

# Memo

To: Nancy Ruscio, Superintendent  
From: Theodore Love, Director of Instruction  
Date: December 7, 2017  
Re: Quarterly Data Report



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Attached is the quarterly data report for the first quarter of the 2017-2018 school year. In addition to the quarterly data, we have also included data from the 2017 3-8 Math, ELA, and Science New York State Tests. A few notes on the data report:

1. We have aligned the attendance data with the NYSED reporting thresholds for chronic absenteeism. Students who are absent from school at a rate of 10% or greater are considered “Chronically Absent.” Students who are absent from school at a rate between 5-9% are considered “At-risk of Becoming Chronically Absent.” The goal for all schools in New York State is to have a Chronic Absenteeism rate of less than 10%.
2. Fast Bridge data is taken from the District-level Impact Report. We have formatted the stacked bar graph for this report and several others in a way that shows all students at risk below the line and student at or above grade-level above the line. We believe this format is much easier to discern useful trend data at a quick glance.
3. First quarter grades were aggregated on November 16th from SchoolTool and are only reported for Junior High and High School. Course performance is broken down into three categories:
  - a. Mastery 85-100
  - b. Passing 65-84
  - c. Failing 0-64New this year are pie charts that show the breakdown of those categories by department as well as new reports that look at total number of students who are failing courses (failing 1 class, 2 classes, 3 or more classes) and a similar report that looks at the number of students with course mastery grades (1 course, 2 courses, 3 or more courses).
4. New York State Test data for Grades 3-8 Math, ELA, and Science are reported with a three year historical trend, prior year comparison, County comparison, BOCES comparison, and comparison to the Comparison and Stretch Districts in our Strategic Plan. The report ends with data on test refusals (opt-outs).

In reviewing the Principal's' reflections, I am noticing the following themes or trends:

**Attendance:**

Schools reported a continual focus and monitoring of students with attendance concerns. Principals report using a variety of communication methods to reach parents and students with the message that attendance at school is the first and essential step to student learning.

**Fast Bridge Benchmark Data:**

All schools are working with student data to identify students with skill gaps and provide intense focussed interventions in an effort to increase the ability for those at-risk students to be successful in the core on-grade-level instruction through the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. Of significant note is the work being done at the Elementary school to address reading skills at each student's level in the core (classroom) instruction. Also of note is the pilot study being done at the Intermediate School with the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program in a select group of our grade three through five classrooms. Through the same RTI process that we use for identifying students gaps in reading skills, the Intermediate and Junior High are looking at Math skills and have put in place Math interventions. The data shows more students at risk in grades six (55%) and eight (46%) than grade three (26%). This is an area that we are addressing through supplementary instruction, but I believe that we will also need to begin to look at our core math instruction to improve the ability for students who are at low risk or on a college pathway in grade three to remain at that level of proficiency through eighth grade.

**Writing Benchmark:**

We have already had several discussions about the need to align this District-created assessment with the current curriculum. While we will be administering the writing assessment this year, we believe that it is not directly measuring the skills we are teaching at each grade level. We are beginning to plan to revisit the writing assessment this Spring and next Summer so that we might have a more appropriate measure next school year.

**Course Performance:**

As noted above, this data is being presented for the first time in this format and Mr. VanEtten and I have had a conversation about the usefulness of this data. As we begin to make this data actionable, we will be working together to dig deeper into the way we can track student course performance and specifically look at ways to intervene with students who are failing courses in the first marking period while it is still possible for students to get back on track and still earn credit for the course.

# Memo



To: Theodore Love  
From: Douglas VanEtten, High School Principal  
Date: December 6, 2017  
Re: Quarterly Data Report

Thank you for your time this afternoon to meet and discuss my reflections. I want to also thank you for changes in presentation as I believe this report was easier for me to visually review compared to others. I also believe the standardization in attendance data and using the state definitions will assist in meaningful comparisons from quarter to quarter as well as year to year. With all of this, I am left with thoughts and questions.

## **Attendance**

Last year, the changes in attendance from quarter 1 to quarter 2 was notable. I am hopeful that is not the case this year.

