

Dennis-Yarmouth RSD

Instruction Office Newsletter

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DDM's

On Friday, January 17, 2014 nearly two-thirds of our staff underwent professional learning to begin developing District Determined Measures (DDMs). As a Race to the Top district, during the current year we are required to pilot DDMs in 5 specific areas: K-3 Literacy; K-3 Math; 5-8 Math, High School Writing to Text; and traditionally non-tested grades/subjects (i.e.: Health, Music, Art, PE, Technology, etc.) Rather than focus solely on those areas, it made the most sense to provide everyone with the same training, at the same time so that all educators are ready for implementation in September of 2014.

The information you provided on your Ticket to Leave has allowed us to begin planning next steps in the process. While each grade level/content area had various specific concerns or questions, there were definitely some common denominators. Here are a few of your questions . . . with answers!

DDM ~ Answers to Your Questions

Q: Will there be district accommodations for IEP and ELL students?

A: Students on an IEP or who receive ELL services will be afforded the same accommodations on DDMs that they receive for any other assessment given.

Q: How often can a DDM change?

A: DDMs can change from year to year, based on the self- and student assessments completed at the beginning of the year.

Q: What is a student's academic peer group? How are they defined?

A: Peer groups for DDMs are no different than peer groups for MCAS. Students are grouped based on common traits- SPED, ELL, Low Income, Advanced, etc.

Q: How do we determine what is High, Moderate, and Low growth?

A: MTA and DESE recommend that educators and their evaluators exercise professional judgment when outlining expected levels of performance. This is a collaborative process which takes in to account the instructional challenges of each class.

TELL Us What You Think:

It's that time again to complete the TELLS survey sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The survey is open now until February 18, 2014. Please see your principal for the school-specific code to access the survey. The results of the survey will be used to inform decisions for school and district-level improvement.



Dates & Deadlines

- TELLS Survey: 2/18
- District Meeting: 2/26
- Early Release Dates: 3/6, 3/12
- Mentor Meetings: 4/14, 6/2
- 100th Day of School 2/24

IPDP

For all those with a professional level license, one element of the recertification process is to have a completed Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP). Goals should be aligned with the **current** School Improvement and School Committee goals.

To enter information into your IPDP, go to the D-Y website "Quick Links" and click on DYPD.

Once you have logged in, go to "Settings" then click on IPDP at the very top of the page.

Here you will be able to add your personal information, your Professional Growth and School Goals, check your PDPs to make sure they are in the right category, i.e. Primary or Elective, and also enter any additional activities that you may have attended within your school.

Once you have completed your form, print it out and have your principal sign it for your records

For explicit directions: [IPDP Directions](#)

"A good head and good heart are always a formidable combination. But when you add to that a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special."

Nelson Mandela

Surf's Up

Check out this website – www.pbis.org to learn more about Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. The district is moving toward a more systemic approach to the implementation of academic and behavioral supports; PBIS is a framework designed to enhance the adoption and implementation of a continuum of evidence-based interventions to achieve academically and behaviorally important outcomes for all students.



From the Superintendent's Desk

Going Back to the Starting Line

We are living in a time where the education profession is under a great deal of scrutiny. You name it and it is measured and reported to the public; Proficiency levels for students and educators, graduation rates, attendance rates, suspension rates, dropout rates, mobility rates, plans of high school graduates, etc. One of the most significant changes is around accountability for results. This change has forced us to focus on student learning. We are responsible to do all we can to help every student succeed. The focus on subgroups and closing achievement gaps is the civil rights issue of our time. The pace of change has accelerated and those driving the change are not always educators.



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This may be difficult for you to believe but the central office administrators and principals work very hard to support you when we have to make changes. Initiatives, programs, and materials that are selected are chosen with the needs and performance of our students in mind. Our professional learning experiences are designed to ensure you have the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the accountability "race." However, this often pushes you out of your comfort zone and requires you to learn new skills and use new materials. Learning is hard work and can be frustrating at times. It is hard to discard the competencies you have developed to try something new and persist at it long enough to see a difference in your students' performance.

Please know that when something new comes from us we believe it will help you to be more successful in this age of accountability. We are not sitting in our offices dreaming up new things to frustrate everyone. My hope is that as we struggle together to make Dennis-Yarmouth better for all our students we can keep in mind the words we have heard spoken by our Governor many times, "We believe that in times like these we should turn to each other, not on each other." Thank you for all your continued good work! Carol

Coaches' Corner

Betsy Pontius – K-3 Math Coach

James Schwartz discusses "5 powerful ideas" in the 2008 edition of his book, Elementary Mathematics Pedagogical Content Knowledge. He suggests that the entire body of mathematics knowledge is held together by a mere 5 concepts (Composition, Decomposition, Relationships, Representation, and Context). I have been reflecting on these ideas over the last few weeks, and am finding that they provide a meaningful framework to the field of elementary mathematics. Here is a brief summary of the ideas. Each newsletter, I hope to detail one idea, with information and examples from practice. To start, I will summarize the 5 concepts:



1. **Composition:** In order to do mathematics the human mind must be able to compose units. We must be flexible in our definition of units. Putting together units is composition.
2. **Decomposition:** similarly the act of decomposing units into smaller pieces. The act of forming smaller pieces from units is decomposition.
3. **Relationships:** We must be able to perceive relationships between these units (whatever they may be). In this way we are manipulating the units, studying comparisons, and describing the effects.
4. **Representation:** We must conceive ways to communicate these abstract notions through words, pictures and symbols upon which we carry out mathematical operations.
5. **Context:** In order for math to be meaningful, it helps to have a context for the math ideas. Real world applications provide the most useful contexts.