



Superintendent Update

DERRY TOWNSHIP SD | JUNE 30 2021

INSTRUCTIONAL STRUCTURES TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT (OR SOME EDUCATIONAL JARGON DEFINED)

BY DR. WINSLOW

As we prepare for the return of students in the fall, one of the questions that I have been regularly fielding from the parents of our elementary students is “Will the students be tested to see where they are in their learning?” It is easy to answer this question with a resounding, “Yes!” because this is something that we always do. As we approach the fall, I have a lot of confidence that we will be able to address the needs of our students through the structures that we already know are best practice and are part of what make the educational programming at Derry Township among the best in the state. As educators we are very familiar with these structures, but the language of them can be

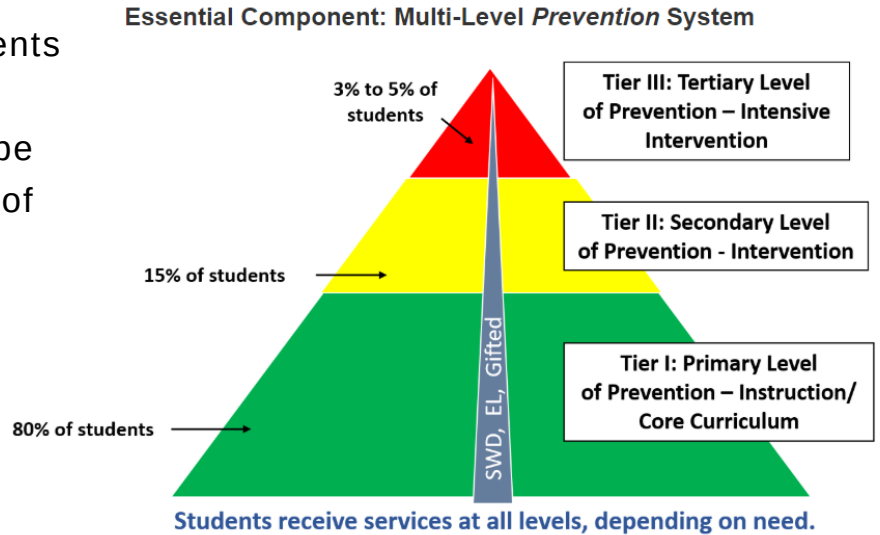
gibberish to someone outside of the field. In an effort to provide some clarity and background knowledge, I want to take the opportunity to share some of them here. Additionally in this newsletter you will find a graphic with our 1-3 End of Year mathematics data (which is right on target with what we normally see) as a snapshot of the type of data we collect throughout the year as well as our 2021-22 assessment calendar.

Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

MTSS is a framework that helps educators provide academic and behavioral strategies for students with various needs.

Instead of the “waiting for failure” assessment model of pre-IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) days, MTSS takes a proactive approach to identifying students with academic or behavioral needs. Early assessment and intervention for these students can help them catch up with their peers sooner. The key components of MTSS include:

- Universal screening of all students early in the school year
- Tiers of interventions that can be amplified in response to levels of need
- Ongoing data collection and continual assessment
- Schoolwide approach to expectations and supports
- Parent involvement



The integrated instruction model of MTSS uses collected data to assess student needs and provide them with interventions in appropriate tiers. At Hershey Elementary school, this work takes place as teachers meet together in quarterly Instructional Planning Meetings (IPMs) and bi-weekly data analysis meetings. At these meetings, any students who are showing a need, either for enrichment or remediation, are discussed and the appropriate interventions identified and put in place. These interventions can take a variety of forms, either in the classroom or as more intensive intervention in a small group with a specialist. The key to intervention success for students who are struggling with a concept or skill is to focus on acceleration and continued work within grade level content.

Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is a school model that emphasizes continuous learning and collaboration for teachers. There are 3 Big Ideas in the PLC model:

1. Ensuring that All Students Learn
2. A Culture of Collaboration
3. A Focus on Results

A key element to PLC is the belief that all students can learn at high levels in rigorous courses of instruction.

Additionally is the understanding that students bring many complex needs to the classroom learning

environment and therefore a collaborative approach to learning is necessary in order to guarantee that all students have high levels of achievement as a result of our work.

In this learning community we know that ALL of the students are all of OUR students and so we work together to answer 4 Critical Questions:

1. What do we want our students to know and be able to do? (This is answered at the classroom level using our standards-based curriculum)

2. How will we know when each student has learned it? (This is answered through formative and summative assessments)
3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?
4. How will we respond when a student has learned the information?

Teachers work in collaborative teams, examining the standards, skills, and content for each unit, and monitoring each student's progress toward the unit goals. When students struggle with a concept or skill, teachers work together to plan classroom interventions and when students demonstrate mastery earlier than others, acceleration opportunities are provided.

In this model, teachers are continually working together to learn from one another's practices and are continually looking at student data to determine the next steps for instruction.

MTSS and PLCs are essential components of the cycle of continuous improvement.

