

Third Grade Global Assessment Information:

As our community changes and grows, Artman Elementary continues to push each child to strive for excellence. Literacy has always been a high priority and we are dedicated in providing the necessary tools for each child to grow and succeed in a literate world. One way we ensure that each child is meeting expectations is through assessments. At the Artman level, early skills are an imperative foundation for further learning. We track every child's progress in the areas of reading three times a year. The purpose of this literature is to provide you with an explanation of these assessments.

Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is a timed assessment of early skills needed (as determined by the *National Institute for Literacy*) to develop success in learning how to read. DIBELS is divided to assess each early reading skill independently. In **Third Grade**, these skills include *Oral Reading Fluency*. Reading fluency, accuracy, and retelling are skills that are timed for one minute to measure the automaticity of correct responses. To understand what these skills are, read further for a brief explanation.

Oral Reading Fluency is the student's ability to read words fluently and without noticeable effort. The student is able to relate letters to the sounds they represent "automatically" so that no conscious attention is required. In other words, automatic fluency is comprised of reading skills that are over learned to the extent that students can perform without thinking. Fluent reading depends upon more than accuracy in word recognition; for reading to be fluent, word recognition must be both accurate and rapid. Thus, a student's reading rate is a

good indicator of the student's automaticity with the code (English language). Once a student's word recognition skills become "automatic," cognitive resources previously devoted to decoding words are available for higher-level processing. The student is then able to devote more cognitive capacity to comprehending and *enjoying* what is read.

Title I Assessment is a federal requirement that Title I schools conduct. Artman uses *Fry Words* as our Title I Assessment. This list of 600 words, compiled by Edward Fry, contains the most used words in reading and writing. The words on the list make up almost half of the words met in any reading task. Good readers decode words so that they are said "instantly", therefore, assuring the automaticity essential to comprehension. The words are divided into six levels, roughly corresponding to grade levels; then into groups of twenty-five words, according to difficulty and frequency. **Third Grade students are assessed on the third 100 Fry Words (most common words) three times a year.**

The difference between DIBELS and Title I assessment is that Title I assessments are not timed. Therefore, our professional staff can distinguish between automaticity and knowledge of learned skills.

Another approach to measure reading is the **STAR Reading Assessment**. This assessment is an assessment of reading comprehension and skills for independent readers through grade 12. STAR Reading tracks development in multiple domains: Word Knowledge and Skills, Comprehension Strategies and Constructing Meaning, Analyzing Literary Text, Understanding Author's Craft, Analyzing Argument and Evaluating Texts, predicting, summarizing, sequencing, characters, details, vocabulary, interpretation, and reflection. All

STAR assessments are computer-adaptive tests (CATs). Computer-adaptive tests continually adjust the difficulty of each child's test by choosing each test question based on the child's previous response. If the child answers a question correctly, the difficulty level of the next item is increased. If the child misses a question, the difficulty level is decreased. CATs save testing time and spare your child the frustration of items that are too difficult and the boredom of items that are too easy.

As the year progresses the expectations rise, thus the benchmarks increase throughout the year. These benchmarks serve as a baseline and are used to set goals for each student.

As with any type of assessment, there are factors that can skew results. For example, test anxiety can place a barrier on student performance. Also, children who are sick, tired, or just having a bad day can sometimes not perform as well as he/she could. When analyzing results of these assessments, we keep those factors in mind when making instructional decisions.

Artman's goal is to communicate to the parents and community our purpose for testing and assessment. In doing so, we hope this literature provides you with a clear overview of our assessments. If you have further questions please contact the Artman Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach, Vincent D'Angelo at (724) 981-8750 ext. 5025 or Building Principal, Amy Wanchisn at ext. 5011.

For more information and research on teaching children to read go to the National Institute for Literacy Website at www.nifl.gov and National Reading Panel at www.nationalreadingpanel.org.

Resources:

Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

Dynamic Measurement Group



