test is taken in a group.

### ***When and how will parents receive InView results?***

The District receives InView test results some time in early March. Copies are mailed home to parents shortly after they arrive.

## ◆ **Terra Nova Tests**

### ***What is Terra Nova?***

Terra Nova is a series of standardized achievement tests designed to assess student achievement in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, vocabulary, spelling and other areas. Students in grade eight take the Terra Nova test the week after the Thanksgiving Break for Glenbrook North and South high school class placement purposes. The Terra Nova takes approximately 4 ½ hours to complete and is given over a three-day period of time. The test is administered in students' regular eighth grade classes to provide a comfortable, familiar environment.

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## **Assessment Schedule**

**Curriculum Based Measurements:** Fall, Winter, Spring

**MAP Testing (Grades 2-8):** Fall—September 8—18; Winter—January 11—22; Spring—May 3-14

**InView Testing (Grades 2-6 and select Grade 7):** November 30—December 4

**Terra Nova (Grade 8):** November 30—December 4

**ISAT (Grades 3-8):** March 2 — March 12

# State Mandated Assessments

## ◆ Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)

### **What is ISAT?**

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* requires all states to measure each public school's and district's achievement and establish annual achievement targets for the state. The overarching goal is for all students to meet or exceed standards in reading and mathematics by 2014. Each year, the state is expected to calculate a school's or district's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) to determine if students are improving their performance based on the established annual targets.

To meet the federal requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, Illinois developed Illinois Learning Standards and the ISAT. The Illinois Learning Standards define what all students in all Illinois public schools should know and be able to do as a result of their elementary and secondary schooling. ISAT measures

individual student achievement relative to these Standards.

### **Who takes the ISAT and when are these tests taken?**

The Illinois State Board of Education determines when ISAT is to be administered. Traditionally, this has been each spring some time in March. All students in grades three through eight take the ISAT. Exceptions to taking the ISAT include students who are severely cognitively impaired. Cognitively impaired students take the Illinois Alternative Assessment (IAA) in lieu of the ISAT.

Students in grades three through eight take the ISAT reading and math tests. Additionally, students in grades four and seven take the ISAT science test and students in grades three, five, six and eight take the ISAT writing test.

### **How are the ISATs scored and when are the results available?**

ISATs are scored by the State of Illinois. Official scores for schools, districts and

individual students are received some time in the fall. ISAT scores are reported in the following categories in relation to the Illinois Learner Standards: exceeds, meets, does not meet and warning. Parents are given copies of their children's score reports shortly after the District receives them.

## ◆ ACCESS

### **What is ACCESS?**

All students who are Limited English Proficient take the ACCESS for English Language Learners. The ACCESS is a standards-based criterion referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure social and academic proficiency in English. ACCESS scores are one criterion used for entry into and exit from the ELL program.

## WEST NORTHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT 31

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## Our Vision:

World Class Education --

The Highest Achievement for Every Student

## Our Mission:

Our mission is to recognize the unique talents of each individual and to create an environment where learning has no boundaries. We are committed to providing opportunities which support the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable all individuals to be confident, life-long learners and responsible citizens of a changing world.