



Ontario-Montclair School District Learning & Teaching Division



From the Desk of Karla Wells

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Welcome back! I hope you all had a fantastic summer full of fun, relaxation and quality time spent with friends and family. I also hope that you are as excited as I am to “kick-off” the new school year. This is an exciting time of year for our students, families and staff as we work together to ensure our students have a highly successful school year. This year is especially exciting for me as I begin my new role as Assistant Superintendent, Learning & Teaching. I am truly honored and blessed to work with such a dedicated team of professionals at the school and district levels. I count on each of you to share your best practices, ideas and strategies with each other, our district team, and me so that we will achieve our goal of making OMSD the best district in San Bernardino County, the state and our nation!

As you know, our Board of Trustees has adopted a new Five Year Plan to help focus our work and ensure our students receive a world-class education. The Five Year Plan is the driving force behind our goals for our instructional program and will be the foundation of our work this school year ensuring that our **compass is firmly set on student learning**.

To articulate the direction and vision of our district’s instructional programs, we have set attainable goals in four areas: increased achievement in English Language Arts and Math, deepening the development of Professional Learning Communities, and building stronger and more effective partnership with community, local agencies and organizations. These are not new areas of focus; however, they are designed to more effectively support the achievement of the district Five Year Plan.

Writing across the curriculum will be a major focus for every school this school year. We know that student writing helps us measure and model student thinking. We want students to write to capture and develop their thoughts, and to communicate their thoughts to others. Last school year we created a district-wide action research project by decentralizing the writing program selection. Each school

has selected a writing program in which they will provide teacher training and develop an implementation and monitoring plan so that excellent writing instruction is evident in all classrooms. To support this unique writing program implementation, Learning & Teaching is redesigning our writing assessment program to include just two writing assessments for the year, a pre-assessment taken very early in the school year and post-assessment. The results of these assessments will enable us to measure both program effectiveness and student learning. Another focus for this school year will be the continuation of our work on creating engaged learners and engaged classrooms. We will work in our PLCs to design what the highly engaged classroom looks like and work together to implement promising strategies that ensures **every student is an actively engaged learner**.



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Safety and Performance

Hector Macias, Executive Director, Student & Family Support Services

School safety cannot be separated from performance. A safe school is a successful school, and a successful school is a safe school. When students and teachers can focus their energies on learning rather than on danger, achievement is higher.

One of the most important components of safe schools and a positive learning environment is students' experience and perception they have of their school. Safe school climates do not just happen, they are created and maintained.

Bullying, cyber bullying, harassment, weapons, and violence are potential problems at any school, and can be minimized if students feel that they can safely let someone know. Please encourage your students to break the "Code of Silence" and tell an adult about their concerns. Let them know that they can create a new culture where it is okay to speak up.

The implications of cyber bullying on school culture are great. Cyber bullying

occurs when the internet, cell phones or other technological devices are used to send or post messages or pictures intended to exploit, intimidate, defame, threaten or otherwise harm another person. Some statistics on cyber bullying conducted by the Crimes Against Children Research Institute found the following: forty-two percent of the students report they have been cyber bullied, one out of four repeatedly, 35% of students report they have been threatened online, 58% of students report they have had mean things written about them online, 58% of the students don't tell their parents.

How can schools, families, and communities begin to address this growing concern of bullying that is rarely detected but negatively impacting school safety? Consider these recommended practices:

- Send strong messages from the school to families regarding the seriousness of bullying and cyber bullying (Education Code 48900r, 48900.4, 32261).

- Send regular e-mails and newsletters identifying what to look for in victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying
- Give routine updates to families regarding incidents of bullying and cyber bullying and what the consequences are of this act including law enforcement involvement when appropriate.
- Respond immediately and with significant consequences.
- Respond with care to families whose children are victims of bullying and cyber bullying.
- Have regular family meetings and schools have regular in-services on internet safety

The people of the State of California have enacted legislature, law, policy and practice to ensure that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve. Ontario-Montclair School District students are entitled to a safe and orderly campus to engage and enhance their academic learning.