Sources:

Dufour, Richard. "What Is a Professional Learning Community." *All Things PLC, Educational Leadership*, 2004, www.allthingsplc.info/files/uploads/DuFourWhatIsAProfessionalLearningCommunity.pdf.

"What Is MTSS?: A Multi-Tiered System of Supports." *PBIS Rewards*, 5 Mar. 2019, www.pbisrewards.com/blog/what-is-mtss/.

Professional Learning Community Defined

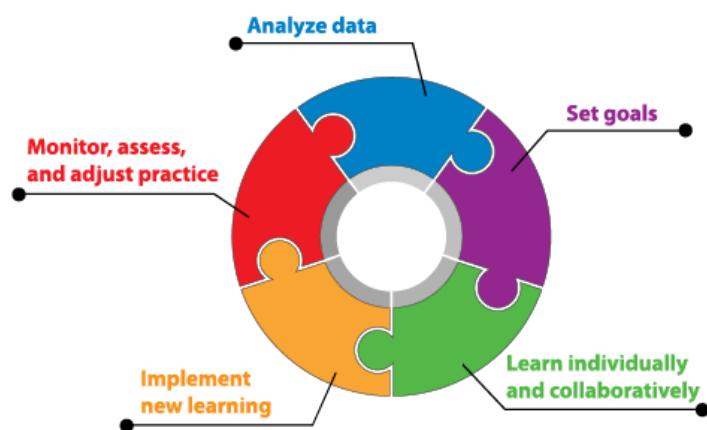
An **ongoing process** in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve.

PLCs operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.

(DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many, 2010)

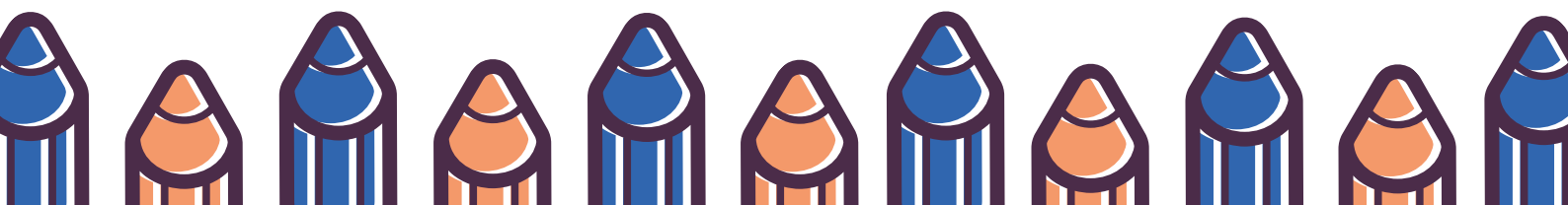
These structures are deeply embedded into our regular practices and keep student progress at the center of collaborative discussions and instructional practices. Teachers rely on one another to improve practice, to develop interventions, and to compare results ensuring that no student need is overlooked.

Teacher learning team cycle



Source: *Becoming a Learning Team: A Guide to a Teacher-Led Cycle of Continuous Improvement*

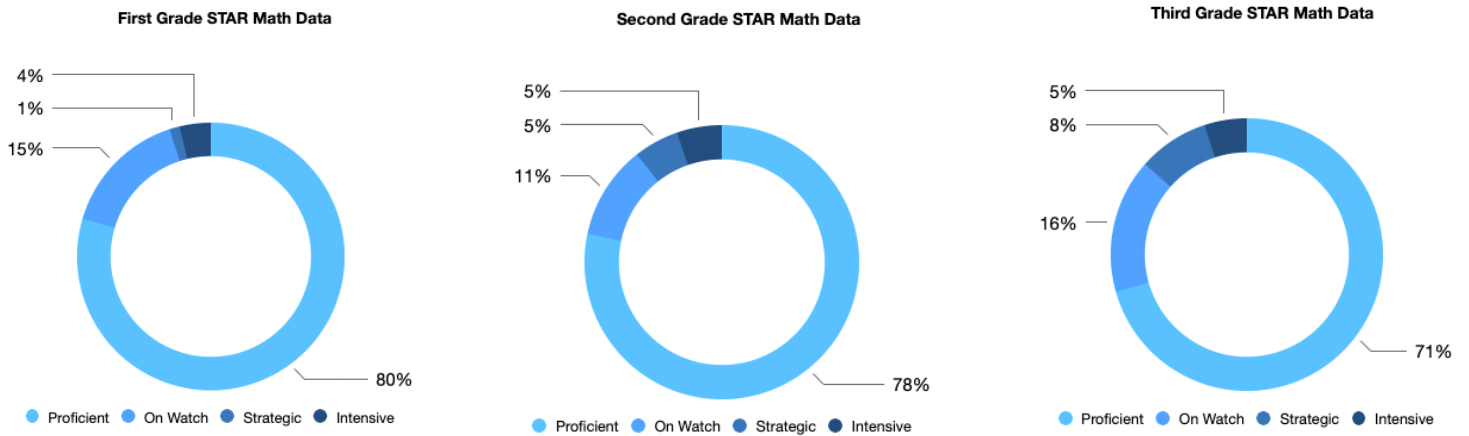
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THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION



STAR MATH DATA 20-21

The following graphics highlight the 2020-2021 data for our first through third grade end of year math assessment.

