

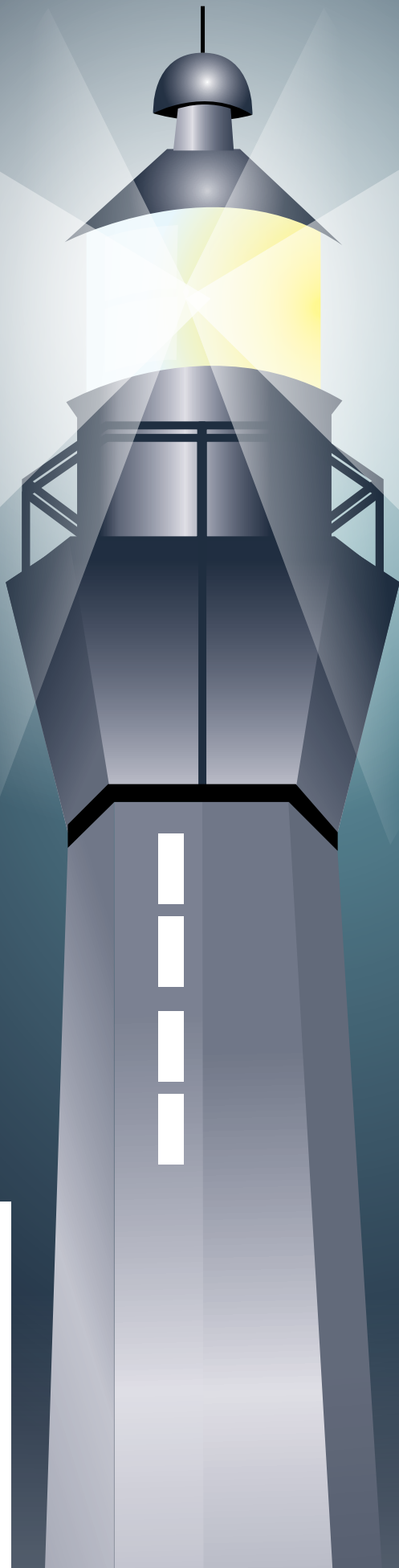
YOUR SCHOOLS

The Magazine of Thornton Township High Schools District 205

Fall 2010 Vol. 57 Special Edition II

Special Edition: Is Your Child Ready for High School?

“Will Your Child Be Ready For College and Careers?”



- ★ HOW WILL THE GRANT BE SPENT?
- ★ IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR HIGH SCHOOL READING?
- ★ IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR HIGH SCHOOL MATH?
- ★ IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR COLLEGE MATH?
- ★ HOW WILL ATHLETICS BE IMPACTED?
- ★ CAN THE BUDGET SUSTAIN AND SUPPORT THE CHANGES?
- ★ WHAT ARE THE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS?
- ★ WHAT ARE SOME SUCCESSFUL INNOVATIONS?

THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOLS



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How The Grant Funds Will

Innovation Through Progress and Improvement

Family & Community Engagement (\$495,000)

- **Clinical Social Workers**
 - Provide direct services to students and families in Freshman Center
 - Improved collaboration with outside agencies
 - Work with K-8 districts
- **Community Health Clinic** (*In Conjunction with Health & Human Services House*)
 - Diabetes, Asthma, Wellness (obesity, immunizations)
- **Parent Academies**
 - Reading, math, study skills, college planning

The District 205 Parent Academy team is committed to providing parents/guardians with the cutting edge information they need to support their children in an increasingly competitive global society.

- The Parent Academy team offers an interesting series of educational workshops on issues influencing our youth.

Data-Driven Curriculum & Instruction (\$2,079,000)

- **Database**

Providing teachers with immediate access to students' academic history, grades and test scores to guide instruction, schedule students and improve student learning.

 - Implement Pearson Inform Data Warehouse
- **Data Coaches**
 - Using achievement data to improve instruction

Facilitate the use of data to assist in the improvement of student achievement in all content areas.

Person who collects and shares data (i.e. practice ACT data and monthly tests to promote classroom decision making) with teachers so that they can make informed decisions to adjust instruction.

Partnership with K-8 Districts (\$828,000)

- **Special permission from U.S. Department of Education and ISBE** to use School Improvement Grant funds to work with the elementary school districts.

- **Professional Development for teachers**

Common Core Standards will help to ensure that elementary, middle, and high schools will have the same expectation for learning standards.

- **Quantum Learning**

Strategies supported by how the brain learns, which focuses on character development.

- **Summer Programs for Students**
 - Teachers implement and refine strategies

- **Summer Programs grades 5-8**

Teachers from grades 5 through 8 will teach a summer program for students who need support in reading and math. Teachers will practice strategies they have learned in workshops during the school year while helping students improve their reading and math skills. This program will be an addition to many summer programs already offered in District 205.

- **Revive TTTLP Assessments**
 - ACT CoreWork

The Partnership will work with ACT to develop reading and math assessments for grades 5 through 8 that align with high school readiness standards. This will inform the schools early about how students can improve their skills to meet and exceed standards in high school and prepare for college and careers.

Staff Evaluation System (\$210,000)

- **Includes Student Growth as a measure**

Improving teacher accountability for student achievement.

