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Ontario-Montclair School District Learning & Teaching Newsletter

From the Desk of Karla Wells, Assistant Superintendent

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

What's it all about and how is OMSD preparing for this Transformational Reform?

California has joined 45 out of 50 states in adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These standards establish clear and consistent goals that will prepare all students for success in college and work and will equip students from every state to compete with their peers in top-performing counties. We now have a clear road map – anchored in college and career readiness and internationally benchmarked – for what students in California must know and be able to do to succeed. With this road map we have a chance to fundamentally rethink our system, including instructional program design and professional development so that it reflects best practices and accurately targets student needs.

The District is diligently preparing for the implementation of the CCSS with the goal of ensuring that teachers play an integral role in aligning of instructional materials and curricular units to the CCSS; helping to design and facilitate highly effective professional development; and redesigning data, assessment and accountability systems to reflect the expectations in the CCSS. Together we can achieve the extraordinary!

We are already taking the first steps in our implementation process. At each step of this transformational process, we will include all stakeholders including teachers, principals, site instructional support teams, university partners and parents to ensure a well thought-out and articulated process. We will form several implementation teams to assist our district team:

CCSS Leadership Team: This will be the strategic implementation team that will carefully consider the district capacity for implementing the transition to the CCSS, determine timelines, assign areas of responsibility and monitor progress. This team will be composed of district and site administrators and teachers.

Alignment of Instructional Materials and Unit Design Team: This team will deconstruct the CCSS, identify matches and gaps with our current instructional materials, identify supplemental materials to fill identified gaps, design instructional units and pacing guides, plan how teachers and principals will receive instructional materials and units, and how to monitor the implementation of the CCSS. This team will be grade level specific and composed of teachers, district and site administrators, university partners, identified field experts, and parents.

Professional Development Team: This will be the team responsible for all aspects of the CCSS training provided to teachers, administrators, and parents. This team will consider how an effective professional development system can help change instructional practice in support of the CCSS. The team will craft a professional development plan identifying exactly how professional development will occur across the district. It will identify the preferred model for training and build a balanced portfolio of professional development

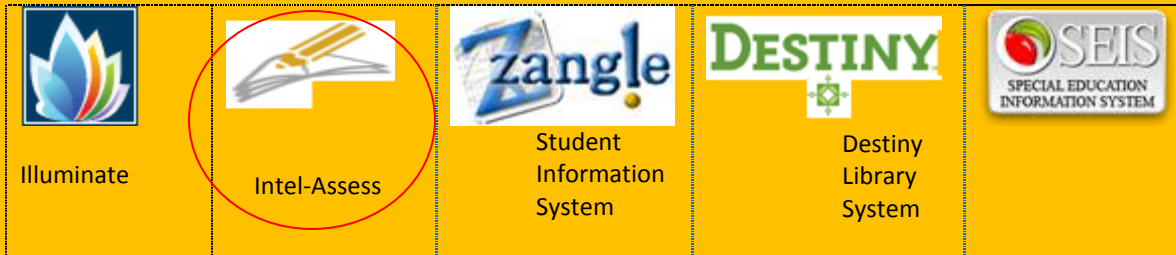


Chinese New Year
of the Dragon

Intel-Assess

Scott Turnbull, Director II, Research and Assessments

Many of you are familiar with QuickChecks, the prefabricated quizzes produced by Intel-Assess with five items aligned to a single standard. This company also provides access to a robust bank of standards-based items from which you can build your own assessments. You may have noticed that a link for Intel-Assess has been added to the bottom of the district homepage (as shown below).



The Learning & Teaching Division believes this tool can be invaluable to teachers in grades 2-8 and to Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to access this resource. This article will explain a little about this resource. For specifics on accessing the site, please see your Data Coach.

First, I would like to share with you a little about the items housed in Intel-Assess:

- Intel-Assess items are developed specifically to measure student mastery
- Math, ELA, Science, and History/Social Studies
- Multiple choice, constructed response, embedded error, and "paired passage" items
- Written to the rigor and style of state standards
- Classified by Bloom's taxonomy
- Every assessment includes a Teacher Rationale document that explains student errors

Secondly, I would like you to know that the assessments you create in Intel-Assess can be added into Illuminate. This will allow you to record results via GradeCam.

Finally, I thought it is important for you to know that Intel-Assess is working on providing similar resources for the Common Core State Standards that will be available in the fall.

For training guides and videos on creating assessments in Intel-Assess and moving them into Illuminate, please go to the [Research & Assessment MyOMSD website](#). If you need additional support, please see your Data Coach.