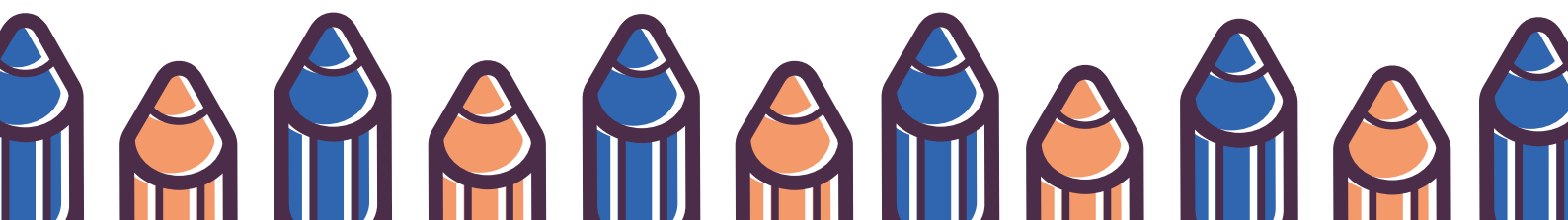
Students marked as "proficient" are in the 50th percentile or higher, students marked as "on watch" are the 25th to 49th percentile.



WHAT ARE WE READING AND LISTENING TO?

Leading the Rebound by Nancy Frey & Douglas Fischer: Frey & Fischer tackle the basics of what leaders and teachers need to know as we come out of pandemic teaching. They emphasize the importance of student agency and school wide systems (future newsletter topics).

Taken for Granted is a podcast on the TED Audio Collective. This is a special series hosted by Adam Grant in which he interviews top experts in a variety of fields. You can hear incredible talks with the likes of Brene Brown, Jane Goodall, Malcolm Gladwell, Merve Emre, and Lin-Manuel Miranda.



YEAR AT A GLANCE ASSESSMENT CALENDAR

Month	Grade	Subject	Start Date
September	2-5	Acadience Reading Benchmark Testing (SWAT)	9/8/2021
	K-1	Acadience Reading Benchmark Testing (SWAT)	9/9/2021
	1-5	STAR Math Assessment	9/13/2021
	2-3	Math Beginning of Year	9/14/2021
	K	Acadience Math Benchmark Testing	9/14/2021
	K	Math Beginning of Year	9/15/2021
	1	Math Beginning of Year	9/16/2021
	K-5	Reading Extra Assessments (Intervention Only)	9/13 - 9/16/21
	6-8	AIMSWeb MAZE (Select students)	9/13 - 9/17/21
	9-12	Study Island Testing Session	
	6-8	CDT (select students)	
	6-8	Fastbridge (select students)	9/13 - 9/17/21
	K-3	SSIS Universal Screening	
November	1-3	STAR Math	11/4/2021
	K-3	Math End of Trimester 1 Assessments	11/4/2021
	6-8	CDT (select students)	
December	6-8	AIMSWeb MAZE	12/6-12/10/2021
	6-8	Fastbridge (select students)	12/6-12/10/2021
	7-12	Keystone Winter Wave 1	12/1 - 12/15/2021



YEAR AT A GLANCE ASSESSMENT CALENDAR (CON'T)

Month 2022	Grade	Subject	Start Date
January	K	Acadiance Math Benchmark Testing	1/4/2022
	2-5	Acadiance Reading Benchmark Testing (SWAT)	1/5/2022
	K-1	Acadiance Reading Benchmark Testing (SWAT)	1/6/2022
	7-12	Keystones Winter Wave 2	1/3 - 1/14/2022
	K-12	WIDA Testing Session	
February	K-3	Math End of Trimester 2 Assessments	2/24/2022
	1-5	STAR Math	2/24/2022
	3-8, 11	PASA Testing Window	
March	K-3	SSIS Universal Screening	
	9-12	Study Island Testing We	
	6-8	CDT	
April	3-8	PSSA ELA	4/25 - 4/29/2022
May	4	PSSA Science/Math/Make-ups	5/2 - 5/13/2022
	6-8	AIMSweb MAZE (select students)	5/2 - 5/6/2022
	6-8	Fastbridge (select students)	5/2 - 5/6/2022
	K-1	Acadiance Reading Benchmark Testing (SWAT)	5/10/2022
	2-5	Acadiance Reading Benchmark Testing (SWAT)	5/11/2022
	K	Acadiance Math Benchmark Testing	5/25/2022
	1-5	STAR Math Test	5/25/2022
	K-3	Math End of Trimester 3 Assessments	5/25/2022
	7-12	Keystones Spring	5/16 - 5/27/2022
July	7-12	Keystones Summer	7/25 - 7/29/2022