- Statewide must be in place by 2014
- SIG schools must implement in 2012
- Joint committee developing the system with Consortium for Educational Change

- **National Board Certified teachers raise the bar for teaching and learning**

Improving teacher quality through a challenging process to meet national standards.

Increased Learning Time for Students & Staff (\$105,000)

- **Modified Bell Schedule**
 - Extended Class Periods
 - Time for Professional Development

Increase learning time for students and staff.

- **Advisor-Advisee Program**

To have an adult mentor in each building who students can talk to regarding social, emotional and academic needs.

- **Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS)**

School-wide system to improve discipline, attendance, and student learning.

\$18,000,000

Cost of Doing Nothing

- Fewer college scholarship opportunities
- Higher failure rates
- Lack of academic, emotional and social readiness
- Students not at grade level or college level proficient
- Elementary & High Schools create conflicting student expectations

Will Be Invested:

Upper House Academies (\$5,397,000)

- **Advanced Placement (AP) Institutes during the summer**
- **Arts and Communication House – Summer Arts Program**
- **Pre-Law Mini Mock Trial**
- **Business, Engineering and Natural Resources and Technology House (BENT)**
 - Increasing enrichment programs in science and technology
- **Health and Human Service House**
 - Enrichment programs in medical careers (Nursing & Pharmacy)
- **Expanding AP Offerings**
- **Provide programs for 8th graders in world languages**
 - *As freshmen, those students will have AP language classes as an option in the Upper House Academies*
- **Summer Job Shadowing**
- **Digital Media Program**
- **Development of a stronger partnership with South Suburban College**
- **Continuation of 6-year plan to focus on post-secondary and career readiness and success**
- **UN Academy with IIT component**

Intensive Technical Assistance (Partners) – (\$5,685,000)

- **America's Choice- Lead Partner**
 - Leadership Coach in each school

America's Choice Ramp Up Literacy and Ramp Up to Algebra programs serve students who are most at risk for failure in the high school curriculum. These double-period courses focus on core skills that some students may not have mastered before entering high school.

The Reading and Math Navigator programs help students who are closer to high school readiness. Students take the regular English and math courses while using Navigator modules to help them improve their skills to be successful.

- **ACT- Supporting Partner**
 - QualityCore exam scoring and data analysis

Increase the number of students who can reach the "exceeds" level on the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE).

- **Consortium for Educational Change**
 - Supporting Partner

There are 168 (35.7%) of our teachers who have been teaching in the district for 4 years or less.

- New Teacher Induction
- Staff Evaluation
- Developing an assessment system to gauge teacher achievement.

- **Reading & Math Teachers**

The SIG grant funds staff in each school to become Reading and Math Coaches to work with staff and students to improve achievement. The coaches will assist teachers in all content areas with strategies to help students use reading and math skills across the curriculum. They will visit classrooms to provide feedback to teachers on how they can teach reading and math in their subjects.

Freshman Center (\$3,201,000)

The Freshman Center will:

- Put a laser focus on ninth graders in a smaller environment, (socially, emotionally and academically)
- Keep freshmen free from distractions of upperclassmen.
- Staff will be fully dedicated to nurturing freshmen to become independent thinkers and high school ready.
- All freshmen will have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Access textbooks by technology

A focus on overall student achievement will help to increase the number of students who are eligible to participate in District 205's athletic programs.

35% of freshmen drop out of District 205 athletic programs due to ineligibility (Current eligibility is a 1.5 GPA)

- Increased number of honors English, math and science classes
- Expanded music program – vocal and instrumental (Band)
- Implement year-round enrichment programs that meet student needs beyond the traditional school year
- Include options such as Project Lead The Way classes and foreign languages
- Incorporate clubs that promote student leadership and international awareness
- Provide enrichment opportunities in science and technology
- Implementation of a 6-year student plan which focuses on college and career readiness

- **Teams of 3-4 teachers and 130 students**
 - Establish strong relationships and know students' needs
- **Increased honors classes and electives**
- **Increased enrichment activities**
Field Trips, summer programs

32 MONTHS

Beginning freshman year, District 205 has **32 MONTHS**, a little more than 2 ½ years, to get students to 11th grade level on the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) and succeed after high school.

00,000



- Increase in number of students taking remedial college classes
- Increase in number of students who do not fulfill graduation requirements
- Increase in number of students needed to take summer school or credit recovery classes

- Academic, emotional and social problems lead to increased disciplinary issues
- Social implications including increased incarceration rates