The state's definition of chronically absent leads me to think about our buildings efforts in monitoring attendance. We currently communicate when student attendance falls below 90 % and again at 85%. These were determined in county a few years ago amongst schools and community providers. Give the new definitions, we will adjust our monitoring efforts up a bit so we are not seeing students when the fall below what is already identified as chronically absent.

Given some of the trends in data from chronically absent seem consistent at grade at the high school but seem to vary significantly by various sub groups district-wide, I am curious as to the variations in attendance data across the subgroups at just the high school. This is a question I intend to pursue with the high school student services team as I share the attendance data with them over the next few weeks before the end of the calendar year.

## **Fast aReading Data**

I am encouraged by the results of this years fall testing. Late Fall testing was repeated by English staff for those students showing high and some risk and English staff are just reviewing that data as well as other information collected. While it is great to collect data, conversations as recent as this week have included a review of interventions that might be implemented in AIS, English classes, or other setting where students might work to improve skills in which they show risk. I am excited by the excitement in our English teachers who have been leading this effort. I am hopeful that we will continue to improve skills through the analysis and implementation of interventions to improve skills.

## **Quarterly Grades**

The change presentation has led to some new observations for me. In looking at grades by department, I noted that the subjects with the lowest mastery rates did not also have the highest failure rates. I also found it noticeable when looking total failing courses and course mastery that the number of students with course mastery seems fairly consistent across the last five quarters while number of students failing courses increases Q1-Q4 in 16-17 and starts higher in Q1 17-18 compared to 16-17. While you and I discussed that this may represent a loss of the number of students passing but not at mastery over the course of last year, I worry that may be an over simplistic conclusion on my part. I have more questions that I would like to pursue as we look as these new data sets.

To: Board of Education  
From: Tom Turck  
Date: November 2017  
Re: First Quarter Data

### ***Attendance***

We continue to make regular school on-time attendance a priority at the Junior High. Our Student Support Team (SST) meets weekly to review absences/tardies and makes contact with families through a combination of letters, phone calls, and parent meetings. We also reward positive attendance by recognizing students with perfect monthly attendance and by homeroom with a reward breakfast every five weeks. Response to these initiatives developed last year has been very positive.

### ***FastBridge aReading***

We continue our monitoring of Fastbridge aReading results as the school year progresses. Our first benchmark had 12% of sixth graders, 5% of seventh graders and 8% of eighth graders in the high risk category. At our RtI data meetings, we are reviewing both this data as well as specific intervention data to determine groupings and the effectiveness of interventions. We are also discussing ways to increase student awareness of their results through the use of graphing progress. It is our belief that when a student sees their progress and develops goals for improvement, that they will be motivated to do their best.

### ***FastBridge aMath***

As is the case with aReading, Fastbridge aMath data is reviewed regularly by staff. We have incorporated math specific interventions in both grade six and seven RtI blocks to help us improve students' skills. We are not content with the number of students who are not experiencing an adequate level of success with math.

### ***NYS Assessments***

The percentage of proficient students on this exam improved in both grades six and seven from the prior year. Both grade six and seven slightly outperformed the county in this category as well. Grade eight percentages decreased from 40.7% proficient to 27.1% over the two-year span and was behind the county at 31% of students reaching that level.

Math assessments were greatly improved for grade six while grade seven and eight saw a decrease in the percent proficient. On the positive side, our math scores in all three grades were better than other Cortland County schools. We are hopeful that with the addition of math specific interventions being used in our RtI block, that we will begin to see a positive gain in our students level of math proficiency.

With that said, a review of our results when compared to OCM BOCES, comparison and stretch districts indicates that much more work needs to be done. Being a leader in Cortland County is a start, but it is certainly not the desired destination.

To: Board of Education  
Re: First Quarter Data  
Date: November 2017  
From: Stephanie Falls

**Attendance**

The Intermediate School has been calling parents, sending warning letters, and utilizing other mailings to parents to help increase attendance. Many times parents do not realize the frequency of absences and late arrivals until the SchoolTool data is shared. We also had several students with some chronic medical issues this fall.