Continued from page 1, From the Desk of Karla Wells

providers entrusted to deliver high-quality professional development to our district. In addition, this team will craft a professional development monitoring plan to ensure quality training and user satisfaction throughout the CCSS transition. This team will be composed of teachers, district and site administrators, university partners, and identified field experts.

Technology/Assessment Team: This team will be responsible for transitioning our current assessment system to CCSS. They will review current assessments for alignment to grade level and cognitive demands of the new standards, and change the current assessment structure to meet the CCSS. This team will design structure to support the transition to the SMARTER Balance Assessment. In addition, this team will develop/refine data dashboards that allow for analysis of student learning. This team will be composed of teachers, site and district administrators, and university partners.

Our goal is to involve as many teachers as possible in each of these teams. In the weeks ahead we will send out a "Call for Participants" for each team. Our goal is to have a balance of team members from each school and grade level representing both new and veteran teachers to ensure all voices are heard and that our transition to the CCSS is a collaborative effort involving all stakeholders. This is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to truly transform education to ensure all students are college and career-ready and able to reach their full potentials.



Every child ought to be more intelligent than his parents.

—Clarence Darrow





MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Come join us at the 4th Annual OMSD Spelling Bee on March 3, 2012 at Oaks Middle School, 9:00 a.m.

Cheer your students on who will be competing against other students from 20 OMSD school sites! This spelling bee will prepare students for the Inland Valley Regional Spelling Bee (IVRSB) to be held on March 24, 2012, at Mount San Antonio College, Walnut, California (time to be determined).



Classroom Safety

Milissa Checchi, Classified Training & Development Specialist

Teachers strive to maintain orderly classrooms with excellent classroom management, but have you thought about classroom safety? Here are some questions to ponder . . .

- Are there cleaning or other non-district approved products in your classroom that were brought in “just in case”? (*Facilities, Planning, and Operations, has a district-approved list of cleaning products*)
- Have you made a habit of using the first available piece of furniture (e.g. desk, chair) when needing height to hang materials in your room? Are you conscious of how you are lifting objects, or students for that matter, so that strains or sprains are not caused? *Did you know that OMSD teachers have one of the largest percentages of sprain/strain injuries in the district with more frequency during periods of setting up or taking down the classrooms?*



We all get busy trying to accomplish the myriad of needed tasks, but taking a few minutes to be safe will avoid injuries, completing accident reports, and help ensure that teachers and students have a safe atmosphere for learning. So be a **Safety Sleuth** and look for ways to improve safety in your classroom!



The Chinese New Year of the Dragon kicks off year 4710 in the Chinese calendar. The legend goes that Buddha asked the animals to meet him for a New Year's celebration and 12 showed up, so they were each assigned a year. He also said people born in those years would have some of those animal's traits.

This year, 4710, is the Year of the Dragon, which means people born in this year and previous Dragon years are supposed to share the positive traits of being magnanimous, stately, vigorous, strong, self-assured, proud, noble, direct, dignified, eccentric, intellectual, fiery, passionate, decisive, pioneering, artistic, generous, and loyal.

Changes to Read 180 and Interactive Teaching System (ITS)

Dick Archibald-Woodward and Jeremy Wood, Curriculum & Instruction

We have transitioned Read 180 and System 44 to a newer, more responsive version. In the process, servers were updated and we moved to a browser-based interface for both students and teachers.

What does this mean in practical terms? First, the icons on computer desktops for these programs are no longer linked to the version the district is now using. To access Read 180 applications or the Scholastic Achievement Manager (SAM), you must now go through MyOMS. Students may find links under the “Students” tab and teachers will find a link under the “Teachers” tab. All usernames and passwords remain the same.

You now have ready access to ITS for Read 180. ITS will give you online access to *rBooks*, the *Resources for Differentiated Instruction*, links to the Anchor Videos and other resources.

The program may be found either by clicking on the “Resources” tab in SAM, selecting the program and then clicking on the “ITS” tab or you may go to www.read180.com/its. SAM usernames and passwords to login will remain the same.

If you have not yet used this wonderful resource, a tutorial is accessible through SAM by clicking on the “Home” tab and then clicking on the blue hyperlink under the folders.

The Meaning of Instructional Lingo

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

What does Structured Engagement, Accountable Responses, Total Physical Participation Techniques and the rest of that lingo really mean in my classroom?