Sample EXPLORE Reading Test

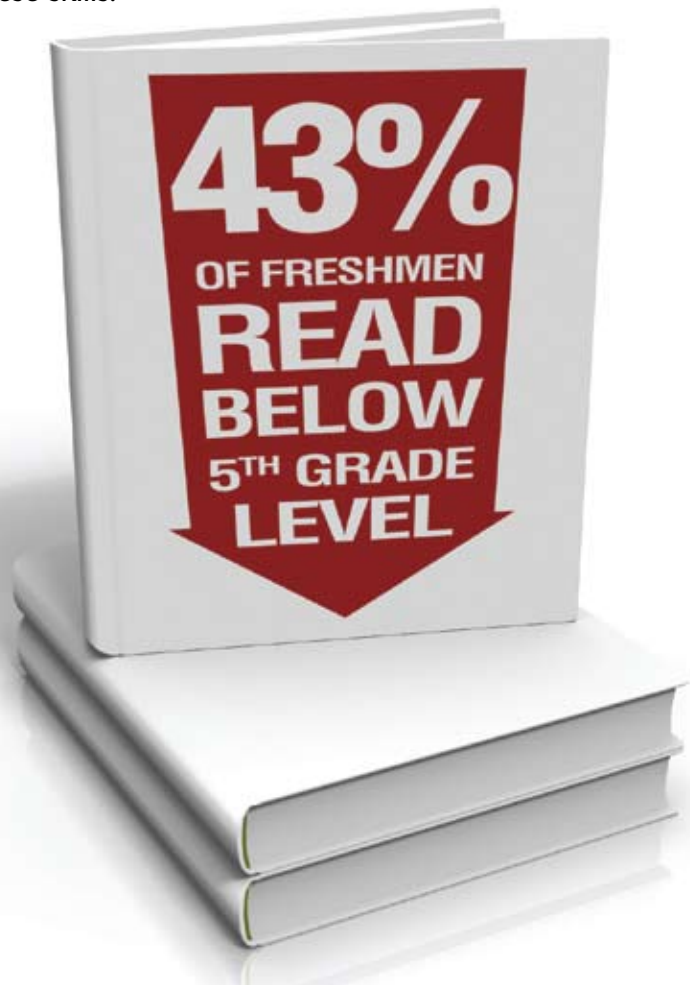
Students who enter high school not meeting benchmarks may lack reading skills such as:

- Reading
- Determine when (e.g. first, last, before, or after) or if an event occurred in uncomplicated passages.
 - Identify a clear main idea or purpose of paragraphs in uncomplicated literary narratives
 - Locate simple details at the sentence and paragraph level in uncomplicated passages
 - Identify relationships between main characters in uncomplicated literary passages
 - Recognize clear cause-effect relationships within a single sentence or paragraph in uncomplicated literary narratives
 - Use context to understand basic figurative language
 - Draw generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, etc. in uncomplicated passages

If your child can successfully perform the following reading skills, then your child is ready for high school:

Progress or Improvement?
Progress = Your child can execute these skills.

Improvement = Your child is NOT able to execute these skills.



DIRECTIONS: The passage below is followed by ten questions. After reading the passage, choose the best answer to each question and fill in the corresponding circle on your answer sheet. You may refer to the passage as often as necessary.

When the triangle sounded in the morning, Jody dressed more quickly even than usual. In the kitchen, while he washed his face and combed back his hair, his mother addressed him irritably. “Don’t you go out until you get a good breakfast in you.”

He went into the dining room and sat at the long white table. He took a steaming hotcake from the platter, arranged two fried eggs on it, covered them with another hotcake and squashed the whole thing with his fork.

His father and Billy Buck came in. Jody knew from the sound on the floor that both of them were wearing flat-heeled shoes, but he peered under the table to make sure. His father turned off the oil lamp, for the day had arrived, and he looked stern and disciplinary, but Billy Buck didn’t look at Jody at all. He avoided the shy questioning eyes of the boy and soaked a whole piece of toast in his coffee.

Carl Tiflin said crossly, “You come with us after breakfast!”

Jody had trouble with his food then, for he felt a kind of doom in the air. . . . The two men stood up from the table and went out into the morning light together, and Jody respectfully followed a little behind them. He tried to keep his mind from running ahead, tried to keep it absolutely motionless.

His mother called, “Carl! Don’t you let it keep him from school.”

They marched past the cypress, where a singletree hung from a limb to butcher the pigs on, and past the black iron kettle, so it was not a pig killing. The sun shone over the hill and threw long, dark shadows of the tree and buildings. They crossed a stubble-field to shortcut to the barn. Jody’s father unhooked the door and they went in. They had been walking toward the sun on the way down. The barn was black as night in contrast and

2. The inside of the barn is described in the passage as:
F. dark and cold.
G. bright and warm.
H. airless but bright.
J. dark and warm.

3. It can reasonably be inferred from the second “Mine?” (line 66) uttered by Jody that he:
A. won’t curry the horse after school.
B. can hardly believe the pony is his.
C. is wondering how he’s going to afford the pony.
D. is embarrassed by what his father has done.

4. Jody had trouble seeing in the barn when he first arrived there because:
F. he was looking around for his pony.
G. all he could see was the red pony.
H. he had just been walking toward the sun.
J. he had just taken a shady shortcut to the barn.

5. Jody realized he was not headed for a pig killing because he:
A. ate breakfast with his father and Billy Buck.
B. saw his father was wearing flat-heeled shoes.
C. would not be able to miss school.
D. walked past the singletree and black iron kettle.

6. The narrator’s statement that Jody “tried to keep his mind from running ahead” (lines 25–26) suggests that Jody:
F. is trying not to get too worried or excited about what might happen.
G. has great respect for his father and especially for Billy Buck.
H. wants to avoid thinking about how he’ll be punished for missing school.
J. knew exactly why he had to follow his father and Billy Buck.

warm from the hay and from the beasts. Jody’s father moved over toward the one box stall. “Come here!” he ordered. Jody could begin to see things now. He looked into the box stall and then stepped back quickly.