**FastBridge aReading**

We are pleased to note the general decrease in the High Risk category as students move through the grade levels. This year we have revised our list of interventions for TEAM groups; adding and deleting from our menu to better meet student needs. In addition, the pilot of CKLA units has introduced new assessments and inventories to help diagnosis specific skill weaknesses and remediation.

**FastBridge aMath**

The College Pathway category has been increasing through grades 3-4. We are thankful to have a Math AIS teacher to help with students that are falling into the risk categories in grades K-3. Grade 5 scores and above are concerning as the College Pathway scores seem to decline. Grade 5 teachers have implemented a daily study hall for extra help- students may work with teachers and/or peer tutors during this time. All intermediate teachers use computer based math programs so students may practice daily at school as well as at home.

**Writing Prompt**

Our writing prompt is the same assessment throughout the year. The number of proficient students will increase as the children progress through the instructional school year. One note- the CKLA pilot classes are not using the same writing instruction as the ENGAGENY module classrooms.

**NYS Assessments**

ELA assessments were over all improved for the Intermediate School with grade 4 seeing the largest gains from 2015-2016. Grade 3 proficiency rates were lower this year; however, scores were similar to those in Cortland County. Our revised intervention menu and CKLA pilot are two initiatives that we hope will increase ELA scores.

Math assessments were greatly improved for grade 4 while grade 3 and 5 saw a decrease in the percent proficient. Our math scores are comparable to other Cortland County schools. The addition of grade 3 TEAM math groups, computer-based math programs, and the grade 5 study halls are being utilized to help increase math scores.

We still need to work toward our OCM BOCES and stretch schools for NYS assessment scores. We have been working with West Genesee School district with the pilot implementation of CKLA in the Intermediate grade levels.

To: Board of Education  
Re: First Quarter Data - Elementary  
Date: Fall 2017  
From: James McGory, Principal

The following is an analysis of the first quarter data for K-2 students. You have been provided with attendance data, Fastbridge benchmark data for both reading and mathematics along with our first and second grade initial writing benchmark.

### ***Attendance***

Our attendance data looks very good comparatively to years past during the first quarter of school. I am pleased to see that upwards of 94% of our students are at school on a regular daily basis. When looking at our chronically absent students I have documented these absences and tardies, communicated with parents the importance of attending school on a regular basis and on time, and continue to monitor these individual students for continued growth in the area of attendance.

### ***Fastbridge Reading and Math***

Fastbridge assessments in ELA and math have been administered traditionally each October, January, and May to determine student reading fluency (ELA) and computational skills in mathematics. These assessments allow our educators to determine what ***tier*** students are performing at throughout the school year.

***Tier 3*** students are students who are reading and performing in math ***well*** below grade level and who require intensive academic intervention along with problem solving meetings to implement remediation. These students are progressed monitored on a weekly basis through the use of Fastbridge assessments.

***Tier 2*** students are students who are performing ***below*** grade level in ELA and math and require further consideration of more intensive instruction. The needs of the students within tier 2 can be addressed through the use of our reading specialist in collaboration with differentiated instruction within the classroom. Tier 2 students are progressed monitored on a bi-weekly basis.

***Tier 1*** students are performing ***at or above*** grade level. Continuing current programming for students who score at the lower end of tier 1 receive continuation of the current curriculum. Students who perform at the higher end of tier 1 should be receiving extensions through

differentiated instruction and extension projects. 80% of students should be operating in Tier 1 by spring according to national norms.

*Our results in ELA using the Fastbridge assessments:*

**Kindergarten:** 38% of kindergarten students performed well below proficient levels when identifying letters names, sounds, and onset sounds. In addition 37% of our kindergarten students are at some risk. This cohort of students that we received this past fall came to us with minimal background knowledge and exposure to direct instruction in the area of literacy. Interventions began with our high and some risk students within the first month of school. Interventions that are being utilized are designed to assist students in identifying upper and lower case letters along with the sounds they make. Students that currently perform at high and some risk receive daily instruction from the reading specialist and classroom teacher using these interventions. These students are also progress monitored weekly to determine if the interventions we are utilizing are working. This allows us to adjust the interventions when needed.

