First Grade Global Assessments 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 **First Grade**, these skills include *Letter Naming Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency and Oral Reading Fluency*. These skills are timed for one minute to measure the automaticity of correct responses. To understand what these skills are, read further for a brief explanation.

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency is the child's ability to break apart sounds in words. If the proctor says *house* the child's response should be */h/, /ou/, /s/*. Phoneme Segmentation Fluency is a part of Phonemic Awareness which is the understanding that sounds of **spoken** language work together to make words.

Letter Naming Fluency is the ability to read uppercase and lowercase letters in random order.

Nonsense Word Fluency is a brief, direct measure of the alphabetic principle and basic phonics. It assesses knowledge of basic letter-sound correspondences and the ability to blend letter sounds into consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) and vowel-consonant (VC) words. The test items used are phonetically regular make-believe (nonsense) words. Students must rely on their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences and how to blend sounds into whole words.

Oral Reading Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. More fluent readers focus their attention on making connections among the ideas in a text and between these ideas and their background knowledge. Less fluent readers must focus their attention primarily on decoding individual words. Therefore, they have little attention left for comprehending the text. We also document the accuracy to keep track of the percentage of words read correctly.

In the beginning of the year, *Letter Naming Fluency*, *Phoneme Segmentation* and *Nonsense Word Fluency* are assessed. In January and May, *Nonsense Word Fluency* and *Oral Reading Fluency* are the reading skills assessed. *Letter Naming Fluency* and *Phoneme Segmentation Fluency* should be secure by the end of January in First Grade, thus no longer need to be tested.

Title I Assessment is a federal requirement that Title I schools conduct three times a year. 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. **First Grade students are assessed on the first *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 **LLI Benchmark Assessment System.** This assessment system is a one-on-one, comprehensive assessment to determine independent and instructional reading levels and for placing students on the Fountas and Pinnell Text Level Gradient, A-Z.

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