A red pony colt was looking at him out of the stall. Its tense ears were forward and a light of disobedience was in its eyes. Its coat was rough and thick as an airedale’s fur and its mane was long and tangled. Jody’s throat collapsed in on itself and cut his breath short.

“He needs a good currying,” his father said, “and if I ever hear of you not feeding him or leaving his stall dirty, I’ll sell him off in a minute.”

Jody couldn’t bear to look at the pony’s eyes any more. He gazed down at his hands for a moment, and he asked very shyly, “Mine?” No one answered him. He put his hand out toward the pony. Its gray nose came close, sniffing loudly, and then the lips drew back and the strong teeth closed on Jody’s fingers. The pony shook its head up and down and seemed to laugh with amusement. Jody regarded his bruised fingers. “Well,” he said with pride—“Well, I guess he can bite all right.” The two men laughed, somewhat in relief. Carl Tiflin went out of the barn and walked up a side-hill to be by himself, for he was embarrassed, but Billy Buck stayed. It was easier to talk to Billy Buck. Jody asked again—“Mine?”

Adapted from John Steinbeck, *The Red Pony*. ©1961, 1965 by John Steinbeck.

1. After he showed Jody the pony in the barn, Carl Tiflin went off by himself because he felt:

- A. lonely.
B. sad.
C. embarrassed.
D. amused.

7. The narrator says that Jody finds his father:

- A. harder to talk with than Billy Buck.
B. harder to talk with than his mother.
C. easier to talk with than Billy Buck.
D. just as easy to talk to as his mother or Billy Buck.

8. When the narrator says that the two men laughed when Jody said “Well, I guess he can bite all right” (line 61), it can reasonably be inferred that the men felt:

- F. the tension that had built up was relieved.
G. confused about what to do to the horse.
H. embarrassed that the horse had been so mean.
J. surprised that Jody had all his fingers left.

9. The pony that Jody finds in the stall is characterized by a:

- I. rough coat.
II. well-curried mane.
III. gray nose.

- A. I only
B. III only
C. I and II only
D. I and III only

10. The fact that Jody’s father is described as looking “stern and disciplinary” (lines 15–16) suggests that he is:

- F. extremely cruel and mean to Jody.
G. unwilling to look Jody in the eye.
H. somewhat distant from Jody.
J. annoyed at that moment with Jody’s mother.

Answer Key					
1	C	5	D	9	D
2	J	6	F	10	H
3	B	7	A		
4	H	8	F		

Sample EXPLORE Math Test

Students who enter high school not meeting benchmarks may lack math skills such as:

- Recognize equivalent fractions and fractions in lowest terms
- Solve routine one-step arithmetic problems (using whole numbers, fractions, and decimals) such as single-step percent
- Perform computations on data from tables, charts and graphs
- Substitute whole numbers for unknown quantities to evaluate expressions
- Solve one-step equations having integer or decimal answers
- Compute the perimeter of polygons when all side lengths are given
- Compute the area of rectangles when whole number dimensions are given

If your child can successfully perform the following math skills, then your child is ready for high school.

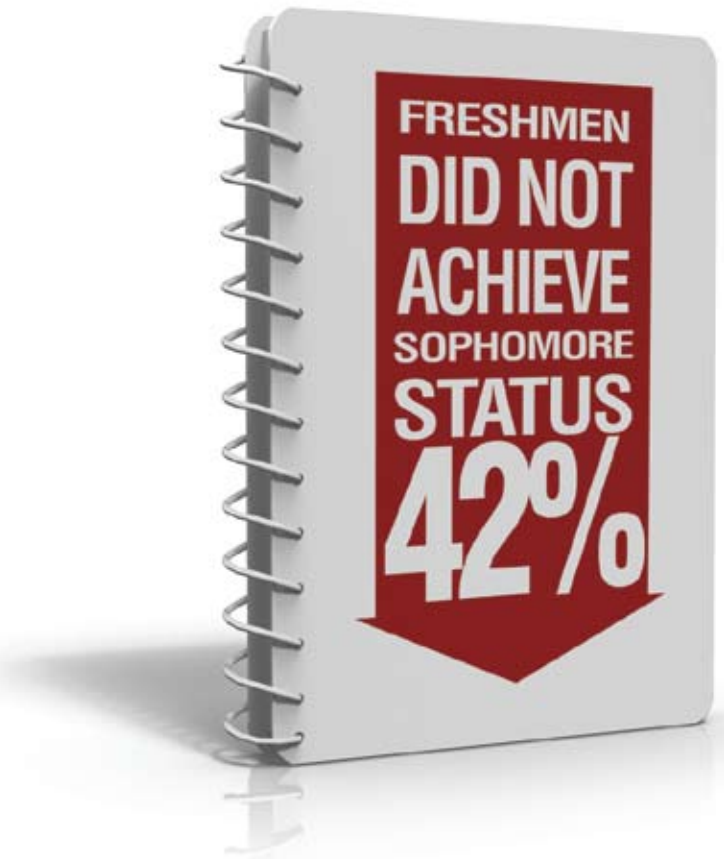
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MONTHS