**Grade 1:** Early reading measures assessed for grade 1 this past fall in combination with our core curriculum assessment and remediation guides has allowed our teachers to pinpoint student learning deficits. Students are being taught at their current unit of non-mastery within our curriculum. Teachers are using our core unit assessments to determine the individual literacy skills students are lacking and then intervening with students utilizing the core curriculum skills strand. In assessing students using our core assessments, we can determine if a student needs to be taught the entire unit or if they just need specific skills retaught so they can master those particular skills. This approach will allow us to catch students up at a quicker pace. As you can see by the data in the early reading measure data, grade 1 teachers are intervening with our high risk and at risk students at least 3 times per day to enhance student's skills around the literacy components they lack.

**Grade 2:** The RCBM is a brief, individually administered, standardized test of oral reading. The test measures words correctly read for a 1 minute period of time. 45% of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students performed at proficient levels. As mentioned above in my first grade analysis, teachers use the same approach to intervening with students that are at high and some risk. Historically at grade 2 we see major increases in reading fluency from our students. The goal for grade 2 teachers is to send students to grade 3 as fluent readers based on our core curriculum.

## **Reading Assessment**

## **Grade 1 and 2**

As the data shows we have a number of students at risk after completing the fall Areading assessment. Areading captures a student's ability to read and then comprehend what they read. In a k-2 setting the ultimate goal is to have students reading fluently. When a student can read fluently, they can then comprehend what they have read. Based on the early reading measures data presented above and on the quarterly data report we will need to continue to intervene with our students in the area of fluency so that they can gain the necessary skills to read fluently which in turn will lead to further comprehension.

### ***Our results in math using the Fastbridge assessments:***

**Kindergarten:** Number identification is the basic skills that students need to know in order to start to be able to formulate responses to math problems. Basic concepts of counting, addition, and subtraction are taught within our core curriculum. Again, this particular group of students as a whole came to us lacking these basic mathematical skills. Our core curriculum is aligned to address these beginning skills.

**Grade 1:** It is encouraging to see that half of our first grade students came back to us this fall with basic concepts around number sense and utilizing numbers to solve mathematical equations. The first grade math curriculum is aligned to revisit end of year kindergarten math material during the first couple of units. Most students need this time to re-grasp these skills and vocabulary as the core curriculum becomes more advanced.

**Grade 2:** Math computation seems to be an area of strength for entering grade 2 students and an area of growth over the last 3 years. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are grasping algorithms that are being taught that align to our new approach in mathematics. Last year 42% of students performed at tier 1 at grade 2 at the second quarter benchmark. This year 55% are performing at tier 1. This to me demonstrates that our student's have picked up on our new approaches in mathematics after learning this way for the past 3 years.

## **Fastbridge CBM Math Assessment Grade 1 and 2**

Fastbridge CBM measures a student's ability to add and subtract numbers during a one minute timed assessment. As educators we are looking for students to build automaticity in recognizing basic math facts. The data that was collected this past fall for both grades 1 and 2 is typical for our student population. Comparatively our grade 1 and 2 student performance on this assessment meets national norms at this point in time of the school year.

### ***Writing Benchmark Assessments***

This past summer our teachers spent 3 days at the CKLA Institute to refocus our efforts on our core literacy program. Through this process we realized that we needed to shift our approach on how we deliver this curriculum based on how the curriculum is designed to intervene with students. With this shift we are now teaching the writing extensions that are a part of our literacy curriculum. We have found that these extensions do not necessarily align with the writing prompts created last year. Therefore the data throughout the school year may look skewed based on this approach as students may not have the necessary skills to properly write the assigned writing benchmark. Through teaching these extensions we will see growth throughout the year in regard to student writing through our core assessments and writing extensions. We all agree at the elementary school that we need to deliver our instruction with fidelity in order to see improved student performance. The plan would be to realign these writing prompts next school year so that they fit our curriculum.