Professional Development

Mari Fedrow, Director II, Professional Development/English Learners

The OMSD Professional Development Department is pleased to announce professional development opportunities for 2011–2012. The options include voluntary sessions for teachers in the areas of Engaged Learners and Aspiring Administrators. Each of these strands includes five sessions scheduled throughout the year from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Teachers who desire to attend all of the sessions within a strand may receive one semester of credit from the University of San Diego.

Leadership Professional Development includes the Elementary Administrators/Assistant Principals Strand and the New Administrators Academy, providing opportunities for growth in instructional leadership and managerial support. Each group will attend seven 2 ½ hour sessions scheduled from 3:00 – 5:30 p.m. throughout the year. Both teacher leadership and site leadership sessions are highly interactive and include job-embedded, hands-on practical activities. For more information about the trainings, please review the course sessions on Go Sign Me Up or contact Mari Fedrow at extension 6408 or Joni Stallings at extension 6390.

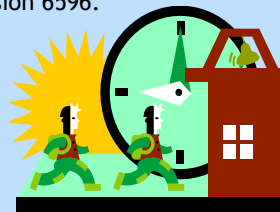
Preparing Read 180 for a New Year

Dick Archibald-Woodward, Coordinator, Technology

The summer has been busy on the Read 180 front as we have worked on servers, moved students and looked at options for new configurations to make the system more responsive.

We have also made changes in where you will turn to for support when you need help or questions come up. Sharon Flores, who has helped guide Read 180 implementation over the past few years, has been appointed Elementary Administrator to Arroyo Elementary School. Unfortunately, she will no longer be part of the support team. She will be missed!

Your contacts for Read 180 support this year will be Dick Archibald-Woodward at extension 6515 and Jeremy Wood at extension 6596.



At the school sites, the Data Coaches will be the primary contact people. Be looking for our flyers, advertising upcoming training dates for any coaches

and teachers who are new to Read 180 or who will want a refresher on managing the system. The sessions will take place during August and September.

Guidelines for setting up Read 180 classes will be sent directly to the Data Coaches and principals before school starts. Please keep in mind, all students who belong in Read 180 must be coded in Zangle for the *Read 180 (Reading Intervention)* program.

We look forward to working with all of you for another highly successful year!



Effective Monitoring of Student Learning through Common Assessments

Veronica Castaneda, Director I, West Learning Region and Ellen Lugo, Director I, East Learning Region

One of the most consistent findings from the research on effective schools and effective teaching is the power of frequent monitoring of student learning. Good teachers are assessing all the time, using a variety of strategies to check for student understanding during every lesson, which is a powerful way to leverage learning in individual classrooms and provide timely effective intervention.

An even more powerful proven approach to assessment is to regularly bring teams of teachers with support team members; such as the principal or data coach, together to find, create and use common assessments across their classrooms for a sequence of lessons or a unit of study.

Members of the team agree on the standards students must achieve to be deemed proficient and establish when they will give the assessment. During their common planning time they discuss different strategies to help students learn the content, different ways to check for understanding throughout the lessons or unit. During instruction individual teachers will be supported with clarity regarding what students must learn and how they will demonstrate that learning. After administering the assessment, the team analyzes the results. If those results indicate an individual teacher's students are having difficulty, other members of the team can offer alternative strategies to teach the concept, thereby helping each other expand their repertoire of teaching techniques. Another important benefit of a team common assessment is to identify students across the grade level in need of intervention or challenge that can be regrouped during UA time to receive targeted intervention or challenge material based on identified learning needs. This team dialogue and sharing of ideas ensures the assessment is formative and used to target and solve student learning problems.

Here is just one way . . . One of our focuses in the district is on the anchor standards in comprehension, writing, word analysis and vocabulary. Here is a tip to try for whole class instruction. Identify a few standards in one of the strands by grade level. Then decide which standards will be monitored all year long with common assessments. There are various ways of monitoring the results.

One idea would be to allow students to have multiple practices over time. What does this look like? Spiraling standards at a designated time during the day is a place to start. The identified standards that a grade level selected to monitor throughout the year can be taught through Standards Plus, Study Island or other resources. This would be a 20 minute lesson covering a few standards every single day. The same standards are covered daily. The key is to monitor the time because some lessons could take up a lot of instructional time and for this purpose we want to spiral all the anchor standards daily. If needed, continue where the lesson ended the next day. Then a common assessment would be used to check on growth. The assessment can be done weekly, every other week or monthly. The team will then meet to review data, share strategies and chart growth as a grade level. This growth will also be seen in the benchmarks and at the end of the year with state testing.