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Benchmark	Sample Test Questions																														
1. Recognize equivalent fractions and fractions in lowest terms	<p>The fraction $\frac{16}{36}$ is the same as:</p> <p>A. $\frac{17}{37}$</p> <p>B. $\frac{1}{21}$</p> <p>C. $\frac{4}{9}$</p> <p>D. $\frac{2}{3}$</p> <p>E. $\frac{1}{3}$</p>																														
2. Solve routine one-step arithmetic problems (using whole numbers, fractions and decimals) such as simple-step percent	<p>What is 12% of 60?</p> <p>A. 6</p> <p>B. 7.2</p> <p>C. 12</p> <p>D. 48</p> <p>E. 72</p>																														
3. Perform computations on data from tables and graphs	<p>A survey taken at a local preschool asked each child for his or her favorite number. The following table shows the results. How many of the children’s favorite numbers were also their age?</p> <table><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Favorite Number</td></tr><tr><td>Age</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>Over 5</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>7</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>9</td><td>9</td><td>8</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>12</td><td>5</td></tr></table> <p>A. 14</p> <p>B. 20</p> <p>C. 29</p> <p>D. 34</p> <p>E. 77</p>		Favorite Number					Age	2	3	4	5	Over 5	3	4	8	7	2	1	4	2	9	9	8	3	5	2	4	1	12	5
	Favorite Number																														
Age	2	3	4	5	Over 5																										
3	4	8	7	2	1																										
4	2	9	9	8	3																										
5	2	4	1	12	5																										
4. Substitute whole numbers for unknown quantities to evaluate expressions	<p>What is the value of $\frac{ab+c}{c}$ when a=4, b=0 and c=2?</p> <p>A. 1</p> <p>B. 2</p> <p>C. 3</p> <p>D. 4</p> <p>E. 5</p>																														
5. Solve one-step equations having integer or decimal answers	<p>If $x + 14.520 = 105.149$, then $x =$?</p> <p>A. 90.629</p> <p>B. 103.697</p> <p>C. 106.601</p> <p>D. 119.669</p> <p>E. 250.349</p>																														
6. Compute the perimeter of polygons when all sides and lengths are equal	<p>The length of each side of the pentagon shown below is 17 millimeters. What is the perimeter of the pentagon in millimeters?</p> <p>A. 22</p> <p>B. 44</p> <p>C. 68</p> <p>D. 85</p> <p>E. 102</p>																														
7. Compute the area of rectangles when whole number dimensions are given	<p>If rectangle ABCD has lengths 12 inches and width 5 inches, what is the area in square inches?</p> <p>A. 17</p> <p>B. 30</p> <p>C. 34</p> <p>D. 50</p> <p>E. 60</p>																														
1. C	4. A	7. E																													
2. B	5. A																														
3. C	6. D																														

Can you answer these Work Key Questions?

(Work Keys are a part of the PSAE)

Level 5 question:

Quik Call charges 18¢ per minute for long-distance calls. Econo Phone totals your phone usage each month and rounds the number of minutes up to the nearest 15 minutes. It then charges \$7.90 per hour of phone usage, dividing this charge into 15-minute segments if you used less than a full hour. If your office makes 5 hours 3 minutes worth of calls this month using the company with the lower price, how much will these calls cost?

- \$39.50
- \$41.48
- \$41.87
- \$54.00
- \$54.54

Answer:
To calculate Quik Call's price, convert 5 hours 3 minutes to minutes ($60 \times 5 = 300$; $300 + 3 = 303$ minutes) and then multiply this by the rate of 18¢ (\$0.18) per minute, which equals \$54.54. To calculate Econo Phone's price, round 5 hours 3 minutes up to 5 hours 15 minutes and then convert the 15 minutes to $\frac{1}{4}$ or .25 hours. This value of 5.25 hours is multiplied by the rate of \$7.90 per hour to obtain \$41.48. Compare the two costs, \$54.54 and \$41.48, to determine the lower cost.

- $5 \text{ hr} \times \$7.90/\text{hr} = \39.50
- **$5.25 \text{ hr} \times \$7.90/\text{hr} = \41.48 Correct**
- $5.3 \text{ hr} \times \$7.90/\text{hr} = \41.87
- $5 \text{ hr} \times 60 \text{ min/hr} \times 18¢/\text{min} = \54.00
- $5 \text{ hr} \times 60 \text{ min/hr} = 300 \text{ min}; 303 \text{ min} \times 18¢/\text{min} = \54.54

Level 6 question:

You are preparing to tile the floor of a rectangular room that is $15\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $18\frac{1}{2}$ feet in size. The tiles you plan to use are square, measuring 12 inches on each side, and are sold in boxes that contain enough tile to cover 25 square feet. How many boxes of tiles must you order to complete the job?

- 11
- 12
- 34
- 59
- 287

Answer:
First, convert $15\frac{1}{2}$ to 15.5 and $18\frac{1}{2}$ to 18.5 and multiply these two values to obtain the area of the room in square feet. Next, divide this number (286.75) by the area covered by one box of tiles (25 sq ft). Finally, round 11.47 boxes up to 12 boxes, as it is probably not possible to order a fraction of a box of tiles.