All of the above terms mean the same thing, techniques that require every student to demonstrate cognitive engagement with the content being taught. Think about the typical question-and-answer sessions in most classrooms. Now think about the "beach ball scenario," the teacher tosses the ball to a student, who quickly catches the ball and tosses it back. The teacher then tosses it to another student. The same scenario happens multiple times throughout the day when only two or three eager students actually get an opportunity to demonstrate active cognitive engagement with the topic at hand. Teachers know who these students are because they are the first to put their hands up when a question is asked. Often even seasoned teachers can relate to the problem of calling out a question and getting a response from only one or two students. They get little feedback from the other students and do not get an accurate assessment of what the others have learned. The problem with tossing the beach ball is that too many students sit, either passively or actively disengaged, giving no indication of what they are thinking of, if they are thinking or that they have learned.

The critical point is that unless a teacher intentionally plans for and requires students to demonstrate active participation and cognitive engagement during lessons, a teacher has no way of knowing what students are learning. With approximately six hours of instructional time per school day, teachers try to avoid stretches during a lesson where students are sitting passively listening while the teacher speaks.

Figure out what percentage of time in a six-hour day are students actively engaged and cognitively invested in what is being taught or learned in your classroom? What evidence do we, as teachers, have that students are actually cognitively in tune with us? And what deep critical thinking are we missing out on by not requiring evidence of processing and content-based interaction by every one of our students?

Although implementing Total Participation Techniques will require teachers to actively remind themselves to implement, if teachers stick to it, it becomes a way of thinking. The more teachers deliberately use these techniques, the more active participation becomes the expectation, but intentionality is required. Total Participation techniques work best in classrooms that practice this constantly back and forth, from the text to teachers to students, from students to students, and from students to teachers.

For students and especially English Language Learners, the district's work with Dr. Kate Kinsella is explicitly an example of Accountable Responses/Total Active Participation. Structuring the response with an academic frame further supports vocabulary development and oral language fluency, which is a critical area of concern for students in OMSD. This reinforces the best practices of ensuring every student is thinking, talking and writing, and cognitively engaged in the learning task.

Other strategies for Total Participation include structured AB partnering, choral reading, cloze reading, Think-Pair-Share, students using whiteboards, and a mind warm-up.

We invite you to visit the links in the article for more extensive information.

Chinese dragons are legendary creatures in Chinese mythology and folklore, with mythic counterparts among Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Bhutanese, Western and Turkic dragons. In Chinese art, dragons are typically portrayed as long, scaled, serpentine creatures with four legs. In yin and yang terminology, a dragon is yang and complements a yin fenghuang ("Chinese phoenix").

In contrast to European dragons, which are considered evil, Chinese dragons traditionally symbolize potent and auspicious powers, particularly control over water, rainfall, hurricane, and floods. The dragon is also a symbol of power, strength, and good luck. With this, the Emperor of China usually uses the dragon as a symbol of his imperial power.

In Chinese daily language, excellent and outstanding people are compared to the dragon while incapable people with no achievements are compared with other, disesteemed creatures, such as the worm. A number of Chinese proverbs and idioms feature references to the dragon, for example: "Hoping one's son will become a dragon" (望子成龍, i.e. be as a dragon).

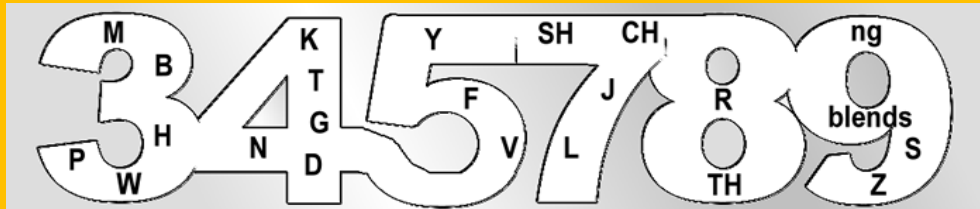


Speech Development in Elementary Students

Diane Hoyt, Director, Pupil Personnel Services

Students develop and grow at different paces. The same can be said for the development of speech sounds. It is very common to have a classroom of kindergarten students making a variety of speech "errors", which would not be normal for a third grade class. So what should you do when you have a student in your class that you cannot understand? The first step is to start listening carefully. Document how the word is pronounced, as well as what the actual word was. For example, the student says "tat" for "cat." Once you start doing this you will quickly find a pattern to the errors which you can then compare to what is developmentally appropriate for the student. The chart below can be used to help you decide if your students are making developmentally appropriate speech sounds. So, if you have an eight year-old student that says "tat" for "cat", consult with your Speech Therapist because the /k/ sound should be in place by age four. If you have a five year-old that says "wun" instead of "run" you will know that this is a normal developmental error since the /r/ sound should be in place by eight years old.

