

Curriculum Office Update

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*We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence is not an event. It is a
habit. —Aristotle*

Education in the United States is challenging and changing. Our district staff works together to offer our students high quality educational experiences and opportunities.

RTI—Response to Intervention (pre-referral process)

As mentioned in previous curriculum updates, by July of 2010, the state of Maine's pre-referral law will take effect. The law states that student academic and behavior needs must be addressed in a systematic manner. In MSAD #22, we have begun to work on our pre-referral process. At the K-5 level, we screen all students in reading 3 times per year. We screen for reading fluency in grades 6-9 as well. We are acquiring more resources for math and behavior screening instruments. MSAD #22 educators are learning how to better identify students who are at risk for educational difficulties. We strive to quickly identify needs and match extra support for identified students. Through our regional partnership, PREP (Penobscot River Educational Partnership), many MSAD #22 educators are taking part in ongoing RTI training. The University of Maine has offered a number of courses from which our educators have learned specific teaching strategies. Several school teams took part in a 3 day RTI team planning institute in early August. Each school is in the process of creating a team to meet student needs. Although we will have some common expectations, each school's delivery will be tailored to students and school schedules. Interventions tailored to student needs are being developed, monitored for progress and implemented by MSAD #22 staff.

MSAD #22 Staff Professional Development

Professional Development Schools - MSAD #22 and the UMaine College of Education are collaborating to create a Professional Development School model pilot. The partnership will provide learning opportunities for teachers, students, UMaine students and university personnel. Starting in the fall of 2009, UMaine students will be visiting and teaching in classrooms through a variety of opportunities. Some will be observing to determine whether they want to enter the field of education. Others will be taking a literacy course at the university and will then come to our K-3 schools to see some of the theory in action. We will also have student teachers join us.

Assessments in MSAD #22

The NECAP (New England Comprehensive Assessment) is replacing the MEA (Maine Educational Assessment) in October 2009. The decision was made for Maine to join New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont in the yearly administration of the NECAP assessment for grades 3-8 in reading, mathematics and writing starting in October 2009. It is projected that joining this collaborative effort will result in savings of at least a million dollars a year for the state of Maine.

NECAP assesses learning from the prior year (teaching year) at the beginning of the next school year (testing year). Therefore, grades 2-7 reading and mathematics are assessed at the beginning of grades 3-8. Fourth and 7th grade writing is assessed at the beginning of grades 5 and 8. Maine's Personalized Alternate Assessment Program (PAAP) will now be provided for students in grades 2-7. The NECAP testing window begins on October 1st or the first school day following October 1st each year and is 3 weeks long. Assessment reports are released during the third week of the following January.

NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are state-aligned computerized adaptive tests that accurately reflect the instructional level of each student and measure growth over time. The assessment itself is unique in that it adapts to the student's ability, accurately measuring what a child knows and needs to learn. In addition, MAP tests measure academic growth over time, independent of grade level or age. Most importantly, the results educators receive have practical application to teaching and learning. MAP tests provide highly accurate results that can be used to:

- Identify the skills and concepts individual students have learned.
- Diagnose instructional needs.
- Monitor academic growth over time.
- Make data-driven decisions at the classroom, school, and district levels.
- Place new students into appropriate instructional programs.

During 2008-2009, we administered reading and math assessments to grades 2-9 and some students in grade 10. Teachers are becoming more knowledgeable about the assessment and its use to guide teaching and learning.

During the 2009-2010 school year, parents will be given more information about their individual child's progress. Be watching for updates.