

TO: Homer Central School Board of Education Members  
FROM: Thomas M. Turck  
DATE: December 2, 2013  
RE: First Quarter Data 2013

This memo is meant to give some perspective to the Homer Junior High quarterly data provided for you in this week's Board of Education packet. As this is the first time that this information is being shared and this memo is being written, I welcome any feedback that you have that will help this document to be as informative as possible.

### **Attendance**

Student attendance is regularly tracked with parental contact being made when a threshold of absences/tardies has been reached. This contact first takes the form of written notification, followed by personal contact leading to a parent-staff member problem solving meeting.

The attendance numbers that you see for grades 6, 7, and 8 are a bit misleading. This year, teachers are taking, for the first time, period by period attendance utilizing our new student management system, SchoolTool. On a number of occasions, students who were in attendance, but were not in a particular teachers class were listed as absent, when in fact they were in district on either partial or full-day fieldtrips. This practice is being clarified and should prove more accurate as we move forward.

### **Grade 6-8 STAR Reading**

This fall, STAR Reading was administered to all grade 6-8 students for the first time. In the past, only small numbers of identified students were given the exam to measure growth as it related to the goals on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This universal STAR Reading screening now gives us specific information about a student's ability to read, and suggests activities that teachers can use to help improve a students' ability to read and comprehend what they have read. The data generated was used in conjunction with other data points that we have used traditionally to identify students who should be receiving Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and specific learning activities that are being used with groups of students of similar need.

### **Grade 6-8 STAR Math**

As was the case with STAR Reading, all students took the STAR Math for the first time this fall. The data generated from this screening has been used to identify students who could benefit from some extra support and instruction in math as well as helping general education math teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses in all students.

## **ELA Module Assessments**

This is the first time that all teachers have administered module assessments at the Junior High. Grade six teachers began this practice last year with seventh and eighth grade teachers coming on board this year. As part of our building Local Assistance Plan process, we will be building in content area data sessions that will allow those teachers to analyze the module assessment results and plan instruction accordingly.

## **Math Module Assessments**

The same can be said for Math. Teachers are implementing and adapting the modules as they become available. The data will be used to assess and modify their instruction in subsequent years. More time has been spent reviewing and planning for the implementation of the modules than has been looking at the data generated from them at this point. The content area time spent moving forward will allow for time to look at trends in the data to inform instruction.

## **Grades and Class Averages for Junior High Classes**

The comparison of this data to the modular achievement of our students will no doubt generate interesting conversations with staff as we move forward. What components make up the overall student average and what should the weighting be for each? Is the numeric score traditionally reported in report cards truly emblematic of students' skills and ability to graduate college and career ready?

In English Language Arts, discussions have already begun about how best to communicate a students' progress. As a temporary reporting method, a student is given two scores...a numeric grade on a 0-100 scale for homework completion, participation, etc. and a rubric score on a 0-4 scale for their writing. Ongoing discussions will center on how best to combine these components to give the most accurate representation of the students' College and Career Readiness as it relates to that grade level and subject area skills.