

### **Assessments Come Under Review**

Late last year, members of the administrative team began working with Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Jane Martin, to develop a student assessment plan.

Principals and administrators worked with faculty to review all assessments administered in Kindergarten through grade 12 in order to identify meaningful common tests in all four domains: summative, formative, benchmark, and diagnostic. Areas of focus for the review were measuring the value of the data that each test provides, determining whether or not the test contributes to informed instruction and learning, and eliminating redundancy in student assessments.

The result is an assessment map that summarizes which assessments are to be given for each grade level at specified times throughout the year, creating a uniform delivery of testing, District-wide. At the elementary level, the focus is primarily on nationally-normed universal screening tools. These screeners are designed to measure progress at each individual student's performance level in order to be reasonably assured that he or she is making appropriate progress in the curriculum area being measured.

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, or PSSA testing, begins in third grade; and is administered to students in grades three, four, five, six, seven, eight and 11. In line with the introduction of the PSSA, 4Sight testing, which acts as a predictor for a student's performance on the PSSA, is introduced in third grade. The test continues to be administered to students in grades three through six for reading only, and is used for secondary student in grades seven through 12 in both reading and math.

STAR testing, an online adaptive assessment designed to measure reading proficiency, is administered in grades two through eight. The STAR testing is an integral part of a comprehensive approach to measuring and increasing student's reading skills. Students can use their STAR results to help them choose reading material that will help them grow as readers through the use of a leveled reading system, indicated through labels placed in library books at Skyview and Arcola. At home, students can use the Accelerated Reader website at <http://www.arbookfind.com/> to help guide families in choosing books. In the future, communication will be sent to families of students in grades two through eight, so that parents can monitor their students' progress in this all important area of the curriculum.

Other assessments include curriculum based tests like the Everyday Math Inventory and Storytown theme tests. These assessments measure a student's progress specific to Methacton's curriculum resources. "These assessments provide us with data that speak to our students' relative strengths and weaknesses, helping us to make important instructional decisions that are designed to move each student forward," Dr. Martin explains, "Teachers can identify areas of targeted remediation and enrichment, tailored for each student."

Beginning at Arcola and throughout the high school years, 4Sight and STAR testing is combined with common exams, mid-terms and finals. "While measuring a student's progress on mastery of our curriculum is important, we continue to see real value in monitoring their progress toward proficiency in the Pennsylvania State Standards." Dr. Martin added.

Many of these tests take very little time to administer, and the result is real data that administrators and faculty can use to help all students reach their maximum potential.