- $15\frac{1}{2}$ becomes 15.5 and $18\frac{1}{2}$ becomes 18.5;
 $15.5 \times 18.5 = 286.75 \text{ sq ft}$; $286.75 \text{ sq ft} \div 25 = 11.47$, then rounded down to 11 boxes
- **$15\frac{1}{2}$ becomes 15.5 and $18\frac{1}{2}$ becomes 18.5;
 $15.5 \times 18.5 = 286.75 \text{ sq ft}$; $286.75 \text{ sq ft} \div 25 = 11.47$, then rounded up to 12 boxes Correct**
- $15.5 + 18.5 = 34$: Added the room dimensions
- $15.5 + 18.5 + 25 = 59$: Added all the dimensions given in feet

Level 7 question:

$15.5 \times 18.5 = 286.75$, then rounded up to 287: The area of the room in square feet The farm where you just started working has a vertical cylindrical oil tank that is 2.5 feet across on the inside. The depth of the oil in the tank is 2 feet. If 1 cubic foot of space holds 7.48 gallons, about how many gallons of oil are left in the tank?

- 37
- 59
- 73
- 230
- 294

Answer:
First, look up the formula for the volume of a cylinder ($\pi r^2 h$). Next, divide the diameter (2.5 ft) by 2 to find the radius (1.25 ft) and calculate the volume of the cylinder (9.81 cu ft). Finally, the volume must be multiplied by 7.48, the number of gallons per cubic foot, to find the number of gallons remaining in the tank.

- Multiplied $2.5 \times 2 \times 7.48 = 37.4$, then rounded down to 37
- Forgot to square 1.25; $3.14 \times 1.25 \times 2 \times 7.48 = 58.72$, then rounded up to 59
- **$2.5 \div 2 = 1.25$; $3.14 \times (1.25)^2 \times 2 = 9.81 \text{ cu ft}$; $9.81 \text{ cu ft} \times 7.48 \text{ gal/cu ft} = 73.4$ gallons, then rounded down to 73 Correct**
- $(1.25 \times 3.14)2 \times 2 \times 7.48 = 230.47$, then rounded down to 230
- $3.14 \times (2.5)2 \times 2 \times 7.48 \text{ gal/cu ft} = 293.59$ gallons, then rounded up to 294: Used diameter² instead of the radius

What will be the Impact on Athletics?

Current Athletic Program Offerings

District 205 athletic programs have always been the ones to beat in our area. Students' dreams are being deferred as they struggle with their academics. These struggles come in the form of:

- Grade point averages (G.P.A.) that do not meet the athletic eligibility requirements to play on a high school team for the entire season.
- G.P.A.s that do not meet the athletic eligibility requirements to play on a high school team for part of the season.
- Graduates that are not eligible for acceptance into a four-year university due to poor G.P.A.s
- Graduates that enter universities, but do not complete the program of study because they were not college-ready.

Under our new system, students will be spread across two schools as opposed to three schools. In the past, one of our three schools may have been known to be exceptional in one sport when compared to the other two schools. With this new system, there are more chances to have exceptional teams at both schools in more sports. This new athletic system will still allow all students who would like to participate the opportunity to do so. Playing on a competitive team will also boost the chances that scouts will come to recruit our students for college. Examples follow:

	THORNTON	THORN RIDGE	THORNWOOD
Football	X	X	X
Girls' Basketball	X	X	X
Boys' Basketball	X	X	X
Girls' Soccer		Merged into one team (Due to low enrollment)	
Boys' Soccer		Merged into one team (Due to low enrollment)	
Girls' Track	X	X	X
Boys' Track	X	X	X
Softball	X	X (Low Enrollment)	X
Volleyball	X	X	X
Wrestling	X	X	X
Girls' Cross Country	X	X	X
Boys' Cross Country	X	X	X
Girls' Swimming		Merged into one team (Due to low enrollment)	
Boys' Swimming		Merged into one team (Due to low enrollment)	

* Currently, some of our teams are not as competitive as they could be because our current system spreads our students across three schools. At this moment, we do not have enough athletes to create full and competitive teams at each building, as defined by the Southwest Conference guidelines

Current Football and Basketball Programs (12 teams each)		
THORNTON	THORN RIDGE	THORNWOOD
Freshman (A)	Freshman (A)	Freshman (A)
Freshman (B)	Freshman (B)	Freshman (B)
Sophomore	Sophomore	Sophomore
Varsity	Varsity	Varsity

Proposed Football and Basketball Programs for the 2012-2013 school year (12 teams each)	
THORNTON	THORNWOOD
Freshman (A)	Freshman (A)
Freshman (B)	Freshman (B)
Freshman (C)	Freshman (C)
Sophomore	Sophomore
Junior Varsity	Junior Varsity
Varsity	Varsity

The main goal of the athletic program is to provide all students with the desire to participate, the opportunity to do so in a fashion that develops the student and ensures access to quality athletic exposure. Discussions on the need to add and merge levels in the athletic programs will take place if the need arises.

Can the Budget Sustain and Support the Changes?

The entire world is in the midst of an economic downfall that many of us have never experienced. The District must be cognizant of the strong likelihood that this economic contraction will have a growing impact on the schools, and it must take action to prepare for this possibility. The impact of this economic crisis on Thornton Township High School District 205 may be seen in three primary areas: (1) The State financial crisis and its impact on State funding, (2) The increase in foreclosures and its impact on tax collections and (3) Low rates of inflation and its impact on tax revenue growth.

