

**October/
November
2007**

- *In times of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future.*
- *The learned usually find themselves beautifully equipped to live in a world that no longer exists.*

• *Eric Hoffer, Reflections on the Human Condition (New York: HarperCollins, 1972, p. 32)*



Begin lessons with a review of relevant previous learning and a preview of upcoming lesson.

Curriculum Corner

“Failure is NOT an Option” for our Schools

In the book, “Failure is NOT an Option” the author Alan Blankstein, challenges schools to strive for success in addressing EACH student’s individual needs. He notes that during the Apollo 13 spaceship crisis, accepting the fact that there was nothing they could do to save the astronauts was not an option. They were going to bring them back no

matter what the cost. Failure was not an option!

And so, Blankstein lays out six guiding principles that ensure student success. These include:

#1-Common mission, vision, values and goals

#2-Ensuring achievement for all students: Systems of Prevention and Intervention

#3-Collaborative Teaming focused on teaching and learning

#4-Using data to guide decision making and continuous improvement

#5-Gaining active engagement from family and community

#6-Building sustainable leadership capacity-not only through the principal but within the building-teacher leaders.

ISTEP Feedback and Comments

Many positive comments have been heard from building principals and counselors as to how focused and prepared the students have been during ISTEP . This is a direct reflection on all teachers for their hard work, planning and focus on

getting kids prepared to take the test.

For some schools, the weight of ISTEP testing is paramount (AYP, 4 Star status), and kids feel the weight too.

A huge amount of gratitude goes to each and

every teacher for preparing the students for ISTEP and also to the high school teachers for their work through Project Start and the SAT/ACT prep that took place as well.

Thanks to all for everyone’s hard work.

RtI is a general education initiative. It is not a special education initiative.

The extent to which students respond to the general education curriculum and interventions is the key.



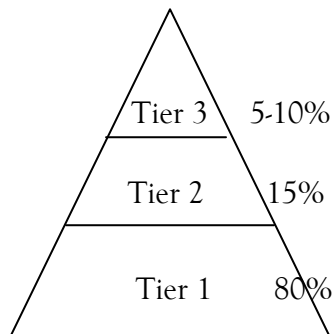
Courage is the mother of all virtues because without it, you cannot consistently perform the others.

Aristotle

RTI- What it is and Why it is important

With the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), the federal government officially allowed students to be classified as learning disabled based on documentation of how well they respond to interventions— a procedure commonly referred to as RTI (Response to Intervention).

IDEA 2004 specifies that for the purposes of determining learning disability (LD) eligibility, a school district may implement a procedure that involves documentation of how a child responds to scientific, research-based interventions as part of its evaluation procedures.



A three tiered system involving three separate interventions is typically recommended.

In Tier One of this pyramid, 80% of the students are successful with the core instruction. This success includes interventions that the classroom teacher implements as well.

Problems are alleviated and the students perform.

Tier Two is also a general education responsibility but

it involves a more intensive intervention and possibly a progress monitoring component. Outside assistance may be required from other teachers and/or experts in the subject area (reading/math).

Approximately 15% of all students may need Tier 2 services.

Tier Three is typically described as the final intervention level. Students at this level are in need of frequent, intensive interventions, often leading to determination of a learning disability.

Indiana's interpretation (Article 7) will be reauthorized soon to give schools more specific direction as well.

How Does RTI Work in the South Montgomery schools?

All four elementary schools have been working to use DIBELS data to help progress monitor students not testing at benchmark and possibly in need of supplemental services. As we have become comfortable using DIBELS, we need to begin

considering what other measures can be used to track student progress. This could include timed math facts drills, writing prompt data, SSP data, Ed Performance data.

Using this data that we have accumulated will help

us make the necessary changes we need to make to ensure all of our students are successful.

The underlying question is: How is the student responding to the curriculum and what if he/she is not successful?

October 2007

October 1-26 Performance Series testing window grades 2-9

October 5 Report cards go home

October 17 7:30-8:15 Social Studies Curriculum Mapping in LGI room at Southmont- This is an overview before the full work day-please bring standards

October 18 and 19 Fall Break- No School

October 24 8:00-3:00 Social Studies Curriculum Mapping in LGI room at Southmont- This is a work day-please bring standards

October 21-27 National Character Counts Week and Red Ribbon Week

November 9 End 2nd 6 weeks, Trimester, Dollars for Scholars Banquet- 5:30pm Social Hour, Banquet at 7:00pm

November 15 and 16 Parent Teacher Conferences- Early dismissal for students, Teachers conduct conferences Thursday, leave early Friday

November 22 and 23 Thanksgiving Break-No School

Tips for Successful and Productive Parent Teacher Conferences

(Taken from Teacher Vision)

Professionally conducted parent-teacher conferences can prove a most valuable strategy for improving student classroom behavior as well as enhancing learning. Here are some ideas to help reap the maximum benefit from parent-teacher conferences:

*Before the conference, plan what you hope to

accomplish. What information will you share? What problems need solving?

*Create an inviting room atmosphere. Displays of students' work, projects in progress, posters or learning centers help create a warm atmosphere.

*Assemble samples of the student's work and a list of his/her grades.

*Sit beside the parent at a table instead of behind the desk.

*Begin the conference with a positive note.

*Be specific when discussing difficulties the student is experiencing.

*Try to offer 2-3 specific suggestions for the parent to implement at home that might help the student.



The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. Courage faces fear and is thereby mastered by it. We must constantly build dikes of courage to hold back the flood of fear.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dollars for Scholars

SOUTH MONTGOMERY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Cathy Rowe, Curriculum Director
www.southmont.k12.in.us

The South Montgomery Community Schools Dollars for Scholars offers scholarships for students each spring. Fundraising events help fund scholarships for our Southmont graduates so please take advantage of opportunities to give.



Event: Annual Hall of Fame Banquet sponsored by Dollars for Scholars

When: Friday, November 9, 2007

Where: Crawfordsville Country Club

Time: 5:30 pm Social Hour with 7:00pm Banquet

*Southmont alumni and selected teachers/administrators will be inducted into the Hall of Fame that evening (inductees will be announced soon). In addition, teacher excellence awards for the South Montgomery School Corporation will also be given.

*Tickets will go on sale in October at Southmont High School so be sure to get your tickets early. Seating is limited.

*Please plan on attending to support our local Dollars for Scholars chapter.

Research-Based Findings About the Qualities of an Effective Teacher

The following research was collected by Stronge, 2002 regarding the seven research-based findings about the qualities of effective teachers:

1. The single greatest influence on students in a classroom is the teacher.
2. Certified and experienced teachers who have specific knowledge, skills and dispositions are more effective in terms of promoting student achievement than unlicensed and/or inexperienced teachers.
3. Teachers who practice the art of reflection are more effective than those who do not.
4. Teachers who possess good classroom management skills increase instructional in-class time.
5. Teachers who carefully and methodically plan and prepare for instruction are more effective than those who do not.
6. Teachers who employ instructional strategies that increase time-on-task are more effective than those who do not.
7. Teachers who differentiate instruction by employing a variety of teaching strategies and attending to the needs of all learners are effective in promoting learning.