If you would like a sample of daily practice, please contact Veronica Castaneda at extension 6518 or Ellen Lugo at extension 6493.

A Message from Karla Wells, continued from page 1



We have re-energized our efforts in support of schools. As Directors within the Learning & Teaching Division, Veronica Castaneda will support the West Learning Region schools and Ellen Lugo will support the East Learning Region schools.

They will work systematically with sites as a partner and collaborator ensuring each school has the resources and knowledge needed to reach their school and district goals. In fact, our entire Learning & Teaching team is committed to working closely with your teams to **ensure ALL schools and ALL students accelerate their WINNING STREAKS!**

As I visit schools and classrooms in the upcoming weeks, I look forward to seeing our students and programs in action. My plan is to use this newsletter as a vehicle to share the exciting programs that are being implemented throughout the district promoting the outstanding work that I know is done by our school staffs every day.

Thank you for all you do in support of our students, families and the community. Working Together We Will Achieve the Extraordinary!

With warm regards,
Karla





“Lessons from California Districts Showing Unusually Strong Academic Performance for Students in Special Education” (January 2011)

Diane Hoyt, Director, PPS

In 2010, OMSD was one of the 84 percent of California school districts with a significant subgroup of students with disabilities that failed to meet AYP due, at least in part, to the academic performance of their students in special education. The California Comprehensive Center at WestEd published the report named above after investigating districts who sustained above average academic performance over a four-year period for their students with disabilities. These districts had strategies in place that were fully developed and could be clearly described. The main themes that emerged are consistent with the research and literature on effective practices for students in special education: *inclusion* and access to the core curriculum, *collaboration* between special education and general education teachers, *continuous assessment* and the use of Rtl, and targeted *professional development*.



The researchers also reported on a study conducted by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts in 2004 focusing on promising practices in urban special education. Of the 11 practices that supported successes in special education, 10 of them were similar to the practices emphasized in the effective schools literature for *general* education (number 11, inclusion, is specific to special education). These practices included an emphasis on curriculum alignment with curriculum frameworks, emphasis on inclusion and access to the curriculum, culture and practice that support high standards and student achievement, and use of student assessment data to inform decision-making, among others.

You'll be hearing more in the coming months about inclusion and collaboration for our students with disabilities, as OMSD moves forward with improving achievement for everyone. The PPS staff is looking forward to visiting classrooms this year to see effective inclusion in action. If you don't see us, please invite us!



Teachers are messengers from the past
and an escort to the future.

Albert Einstein




Illuminate Data and Assessment

Scott Turnbull, Director II, Research & Assessments

The Learning & Teaching Division is dedicated to providing teachers and staff with the very best resources available. As part of this pursuit, Learning & Teaching staff spent last year determining if there might be a data warehouse that better fit OMSD's needs (previously we had used DataDirector). After conducting field testing it was determined that we would make the switch to a new system called Illuminate Data and Assessment (“Illuminate” for short).

One of the most exciting and efficient aspects of Illuminate is their collaboration with the “GradeCam” system. GradeCam allows pre-slugged answer sheets to be scored and uploaded to the system via a webcam as opposed to a scanner. This functionality will save time and allow teachers to immediately have results from common assessments recorded in the system's gradebook.

Report Cards for grades Pre K-6 will be housed in this system just as they were previously in DataDirector. You will find the web-based interface for completing report cards similar (but more streamlined) than in the previous system.

We are still building up all of the data to make the site completely functional. In the meantime, if you would like to log-in you can go to [illuminate](#) website, use your OMSD log-in (typically first name, last initial), and first time password “change.” Once you are in the system please click on the gold lock  in the upper right corner to set your own personal password.

Data Coaches will receive further training on the system to take back to the school site. Our first big order of business will be uploading all 2010-11 STAR results to Illuminate. While there will be a brief period of dealing with the change involved, we are very confident you will find this new data system more efficient and a more integral part of your regular work. For more information, please contact Scott Turnbull at extension 6594.