State Financial Crisis

With almost one-third of the District’s revenues coming from State sources, Thornton Township High School District Number 205 is very dependant on State revenues to fund its operations. It is therefore vulnerable to the economic plight of the State. The State was forced to rely on \$1 billion in Federal stimulus money both in FY 2009 and FY 2010 in order to cover mandatory State-aid payments. Beginning in FY 2011, the State will no longer receive these funds, which will create a huge funding gap. The crisis is evidenced by the fact that critical State revenues such as transportation aid and special education reimbursements have been delayed in excess of 200 days. On June 30, 2010, the State owed the District in excess of \$7 million. While the State is making efforts to not reduce funding, it has acknowledged that this will be very difficult going forward.

Increasing Rate of Foreclosure

Over the past five years, the District has collected between 92% and 94% of its tax extension. For the most current year, this percentage has decreased to below 89%. This drop is primarily due to an increase in the foreclosure rate in the District. While banks are paying taxes on most residential property foreclosures, commercial property foreclosures are dramatically impacting tax collections. For every one percent decline in tax collections, the District loses approximately \$600,000.

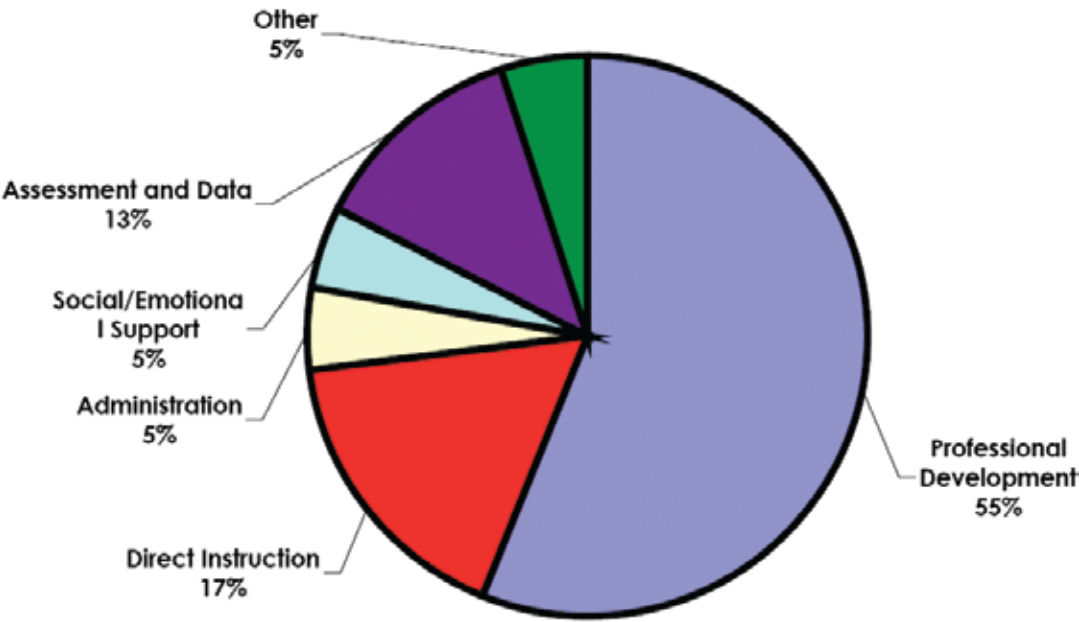
Issues Facing the District

With the goal of ensuring that the financial condition of the District remains healthy, it is imperative to examine major issues that may have a significant impact on the District’s financial condition and consider these issues when making financial projections.

Implementation of School Improvement Grant

The School Improvement Grant is a major event that must be evaluated not only on its academic impact, but also its financial impact. Specifically, the District must make a determination on whether the program is financially sustainable beyond the three years for which the grant is funded.

The District will receive a grant from the Federal government totaling \$18 million. The funds would be distributed so that the District will receive \$6 million over each of the next three fiscal years. The funds are primarily to be used to significantly alter the method in which educational programs are delivered to students so as to increase the District’s overall academic performance. Based on the current plan, the following is an estimated breakdown of how the funds will be utilized over the next three years:



Impact of Plan - Years One through Three

Based on the grant application, the Federal government will provide the District with all the funds necessary to develop and integrate the strategic improvement plan through the first three years of the plan. Therefore, there will be no financial impact on the District during the first three years of the plan. As a strategic part of the plan implementation, however, the District intends to establish a freshman academy at Thornridge High School, which will result in all freshmen in the District being housed at Thornridge and all sophomores, juniors and seniors being housed in Thornton and Thornwood. The financial impact of this facet of the strategic improvement plan will be dramatic.

One of the most effective financial strategies school districts often can implement is converting to a grade center-type structure. By having similar populations in one building, school districts have the ability to more effectively implement class scheduling, which allows for reductions in staff sizes. Based on District projections, total staff size can be reduced by thirty staff members throughout all of its buildings, should the freshman academy be implemented. This would result in an expenditure savings of approximately \$2.4 million annually.

Impact of Plan - Beyond Year Three

After the third year of the plan, the District will lose its funding for the school improvement grant. The District must ensure that the program is sustainable after this time period. At this time, it is uncertain as to how much of the \$6 million in expenditures will remain after year three. The assumption would be that the costs associated with the initial set up of the plan and expenses related to professional development will be significantly reduced as a result of the extensive training that will be provided in the first three years. The continuation of the other portions of the grant will likely be determined based on the success of the program and an analysis at that time of what has and has not been effective.