You may also want to check if the student is able to correct the error. For example, if they say "tat" for "cat" you could say, "Did you mean 'cat'? You try it!" Have the student attempt to make the sound. After documenting the errors and attempting to have the student produce the correct sound, you can determine whether you need to consult with the Speech Therapist and/or whether the student should be referred to SST. Do not hesitate to consult with your site Speech Therapist for more information.



California Common Core State Standards (CCCSS)

Lauren Maitland-Francoisse, Director II, Curriculum and Instruction

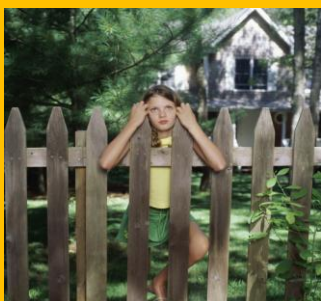
As Ontario-Montclair School District moves forward in the process of implementing the California Common Core State Standards, we invite you to visit the website for the Common Core State Standards Initiative at <http://www.corestandards.org/>. Information is provided for those who wish to enhance their understanding of English Language Arts or Mathematical standards.

As you navigate the site, you may wish to focus on Appendix A of the ELA standards, as a resource for understanding one of the vital elements of the new standards, *text complexity* (<http://www.corestandards.org/>). The information provided will help the district in the selection of materials. In addition, this section is helpful in distinguishing the type of vocabulary instruction needed with the CCCSS.

Appendix B of the ELA standards (http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf) provides text exemplars and performance assessment information.

With a district focus on student writing, you may wish to see student writing samples in Appendix C (http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_C.pdf) to see how the common core standards will evaluate student writing tasks.

Much of what we will face is a challenge, but meaningful for our students as they embrace 21st Century skills. Visiting the sites above will help us appreciate the work that lies ahead.



"I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework."

-- Edith Ann, [Lily Tomlin]

Positive School Climate

Hector Macias, Executive Director, SFSS

A positive school climate exists when all students feel comfortable, accepted and secure in an environment where they may interact with caring people they trust. The OMSD Healthy Kids Survey indicates that over 80 percent of OMSD fifth and seventh grade students feel there is a caring adult on campus. So, why do students misbehave?

Students come from different backgrounds and cultures that view "behavior" differently. Thus, it should not be assumed that students know how to behave appropriately when at school. Many students make poor choices when confronted with a conflict. Consequently, students need to be taught how to behave at school to ensure they make better choices.

A positive school climate mentality views inappropriate behavior in the same manner that problems in reading or math are viewed, as a skill deficit. When a skill deficit exists, the appropriate skill is taught. In so doing, a positive school climate informs students and staff that appropriate behavior is a priority in school.



To support a positive school climate, listed are several research-based, targeted strategies to improve school climate:

Relationship-focused: connect each student to at least one caring adult.

Curricular-based: ensure the curriculum promotes social, emotional, and civic competencies in addition to content competencies.

School-wide focus: adopt community-wide practices to build character and support appropriate student behavior.

Emphasize resiliency: help at-risk students use school and community-based supports to build upon their unique strengths.

Response to Intervention Model: use diverse and increasingly intensive approaches to support students academically.

Data: track and analyze school data that goes beyond test scores and includes perceptions of key school climate indicators.

Coordinate: build systems that are safe and caring to link educators, students, parents and the community.



Question of the Month



Patti Harris, District AVID Liaison

“What are some ‘college-readiness’ skills I can teach my students?”

One of the goals at Ontario Montclair School District is to prepare all students for college readiness. Here are some ideas for you to share with your students:

1. Have your students use an “Organizational Tool” in your classroom, this could be a folder, binder or other method of organizing papers, notes, etc.
2. Discuss Time Management with your students. Give them an activity to keep track of their time for one week. How much time is spent doing various things? (watching TV, studying, playing games with family/friends, exercising, writing or reflecting in a journal/diary).
3. Use an ‘agenda’ or ‘planner’ in your classroom for students to write assignments and to communicate with parents. More importantly, teach students to “check off” assignments when completed.
4. Teach students “SLANT” (Sit up; Lean forward; Ask questions; Nod to the teacher (speaker), Talk to the teacher (or Track the speaker), as a tool to maintain focus at school. Some schools do this school wide and it’s fun to watch the kids “SLANT” as soon as an administrator walks into the room.
5. WRITE: give students a few minutes at the end of a lesson to reflect on what they have learned by writing a few sentences about what they learned and/or questions they still have about the material.

It is becoming increasingly important that students are prepared to be successful in our global society. Please let me know if I can help with anything.