For purposes of estimating the annual impact of the school improvement plan beginning in year 4, we will assume that the District will maintain 25% of its expenses related to the school improvement plan in order to maintain successful programs. This equals \$1.5 million. Since the District will continue to save in excess of \$2.4 million through the reconfiguration of the buildings, the savings will more than cover the additional expenses and the District will continue to improve its financial condition due to the plan.

The District is fortunate in that the Federal government will be funding the initial set-up and professional development training needed to implement the plan. Through the support of the Federal grant and through the savings that will be realized through the creation of the Freshman Center, the decision to implement the school improvement plan in the manner proposed seems to be a solid decision from a financial perspective.

What Are the Frequently Asked Questions?

***These are the questions asked during the community meetings.*

What will be provided for students who are ready?

Students entering our schools at or above grade level will have increased year-round enrichment opportunities, additional advanced placement classes, job shadowing opportunities, college tours, more Advanced Placement classes, increased access to technology and an opportunity to take more electives.

Will the change destroy school legacy and tradition?

Thornridge's legacy will always remain, and the tradition will be enhanced by producing students who compete globally.

What is the status of band and other extracurriculars?

The District will ensure that full extracurricular opportunities are available for students. The parent recommendation to develop a school of the arts (band, choir and theater arts) may be created.

Will this affect personnel?

Yes. Teachers will need to apply to teach at the Freshman Center and Upper House Academies. The grant requires District 205 to create a new staff evaluation model that uses student progress as a major factor.

Will this affect Administration?

Yes. The grant requires that Principals in place for more than two years must be removed and this has already taken place in one building. The grant also provides funding for one additional administrator in each building. Much of the authority from Central Office had to be transferred to the building Principals.

Where will juniors graduate from?

Parents and students from Thornridge have suggested that the current Thornridge juniors hold their graduation ceremony at Thornridge and maintain a separate class rank even though they will be attending school next year at Thornton and Thornwood.

When will we know the boundary lines for each building?

The district is working on determining the boundary lines.

What are the qualifications for the Lead Partner?

Lead Partners were approved by the Illinois State Board of Education prior to the grant process. The ISBE approval was based upon the partners' record of success.

Will there be a copy of the grant proposal and by-laws?

Once the District receives final approval from ISBE these will be available on the District website.

Why can't the program start in 7th grade?

District 205 is not a unit district. It only serves grades 9-12. It has a partnership with the nine feeder school partners. District 205 has no authority to make changes to feeder school curriculum or graduation requirements.

Does isolating freshman move the problems to sophomore year?

No. Research shows that Freshmen Academies help to increase attendance rates

and decrease discipline issues. Students in the Freshman Center will have opportunities throughout the year to visit the Upper House Academies, and they will be mentored by upper house students in order to become familiar with course opportunities, the physical environment of the Upper House Academies, and their upper house peers.

After freshman year, do students move to another school?

Yes. All students will be assigned to one of the Upper House Academies by attendance zones, or, in some cases, by enrollment in a specific program that may only be available on one campus, such as Navistar.

What will be provided for students who are ready?

Students entering our schools at or above grade level will have increased year-round enrichment opportunities, additional advanced placement classes, job shadowing opportunities, college tours, and an opportunity to take more electives.

What will the data be for juniors?

The goal of these changes is to increase the number of juniors meeting and exceeding state standards on the PS&E. Improved grade point average, students on track for graduation, Advanced Placement enrollment and scores, and acceptance to college study will also be measured for juniors.

→ For a complete list of the Freshman Center and Upper House Academies discussion questions, please visit www.District205.net.

Successful Innovations in District 205

Senior Project

All students are required to complete a senior project prior to graduation that includes a written paper, a product or performance, a portfolio and an oral presentation.

Upper House Academy Innovations

Arts and Communication House

- International Culinary Arts Program
- Digital Media Program (Mac Training)
- Speech and Drama Team (Activity)

BENT House (Business, Engineering, Natural Resources and Technology)

- Project Lead the Way (Pre-engineering and Bio-medical engineering)
- Thornton Township Academy of Truck and Diesel Technology-Powered by Navistar
- National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)
- Coming Soon: Welding Program
- Biodiesel Club

Health and Human Services House

- Pre-Pharmacy Program (University of Illinois and South Suburban College)
- Law and Social Justice Program (Markham Courthouse)
- **Coming Soon:** Nursing Program
- Pre-Pharmacy Club
- Mock Trial Team (Activity)

United Nations Summer Leadership Academy (Grades 3-8)

Provides students from surrounding school districts and communities, with a global-based academic and enriched experience.

NEW Summer Math and Science Academy (Grades 5-8)

Launching in the summer of 2011, the academy will be a laboratory focusing on mathematics, science, technology and creative development.

Project Lead the Way (Grades 6-9)

Exposes students to the world of engineering by offering projects and activities involving hands-on science, technology, and math.

Summer Boost Program (Grade 9)

Assists incoming freshmen whose performance on the District 205 EXPLORE exam displayed a need for additional support in either math or reading.

Week-long summer career academies are also available to students who want to gain more experience in their respective fields of interest.